

District Councillor Update

1. **Coronavirus recovery** – The council’s attention is now on helping businesses and the local community to recover from the lockdown and no doubt you have seen some of the changes in market towns such as Harleston. This has caused some controversy. There is currently a consultation underway on the future of the Harleston changes.
2. A new “**Norfolk Fighting Fund**” has been set up by the County Council, District Councils and the LEP with nearly £7m to support recovery for businesses and local authorities.
3. **Planning White Paper** – The Government has issued a White Paper on the complete reorganisation of the Planning system. This could have huge impacts on planning and development in South Norfolk. There are potentially significant changes to how development sites are allocated and gain permission, including changes to public consultation, and there could be changes to the need for schemes to provide affordable housing. It is proposed that sites of less than 40 or 50 homes would not have to provide affordable homes, which would be a big change for our district. Of note, it could significantly impact the Greater Norwich Local Plan, which has been underway for several years, and it is possible this would have to be stopped and a new Local Plan process started.
4. South Norfolk / Broadland working together – **A new website** is under development for the two Councils.
5. **Housing Policy** – The Council has reviewed its housing policies and is updating them to be more focused on the needs of clients. The demands on the housing service has been increasing recently and is likely to increase further in the coming months, so it will be vital that we have policies in place to ensure those most in need get housed appropriately and quickly. Any increase in homelessness is a concern and it is hoped that the council can respond as needed and ensure we avoid this.

Brendon Bernard & Chris Brown

Councillors for Ditchingham & Earsham ward