

Parish Report July 2011

Councillor

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Chief Executive Departure

This week saw the news that Chief Executive Andrea Hill would be leaving Suffolk County Council with immediate effect.

The County Council released this statement to the media;

A spokesman for Suffolk County Council said:

“The Dismissals and Appeals Committee of Suffolk County Council has today (4 July 2011) concluded its investigation into the ‘whistleblowing’ allegations made against Chief Executive, Andrea Hill.

“Bullying and harassment allegations were robustly investigated by an independent firm of solicitors. Although it remains a concern that such a perception existed, the Committee is satisfied that there was no evidence to support those claims or that she was responsible for the death of David White (former Head of Legal Services). The Committee wants to reassure staff that all allegations are treated extremely seriously.

“The Committee also received a report into Mrs Hill’s expense claims during her tenure as Chief Executive. It has concluded that whilst there were undoubtedly claims which, in the current climate, might not represent best use of public money, the Committee accepted that there was no dishonesty in the claims made.

“Following a lengthy discussion last Friday, and negotiations between representatives of both parties over the weekend, the county council can now confirm that Mrs Hill will be leaving her post with immediate effect.

“There has been significant media attention attached to Mrs Hill which has become a distraction and both parties accept that with new political leadership of Suffolk County Council in place, it is better to allow the organisation to move forward with new managerial leadership.

“The county council would like to thank Mrs Hill for all she has done over the past three years and wish her well for her future.

“The total value of compensation to be paid to Mrs Hill is £218,592. This figure includes her contractual notice period.”

County Council Scrutiny & Health Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee will meet on the 13th of July, and discuss a number of different items.

The first on the agenda is on the subject of the Supporting People Programme grant. This item will consider how the programme is being affected by the changes in the way it is being funded and what is being done to mitigate the impact on people in need of housing related support services.

The second item is an interim report from the Academies and Free Schools Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. The report focuses on the impact of the creation of academy and free schools on the provision of education in Suffolk.

The meeting starts at 10 o'clock and is open to the public.

In addition to this scrutiny meeting, the County Council recently decided to reinstate the Health Scrutiny Committee. The next meeting of this committee will be on the 20th of July.

For further information, copies of the reports and agendas please head to the Suffolk County Council's Council and Democracy pages.

County Council - Public questions & Agenda

The next Full Council meeting will take place on the 14th of July at two o'clock. As usual members of the public have the opportunity to ask questions to portfolio holders at the beginning of the meeting. If you are interested in asking a question then please head to the Suffolk County Council website for further details, and the form to fill in. The deadline for the questions is Friday at noon.

On the agenda for the meeting is the petition to Save Suffolk Libraries. This petition is an amalgamation of all the different petitions for each of the libraries.

In addition to this there is also a motion put forward by the Liberal Democrats to extend the time that concessionary bus passes can be used for free. Currently the County Council opts for the basic scheme of free travel between 9:30 and 11. The motion recommends that for those who have the concessionary pass on the basis of age they should be able to travel freely from 9 in the morning rather than 9:30. For those who are eligible for the pass on the basis of disability, there should have no time limitations on their card.

The Lib Dems state that implementing this system, as many other County Councils do would help to increase social mobility, and allow individuals to reach places of work, socialise, and to make hospital appointments.

The other item on the agenda is regarding traded services. You can find out more about the County Council agenda on the Suffolk County Council website.

Cabinet Ups County Contribution to Suffolk Broadband Bid

The County Council at an emergency Cabinet meeting has increased its contribution to the Suffolk Better Broadband Bid, up from the previous amount of £439,000, to a potential £10m over four years.

This increase in contribution is a result of the Government organisation responsible for providing the funding rejecting the bid from Suffolk County Council. The feedback received from the County Council indicates that a higher contribution from the local authorities is required to ensure Government funding. Out of a total of 18 bids, only three Counties were successful and each of these contributed significantly more money to the programme than Suffolk. Norfolk - £15m; Wiltshire £16m; and Devon, North Somerset and Somerset County Councils are contributing £22m.

The funding for this increase in contribution will come from the County Council's reserves, with possible recouping of costs through increased business rates and capital receipts.

If you would like to know more information, please head to the Council and Democracy pages of the Suffolk County Council website.