

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2016

Councillor

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The Budget

Suffolk County Council Budget sees the sixth full year of significant savings being proposed on top of those from earlier years and the austerity measures are set to continue until 2019-20. Further savings in the order of £60m will need to be identified to balance the budget through to 2019-20. It is therefore essential that the Council keeps focused on implementing major transformational change as it is not feasible to continue to deliver services in the same way.

The Government has set out plans for further devolution to local government, including the announcement that local authorities would be able to retain 100% of business rates by 2020. As the overall amount of business rates will exceed the value of the revenue support grant and business rates that local government currently receives, other grants to local government, such as the Public Health grant may be financed from business rates and/or further responsibilities and services may be devolved to local government. The detail of how this new system will work is still to be developed so the real impact of this is not yet known.

Alongside this, the County Council is proactively working with public sector partners to explore the potential opportunities associated with greater local autonomy through devolution deals. As such, the Suffolk public sector submitted a response to the Spending Review consultation that was agreed as the basis for future devolution negotiations (discussed at County Council on 17th September 2015). Since then, following advice from Central Government, Suffolk and Norfolk Leaders have been exploring the potential for a joint devolution proposal and continue discussions with Central Government as well as partners locally.

The Budget Challenge

In order for the Government to achieve the required £37bn of savings by 2019-20 it is planned that the budgets of Government Departments will need to be reduced by £20bn. As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2015, non-protected Government Departments were asked to model 25% and 40% real terms decreases in their revenue budgets over the four year period covered by the spending review (2016-20). The outcome of the review was published on 25th November alongside the Autumn Statement

As it is known that the Government's deficit reduction programme will continue until 2019-20 it is sensible to take a medium term view of the Council's budget and to consider the budget strategy over the duration of this administration and the following two years rather than to consider each year in isolation.

Therefore an assessment has been made of the potential budget gap to 2019-20 and the Council has been developing a savings plan for both 2016-17 and 2017-18. The planning assumptions that were made before the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was received in December 2015 are explained in Appendix C, Section A. It was expected that £48.7m of savings would be required in 2016-17 and £24.1m in 2017-18.

At December 2015 the Council employed 4,329 full time equivalent staff. Of this it is estimated that the cost of 1,100 staff is funded from grants, external funding or traded activity. A reduction in the number of staff funded by these external income sources would not result in a saving, therefore approximately 3,100 are in scope for savings proposals. It is expected that the transformation proposals discussed in this report will result in a reduction in the number of staff. As well as this it is proposed that further savings from staff of £3.7m should be targeted during 2016-18. These would need to come from across the Council.

Council Tax

As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2015 the Government announced that for the rest of the current Parliament, local authorities responsible for adult social care will be given an additional 2% flexibility on 43 their current council tax referendum threshold to be used entirely for adult social care. This flexibility is being offered in recognition of the impact of the National Living Wage and demographic changes which are leading to growing demand for adult social care, and increased pressure on council budgets. It is proposed that the Council should implement this 2% increase, which will be shown separately on the Council Tax bill, but there will be no general Council Tax increase.

Precept requirement is calculated based on the budget requirement of £445,252,996 less Revenue Support Grant, Top Up Grant, Business Rates and a share of the surplus on council tax collection funds held by the Borough and District Councils.

Suffolk County Council Vision and Budget Strategy

Suffolk County Council continues to face significant grant reductions as a result of the Government's deficit reduction programme, which started in 2011-12. The Chancellor announced in July 2015 that the Government plans to achieve a surplus on its budget by 2019-20. This requires £37bn of further savings over the period from 2016-17 to 2019-20 from a combination of changes to the welfare system, changes to the tax system and savings from Government Departments.

The Council has successfully managed the financial challenges laid down by the Government's austerity programme up to now and has delivered savings in excess of £170m. The response to these challenges has been measured, pragmatic and innovative and designed to protect front-line services as much as possible. The Council needs to continue to deliver the best possible services within significantly reduced resources, with a focus on meeting the following corporate priorities which are also in effect the Council's vision:

- a) To raise educational attainment and skill levels
- b) To support the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to increase economic growth
- c) To maintain roads and develop Suffolk's infrastructure
- d) To support the most vulnerable in our communities
- e) To empower local communities

In order to address the continuing budget challenge the Council is required to become a leaner and more focused organisation. This is being implemented through a portfolio of service transformation and enabling programmes that are fundamentally reviewing how services are operated and how the organisation is run.

Locality Budget

Funds of £12,000 were allocated for 2015 together with a balance of £9,580 c/f from 2014 gave a total balance of £21,580 for the year 2015/16 from Locality Budget for Melford Ward, which includes Long Melford, Glemsford, Hartest, Lawshall and groups based in Sudbury serving these parishes. Funds have been distributed throughout the year as detailed below below;

Long Melford Parish Council received funds to support entertainment for the Street Fair, Housing Survey and legal fees for Broadband Installation within the parish. Long Melford Open Spaces received funds to help repair historic railings on Melford Green. Funds also supported the Community Christmas event, Long Melford Silver Band, Long Melford Cricket and Football clubs.

Glemsford received funds towards renewing toilets and improvements at the Village Hall, and also towards upgrading the electrical system at Glemsford Old School Hall.

Lawshall Parish Council received funds to support consultation for Neighbourhood plan and repairs to bus shelter roof.

Hartest Parish Council also received funds to support a consultation for Neighbourhood plan.

