

Wilby PC 4 November 2020

The Covid 19 challenge continuous to be well met in Suffolk, both by Suffolk CC and MSDC.

I have referred to the work of support to the Community and Care Homes in my previous Reports to you. Enough to say that work and support for this carries on. Emergency Resilience Phone Lines are now in place.

We have had a preliminary look at next year's Budget and there is little doubt that there will be a multi-million gap to close.

In the past the gap at the last gasp has been closed by the buoyancy of the Council Tax Collection. The amount received has always been greater than originally budgeted for. However, for 2021/22 this is unlikely to be the case. What we do know is that Central Government will expect to put up the CT by 2% for the Adult Social Care Budget. The challenge will be to ensure that the burden on Suffolk Council Taxpayers is minimised. The bills will be dropping through our doors just as the economy down turns. Obviously Saving will have to be made and SCC tries to be even more efficient!

Many Local Authorities, we know, are in an even worse position than Suffolk (and there are questions about their financial solvency – but not for Suffolk). There is justification for careful use of the Reserves.

The impact of increasing HGV traffic remains a concern throughout the Division.

One of the many services that Suffolk County Council supports is the Coroners' Court Service. In the past the County Council provided a whole range of services from Prosecution in the Courts on behalf of the Police, through Probation Services and provision of Magistrates Courts. These have been nationalised with varying results. The last take over has resulted in reductions in Court Time and an increasing delay in dealing with Hearings. The latest brilliant idea seems to be the take-over of the Coroner's Service!

The recently published White Paper on Planning Reform contains many potential threats to areas such as hours. The Assertion that Housing Shortages are due to the Planning Policy and Development Control (for us this is the service provided by Mid Suffolk District Council) is disingenuous at best. Many Parish Councils have written in their concerns. The one from Fressingfield PC is particularly effective.

I hope the circulars, which I am forwarding from SCC are helpful.

Guy McGregor

Suffolk County Councillor

Hoxne & Eye Division

4 November 2020