

Date: 4th October '21
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Parish Councils Report – Thedwastre North Division

Andy Mellen (SCC Councillor)

Poor signage of road closures

At the full County Council meeting on 8th September I asked the Councillor with responsibility for operational highways, Paul West, about the problem of poor signage for road closures. I have been contacted by many residents across the division complaining that closures and diversions have been very poorly signed, with completely unreasonable diversions indicated. Often the road is open yet the “road closed” signs remain up for hours or sometimes days afterward. The response from Cllr West was that in emergency situations utility companies have the right to close roads for work and then inform the Council later. He did admit to their being room for improvement in this area.

I would be grateful if any further problems like this are reported to me so that I can take them up with the relevant department.

The opposition also asked about the implementation of £20m of cycleway improvements which the Suffolk Conservative manifesto stated had been identified, the response was that these schemes had been identified but the funding is not in fact available as yet, they expect to make piecemeal improvements as various funding becomes available from CIL, section 106 agreements etc.

Review of SEND provision

Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into some limited areas of its Special Educational Needs and Disability provision and the report was published last month. The report was critical of SEND provision and as you may have seen in the media, the Cabinet member responsible, Rachel Hood, apologised to families affected by the poor service. Our opposition group have welcomed the report. It clearly states that the system was overwhelmed, but staff felt unable to communicate this to senior Council officers which is a huge concern. The report points out we have some good people within a poor system Suffolk County Council failed to meet its statutory deadlines for EHC (Education Health & Care) plans, a clear breach of compliance.

Some parents were made to feel pressured and some felt bullied into taking unsuitable placings.

We have asked that the Education Scrutiny Committee be convened to examine the report at the earliest opportunity, but this request has been refused.

Lorry route review

The process of reviewing strategic lorry routes has begun, input from Parish Councils and local Councillors will be sought in the near future.

Locality Funding

I still have some funds available for small-scale projects in the Thedwastre North division. Projects need to align with the Council’s strategic priorities, but please call or e-mail to discuss your project if you would like to apply.

Andy Mellen
County Councillor for Thedwastre North Division
Green, Liberal Democrat, and Independent Group