

FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR PENNY OTTON AND THE LIB DEM TEAM

Austerity Is Over! Really?

The Tory led county council has announced that the council tax will increase by a total of just under 4% in 2019/20, this will be made up of a 2.99% increase in general council tax and a 1% increase for the Social Care Precept.

You would think that this would give the council the opportunity to begin to improve services that have suffered over the last ten years of austerity. Yes? You would be WRONG!

Below are further stringent cuts in our council services that the Tories will implement over the next year despite their extra income:



Penny Otton - "This is not what public money should be used for."

Deferred staged removal of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) grant

Liberal Democrat Group Leader Councillor **Penny Otton** says, "I believe this is a big mistake; CABs do a fantastic job helping people with problems, often related to council services."

Reduction of housing related support

Including the provision of hostel beds for the homeless.

Social care pricing re-negotiation

Either price increases or service cuts will be inevitable we fear.

No more bus timetables

Stopping the display of bus timetables at the roadside.

Reduced bus services

A reduced spend on sponsored bus services.

Reduced out-of -hours services

Reduced out-of-hours council stand-by services.

More dangerous winter roads

A reduction in the winter support fleet for Suffolk Highways.

Neglect of road signs and markings

Stoppage of road sign cleaning and only maintain mandatory road markings throughout the district.

HOWEVER...

The Mid Suffolk district council can manage to find £1 million in extra money to place in a contingency fund to offset any lack of income on their high risk investments in retail premises, many of which are not even in the district.

Liberal Democrat Councillor **Penny Otton** says, "How can the administration justify putting £1,000,000 into a corporate risk reserve and then propose putting the council tax up? Year on year we are being told that the government grant to councils is to reduce and that is the case. But, this constant reduction in services to the community when money is being put aside to offset any possible lack of income from their investments in retail premises outside of the district. The Liberal Democrats have argued all along that this is not what public money should be used for."

Dark Streets

The turning off of more street lights overnight.

Reduction in help for the young

Ceasing council accreditation of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme).

The move to Endeavour House in Ipswich

The Liberal Democrats have constantly voted against this cost saving move as this takes decision making away from the public and makes it so much more difficult and costly for the community to access council staff.

Working Hard For You All Year Round



Home to school free transport

Following the disastrous decision to scrap free school transport for many children, if they do not go to the nearest school, I am now trying to help get some ways in which children can still attend Thurston Community College, This school was the worst hit by this.

Significant increase in insurance pay-outs for cars damaged by potholes

Data published under Freedom of Information laws has shown that, between 1 January and 16 October this year, Suffolk Highways have already paid out £67,819.07 for vehicle damage (including insurance pay outs, costs and legal fees). This is a significant increase from the previous year, when pay-outs for the whole of 2017 totalled £26,004.63.

The number of claims has also more than doubled, from 598 in 2017 to 1,265 so far in 2018.



Motion on single use plastic

Following the support I had on the plastic bottle motion last year I put a motion to Suffolk county council asking that the council and all its commissioned businesses conduct a survey of all single use plastic and to end its use where feasibly possible. I am delighted that this was agreed unanimously.

We all now know just how devastating all this plastic waste is to our seas, land and wildlife.

As Liberal Democrats we want to reduce as much plastic as we can and I am sure you feel the same.

Police Community Support Officers

Mid Suffolk is proposing to fully fund 2 PCSOs. There needs to be a "Service Level of Agreement" with the police. I have asked that the 2 PCSOs should not be concentrated in Stowmarket, but used across the district.



We need your thoughts on what YOU think...

Let Penny know if she can help you.

07922 814047 (mobile)

Penny48@hotmail.co.uk

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