

# May 2012

## County Councillor Annual Report

### **New Chief's**

This year saw the departure of our much derided Chief executive Andrea Hill, I personally found the management style not terribly inclusive, and welcomed the hiring of her replacement Deborah Cadman, who has a completely different approach, as well as salary level. Although the agenda of relentless change is still much the same, already the new approach should lead to better outcomes. This year also saw the airbrushing out of the phrase "New Strategic Direction" from all of our committee papers. While all this was going on, we also had a change of political leader, with Mark Bee taking over from Jeremy Pembroke.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

This year our group called for the County Council to lobby central government regarding our misgivings over the new planning policy framework, Now this framework has become law, I was pleased to note that many of the pitfalls we pointed out to government have been acted upon, however the clarity as to who will fund the new Neighbourhood plans and associated referenda that will come from these plans, has now been shown will potentially fall in the lap of the District council. With the new plans costing upwards of £15,000 each and referenda £60,000 I see little hope of these plans surfacing anytime soon, until then the way is open to interpretation (by lawyers!)

### **Better Broadband**

This year the county backed a project to deliver better broadband for Suffolk started heading in the right direction, this year we secured government backing for the £41.7 million fibre optic backbone planned for Suffolk. The tender for the contract to deliver this is due to go out soon, with upgrades to the existing network being programmed shortly.

It is hoped, that we would have been letting the contract by the summer, and we pushed the County management to make sure this project's timing does not slip, and we attended a conference in Suffolk this spring, & gained detailed information regarding the timeline/ hurdles etc of this investment process.

A website was set up with the target of 10,000 responses needed, to date we have over 12,000 registered [www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband)

### **Libraries Saved?**

During this year our library network was transferred to an "arms length organisation" and our mobile service was cut from a fortnightly service to a monthly one.

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