

## Report for Lavenham Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor for 01.02.2024

### New bus services

Congratulations on your bid for improved 753 service being approved. I hope Chambers can be persuaded to implement it.

Two other bids I am aware of in the Cosford division -

- Monks Eleigh PC's request for a dial a ride minibus that would take people in the villages of Cosford to Lavenham and Hadleigh to join backbone routes between Bury and Sudbury and Hadleigh and Sudbury has been approved by the County Council. The idea is that the service would be bookable online via an app rather than reliant on people answering the phone. The county council will have to open talks with GoStart and Hadleigh Community Transport about how and whether they can run it.
- Bildeston and Hitcham's bid for a five/six day a week service between Hadleigh and Stowmarket where, in my view, we have a big gap in services, has been refused.

### Car free visits – destinations sought

The County Council is seeking 25 “visitor attractions” in Suffolk to promote car free journeys for visitors. Lavenham is of course on a good (and hopefully to be improved) bus route and a short cycle ride from Sudbury. The more visitors leave their cars at home, the less congestion there will be for residents. Attractions will be promoted on website [goodjourney.org.uk](http://goodjourney.org.uk) alongside a marketing campaign. Details from Loretta Jones at Good Journey on [loretta@goodjourney.org.uk](mailto:loretta@goodjourney.org.uk) or [info@suffolkgrowth.co.uk](mailto:info@suffolkgrowth.co.uk)

### County Budget proposes £64m budget cuts over 2 years

The complete axing of £535k funding for **arts and museums** has attracted the headlines and will impact places like Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds. It will also impact vulnerable elderly and children from across the County who are supported by groups like Suffolk Artslink and Dance East, Food Museum.

Other cuts:

£11m staffing costs, initially by not replacing vacancies.

The biggest cuts are in Adult and Community Services where they are proposing cutting £28m next year, £15m more than planned.

There are warnings from officers in the papers that the cuts for adult care “may result in an increase in customer complaints”.

The county is also cutting all funding for skills development and **apprenticeship** programmes. It warns that this means it is likely that the number of young people in Suffolk not in education, employment or training will rise as a result.

The programme to **decarbonise and retrofit school buildings to meet zero carbon targets is being stopped** from the end of this financial year. £3.57m will have been spent on this in the current year.

Over two years £3m will be cut from the £5m **Housing Related Support** budget which enables vulnerable people to live independently and helps stave off homelessness. The council papers say costs will be “rebalanced” which I assume means persuading the District Councils take up the burden.

The Bury St Edmunds **Records Office** will be closed and records centralised at the Hold, Ipswich.

Former Children’s Centres, now called **Family Hubs**, will be “redesigned” in an unspecified way following a public consultation next financial year to save £700k.