

Report to Brettenham Parish Council. Thursday 11th February 2016.

Budget.

The budget for 2016/17 was voted through in Full Council this afternoon. Although general council tax will not be increased, the county's share of the bill will be increased by 2% to reflect the Government's Social Care Levy which is ring fenced for Adult Social Care.

SCC Childrens' Services receive OFSTED 'Good' rating

We have heard today that the Council's Services for looked after children have been rated good by OFSTED following a recent inspection. 78 Councils have been inspected under this framework, and only 17 have received Good ratings, so this is a good achievement.

Devolution

The Government's Devolution plans have been criticised by the Communities and Local Government Committee for lack of transparency, lack of clear objectives and a failure to engage the public. This criticism is probably justified and stems from government's own lack of clarity with regard to what powers they wish to devolve and to what extent.

There is no further news on our own devolution aspirations which remain somewhat mysterious and insubstantial.

Community Transport

I have forwarded Mrs Moulding some information about new arrangements for community transport that will commence in June 2016.

Following the completion of a tender process Suffolk County Council has awarded contracts for the provision of demand led transport services to provide coverage across Suffolk. The aim of the process was to deliver more efficient and effective services based on district and borough administrative boundaries. Bidders were asked to propose the design of the service for their local areas to allow for local demands and differences.

Officers believe that residents will receive an improved service at lower cost. In Babergh the service will be delivered by Hadleigh Community Transport, subcontracting to Go Start from Sudbury. Both organisations, with whom the Council have worked in the past, have been involved in the redesign process

Consultation on the future of the Fire Service in Suffolk.

There is still time to have your say about this. The consultation closes on 22nd February and full details are on SCC website.

High Speed Broadband

Information about the coverage planned up until September 2016 has now been released on the Better Broadband for Suffolk website at: www.betterbroadbandsuffolk.com. I am afraid that there is no news for Brettenham.

Details of coverage planned for later phases will be released in due course - initially it had been hoped that full details of the phased rollout of the scheme could be announced in autumn 2015, but owing to EU related procurement issues these are currently delayed.

Community meetings are being planned across the county from spring 2016 to share plans with local communities, and to get input from residents, landowners and businesses on how to extend coverage in their areas as far as possible.

Also in December, the council announced the public launch of a basic broadband service to fulfil the Government's commitment that everyone should have the option of access to a broadband service of at least 2Mbps by the end of 2015. The scheme, which provides broadband by satellite, has been trialed in Suffolk over the last few months ahead of the public launch. It is intended as an interim solution for businesses and homes that currently get less than 2Mbps, and which are not included in the planned coverage in the next 12 months.

Eligible people can now apply for a voucher to cover the initial installation and commissioning costs of a satellite broadband receiver. A guide and application form for the satellite broadband scheme can be found on the Better Broadband for Suffolk website at www.betterbroadbandsuffolk.com.

Brettenham

All has been quiet from Brettenham recently.

Jenny Antill

February 2016