

## **Report for Brettenham PC 12/9/17 Robert Lindsay County Councillor**

### **Highways reshuffle**

A highways reshuffle means the usual points of contact for you and me have gone and we are being asked to report standard defects on the Highways reporting tool and more complicated issues by emailing or phoning the Phoenix House “service delivery centre”.

### **Secret cabinet committees**

Suffolk County council at their July proposed new cabinet committees which would have seats for councillors from all three political groups. However, the final proposal was that these committees would sit in secret. I introduced an amendment to say they should be in public as are all other council meetings. This was defeated by Conservative councillors who were ordered to vote against. The unamended motion was then carried. I will be sitting on one of the four cabinet committees and am quite prepared to report anything significant to you and my constituents.

### **Cabinet members vote to boost their allowances**

The council in July also proposed to increase the allowance for cabinet members, but for no other councillors. I and most of my group, voted against this. Again the Conservative majority were ordered to vote it through. I believe councillors need to make the arguments over allowance increases after they have served four years, not just after they have been elected.

### **Cutting of free school buses and post 16 travel subsidy**

Schools cabinet member Gordon Jones is bringing before cabinet tomorrow [Monday] a plan by which from Sept 2019.

1. Free travel for primary and secondary school children would no longer be provided, where a student is not attending their nearest school (even if that school is their catchment school).
2. Subsidised travel for 16-18 year olds would no longer be provided.

There are 14 children in Brettenham who attend Thurston Community School who I understand will no longer be eligible for a free bus, under this plan, because their nearest school is Stowmarket. For secondary school pupils, our division will be the worst hit in Suffolk 789 or 37% of secondary school pupils here having their free bus withdrawn and parents facing with the choice of changing school, having to arrange their own car sharing transport or purchasing tickets on a commercial service – if one is available. This move will disproportionately hit rural areas across the county, and amounts to an attack on rural communities. I and my group are opposed to this and will do our best to stop it even going to consultation. It also goes against Government guidance on changing school transport which recommends a phase-in to allow children to continue their education uninterrupted.