Stansted Village Community Centre received funds towards refurbishment of toilets

Local groups supporting the above named parishes who also received funding were: National Trust, Lee Stock, Home Start, Black & White Productions, Go Start Community Transport, Suffolk Libraries, Sudbury Carnival Committee and Sudbury Rowing Club.

Funds are also committed to Long Melford Scout Group for store building, Hartest Parish Council for improvements to Parsons Walk, Stansted Parish Council for Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations and a Rural Coffee Caravan

Funds allocated total £17,121.50. Current remaining balance of funds is £4,485.50. Anyone wishing to apply for funds should contact Richard Kemp.

Suffolk County Council Campaigns

Throughout the year Suffolk County Council has promoted and supported several campaigns in order to promote wellbeing, community caring and awareness and responsibility for the environment. These campaigns include:

Bullying and Friendship issues Campaign - Bullying can happen both in person and online. In whichever form the impact on a child can be significant and we must all do as much as we can to support those affected, with the ultimate aim of stamping it out altogether. We have provided advice on introducing your child to technology and the importance of e-safety, what to do if your child is being bullied and guidance on your child's friendships – when you should help and when it might be better to take a step back.

White Ribbon Campaign - If you hear it or if you see it, don't ignore it; say no to domestic abuse. This is the message being delivered today across Suffolk supporting the White Ribbon Campaign Officially launched today by the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership with guests including county councillors, University Campus Suffolk (UCS) and the fire service, the campaign is supporting the international day against violence to women. An emotive short film featuring a domestic scenario and motivational monologue has been produced by third year BA (Hons) Film students at UCS. The film features Suffolk actors who donated their time; and messages of support from companies such as Live Well Suffolk, Trinity Park Events and Taipan Combat who do corporate self- defence classes; as well as partnership organisations including Realise Futures and UCS Ipswich. The motivational monologue is spoken by different, men and women, intercutting between each person saying a different part of the dialogue to form a continuous piece.

Drink Drive Campaign - The Suffolk Roadsafe partnership is urging everyone, especially younger drivers, to think about the consequences of drink driving. Launched today at the Suffolk Roadsafe partnership board meeting, a radio and poster campaign with over 700 licensed premises will go live in Suffolk. Alerting people to the potential consequences if caught driving over the limit. The striking "drink drive and face the criminal consequences" poster features a montage of four faces, joined to become one, to identify the many faces people will encounter if caught .

Connection with Loneliness Campaign - A campaign, launched by Suffolk's health professionals, invites people to play their part to beat loneliness. The campaign draws attention to the fact that loneliness can affect any of us at any time. An estimated 800,000 people in England feel lonely, and

AgeUK Suffolk predicts that 15,000 older people in Suffolk can go a month without speaking to a friend, family member or neighbour.

The campaign, entitled "[Loneliness. Make the connection](#)" begins this month and kicks off a year-long focus on loneliness and how it affects people in different ways, from new parents to bereavement and unemployment.

Sugar Swaps Campaign - The Change4Life campaign launched today encourages parents to reduce the amount of sugar their children consume by making one or more simple swaps. With new data revealing that over 31% of children in their last year of primary school in Suffolk are overweight or obese, Suffolk's public health team is backing a campaign that calls on parents to cut the sugar in their children's diets.

Stay Warm in Home Campaign - Suffolk Energy Action has been launched by Suffolk County Council, with the support of all district and borough councils in the county. This campaign complements the existing [Warm Homes Healthy People](#) project which aims to help those most in need. The campaign offers £6 million to be shared out amongst local residents across two key schemes to help improve the energy efficiency of Suffolk residents' homes.

Composting campaign - Suffolk Master Composters are inviting green minded enthusiasts to join their ranks and master the art of composting this spring. New volunteers will receive expert training from the [Suffolk Waste Partnership](#) and [Garden Organic](#) to enable them to act as composting ambassadors – encouraging the public to compost through promotional talks, events and demonstrations.

Men to Connect Campaign - Seeking to raise awareness of the support available to Suffolk men at a time when they might need it most. This is the latest instalment in our countywide campaign to highlight men's health and loneliness. In 2010, the Mental Health Foundation cited connections between loneliness and poor mental health, with links to depression, anxiety, paranoia and even a contributory factor to suicide – something which is up to four times more prevalent among Suffolk men than women.

Active for Life walking strategy Campaign - the first Suffolk Walking Strategy which is a countrywide call to action to walk more. The strategy is also for organisations to create opportunities for people to enjoy walking wherever they live. Active for Life: Suffolk Walking Strategy 2015-2020 aims to make walking the default choice for journeys of 20 minutes or less on foot and for walking to be seen as fun, beneficial, easy, inclusive, accessible and safe.

Alcohol Awareness Campaign - Suffolk's Public Health team is drawing attention to the devastating, often hidden, impact of alcohol misuse. The campaign includes one 21 year old man revealing the lifelong consequences of growing up in a family where excessive drinking was commonplace. Timed to coincide with national Alcohol Awareness Week, from **16 to 22 November**, Suffolk health officials are urging Suffolk people to consider their drinking and the unintended consequences on friends, family and loved ones.

Thank you

As always I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the very many people who help and support me in the role of County Councilor including Parish Councils, District Councillors and Parish Clerks to name but a few.

I would also like to say thank you, and congratulations to the many individuals and groups of volunteers we now rely upon to maintain our wonderful communities, you are ALL doing an amazing job!