

Consultation on cuts to Citizens Advice

In November, Suffolk County Council announced their intention to cut all funding for Suffolk's Citizens Advice Bureaus as part of their budget savings proposals. This was later amended to a phased cut over 2 years. The funding will be reduced by half (£184 000) in 2019/20, before being removed entirely in 2020/21. Suffolk County Council have launched a consultation on this proposed funding cut, which I would encourage you all to complete. The consultation runs until 5pm on Wednesday 23 January, and can be found at:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/cabconsultation

Council pledges to lead fight against single-use plastics

On 6 December 2018, my group successfully put forward a motion calling on Suffolk County Council to do more to tackle single-use plastic waste in the county. The motion was agreed unanimously by all councillors. The measures the council has agreed to implement include a commitment to work towards only using sustainable or re-usable plastics in all council buildings, writing to the public on how to reduce plastic waste, and creating a "plastic free Suffolk network" of councils, businesses and other organisations.

Suffolk County Council refuses to tackle carbon emissions

At the Council meeting in December, I seconded a motion asking Suffolk County Council to set an annual "carbon budget" and create targets for reducing carbon emissions. Suffolk County Council already monitors its carbon emissions, but currently this work is not in the public domain and there are no clear targets for carbon reduction. A carbon budget would set out how much carbon the council could emit each year, much like a financial budget sets out how much money can be spent. Unfortunately, the administration voted against the motion and refused to commit to any carbon reduction targets.

Energy from waste facility refinanced

In 2010, Suffolk County Council engaged Suez in a PFI contract to build and operate the Great Blakenham incinerator. The county pays Suez for this via the annual gate fee per tonne of waste which includes a portion of the £180m build costs of the facility as well as the operating costs

over the 25-year contract life. In October 2016, the council paid £37.8m (22.4%) of the facility's capital construction cost in order to reduce the gate fee per tonne. It has now decided to pay off a further £10.2m (6.0%), which would further reduce the gate fee per tonne and consequently reduce the council's annual payments – by a total of about £10.4m over the remainder of the contract.