

Barry Stone - County Councillor for Clavering

Parish Council News Update

September 2022



After a long hot summer it is good to be back to a more normal situation. Most meetings of both Parish Councils and County committees are now face to face and hopefully this will continue into the future.

I have included below some of the current County initiatives going forward for your information.

Plans for improvements to bus services in Norfolk to be considered by Cabinet

Plans of how to spend £49.55m to improve bus services for the County are set to be formally reviewed by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet on 3 October.

Norfolk has been successful in securing the funding to deliver the local Bus Service Improvement Plan from the Department for Transport (DfT) and today cabinet papers have been published which outline how the money will be spent to improve the county's bus services and facilities over the next three years.

Norfolk received the sixth highest allocation in the country and the funding consists of £30.9m of capital funding and £18.6m of revenue funding.

The plans outline 17 new measures across the county which give buses priority on the roads. These include new bus lanes in Norwich, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth and redesigned junctions across the county.

New or improved travel hubs are proposed for Sheringham, Cromer, Diss and Hunstanton which will provide better waiting areas with real-time information to help to give passengers a better experience as well as being integrated with walking and cycling facilities.

There will also be a county-wide review of bus stops with upgrades to improve access for people with disabilities, to provide more real-time information and a programme of works to reduce delays to buses.

Approximately £12 million of the funding will be spent on providing new or expanded bus routes and increased service frequencies on key routes, including more evening and weekend services. The detail of these routes will be worked up with bus operators and using feedback from residents, elected members and parish councils over the coming months.

The final element of the plan is to reduce fares, particularly for those under 25 who will receive a 20% discount, and in targeted areas where flat fares schemes will be piloted starting with Great Yarmouth.

Cabinet to consider further savings to address budget gap

In July, the county council announced the first £13 million of savings to meet a £60 million budget gap next year. Further proposals will be considered by cabinet in October.

The report to cabinet says the council has identified further savings, which take the total to £32.5 million.

It says:

- Many elements of the budget remain unknown and “intensive work therefore continues to identify further savings”
- There is a “significant risk that the council will be obliged to consider reductions in service levels”
- It is “critical” that the council continues to lobby the Government and MPs for “adequate and sustainable funding for Norfolk”

The latest proposals, totalling £19.5 million, include:

- £11.7 million from adult social services
- £1.8 million from children’s services
- £2.9 million from community and environmental services
- £0.05 million from strategy and transformation
- £0.03 million from governance
- £3.1 million from finance and commercial services

The same meeting will consider an update on a strategic review of the council, to improve the way it operates and save between £15 million and £20 million. Once detailed proposals are developed and checked, they will be added to the budget.

Energy saving in County buildings

The following steps will be taken to save energy:

Installing an upgraded electrical and lighting control system in County Hall.

Closing floors 6,5,3,2 and 1 at 9pm each evening and all day at the weekend. From Monday, staff based on these floors who need to work after 7pm or at weekends will be asked to use the South Wing.

Making adjustments to external lighting around County Hall to ensure it doesn’t remain on for longer than needed, while ensuring the health and safety of colleagues and the public are maintained.

Reducing the minimum temperatures for the heating system in winter and increasing the maximum temperatures for the cooling system during the summer, while ensuring temperatures remain within a comfortable range.

Reducing the total amount of time the heating and cooling systems are on by 10 hours per week across all buildings.

As always, I am here to help in any way I can and will always respond to email and telephone requests for assistance.

Email: barry.stone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Phone: Home: 01508 499389

Mobile: 07434 905963

Kind regards

Barry