

# Parish Report – October 2020

## Councillor

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## Children’s Centres cuts given go-ahead by Scrutiny Committee

Following the Cabinet’s decision in August to close 10 children’s centres, my group joined forces with the Labour group to challenge this decision. Our challenge focused on concerns over the lack of financial analysis and the lack of clarity over the new outreach model. The challenge was discussed by the Scrutiny Committee on 11 September. Unfortunately, the majority of the Committee voted against our challenge and endorsed the Cabinet’s decision. This means that the planned changes to children’s centres in Suffolk will go ahead.

## Suffolk County Council decides to oppose Sizewell C

The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council agreed on 22 September that they can no longer support EDF Energy’s proposals for Sizewell C in their current form. However, the Cabinet maintained their support for the principle of a new nuclear power station in Suffolk. The Cabinet’s key concerns were regarding transport impacts, site design and the environmental impact on the Suffolk coast. The Cabinet also believe that the current proposals do not sufficiently avoid, minimise, mitigate or compensate impacts of the proposed development.

Considering the enormous number of issues I asked “why cannot SCC just say NO now”? I make so apology for including this as the impact on HGV,s on the A14 and increase in goods freight on the train line will be significant.

These concerns will be submitted as Relevant Representations to the Planning Inspectorate. The final decision will be the government

## Financial impact of Covid-19 on Suffolk County Council budget

Suffolk County Council has published their Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report. This focuses heavily on the impact of Covid-19 on the council’s finances.

The council is currently forecasting a net overspend of just £0.4m (0.1%) for the 2020-21 budget. The headline figures are:

- Additional expenditure from core budget - £41.2m
  - o £43.9m – additional expenditure and lost income due to Covid-19
  - o Offset by underspend of £2.7m from non-Covid business as usual activity
- Additional funding - £40.8m
  - o £39.1m – non-ringfenced Covid-19 grants from the Government
  - o £1.7m – additional funding from business rates

## **Boundary review restarts with consultation on draft recommendations**

Following a delay due to Covid-19, the Boundary Commission has restarted the boundary review for Suffolk with a consultation on their draft recommendations, which include a reduction to 70 councillors. Any boundary changes will not be implemented until the 2025 elections. I still believe, that with the huge increase in population due to the number of planning approvals the number should remain at 75.

The draft recommendations and boundary changes are available to view on the Boundary Commission's website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/suffolk-county-council>. The consultation on these recommendations will run from 15 September – 23 November and can be found here: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/18495>

**WORK ON A14;** following a meeting with highways England upcoming work between the woolpit and Beyton junctions from October 19<sup>th</sup> for 7 weeks, from 8pm to 6am. There will be local diversions. I asked why they cannot replace the concrete section at the same time; they will replace signs and work on slip roads.

**MID SUFFOLK;** at the council's AGM I was proposed as chair of council, however this was voted down by the outgoing chairs casting vote. All other chairs of committee were decided by the new chairs casting vote, thereby giving all to the current administration.

**GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER ON PLANNING;** the council has done a comprehensive response. ( I can send if you wish).

**GATEWAY 14; CONSULTATION;** this is taking place for the proposal for a mixed use business park on the outskirts of Stowmarket

**SHELTERED HOUSING;** I am pleased that the council will not be increasing rents and service charges this year.

**ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS;** money from CIL has been made available for charging points in Stowmarket.