

Report for Brettenham PC 13.9.18

Public Sector Leaders Group

They have confirmed that they will hold five public meetings a year with minutes and agendas published – there will be some private meetings in between. I am told this is purely for planning rather than decision purposes.

Suffolk scheduled to overspend by £8.6m this year.

Based on its spending in the first quarter of the 2018/19 financial year, the county council is forecast to overspend its £501 million budget by 1.7%. It is now attempting to reduce costs and make savings by 31 March next year. It says the overspend is mainly driven by rising demand for services and increased costs in Children and Young People's Services, (accounting for almost £5 million of the projected overspend). This includes services for looked-after children, specialist social care for children and home-to-school transport.

Special Educational Needs crisis

A report to cabinet is projecting a rise of 18% in Sen children in the next two years, they will be short 300-400 places equivalent to three special schools. SEN kids already face either a long wait or are placed out of county, contributing to the budget overspend. Officers have consulted and are recommending cabinet provide new places via a mix of some new schools and provide specialist support centres within existing schools.

Unitaries

I have learnt that the new leader Cllr Hicks is not in favour of his predecessor Colin Noble's single unitary idea and is dropping the study that Respublica had been tasked with. However because Respublica has already been paid he is looking to task them with something else.

Cycling network plans for next five years

At full council last week, I proposed two motions,

- One asking a cross party working group to draw up a costed five- year plan for a network of cycle paths
- The other to commit 5% of the annual integrated transport budget, which the council gets from central government, to cycling infrastructure.

The first was unanimously carried, the second was voted down by the Conservative majority administration. I am awaiting further information regarding the cross-party group that will draw up a cycling plan, and will keep you updated as this progresses.

Grit bins – New policy is not to supply grit heaps but only to refill yellow bins. This is owing to damage to hedges etc caused by rain washing salt away. This also makes the grit ineffective at melting ice. Grit bins have to be bought by parish council privately (£42 from gritbins.net). Have to be yellow unless in a conservation area.