**County Councillor’s Report to Lavenham Parish Council meeting on Thursday 2nd September 2021**

**20mph limit Lavenham**

Cabinet member for Highways maintenance Paul West has said I can see a copy of an informal report on this before he comments “informally” on it this month. I have asked Paul to clarify whether this is a final decision or not and what exact procedure officers are following. It turns out he is the Cabinet Member in charge of speed limit changes, not Richard Smith as I stated in my last report. This is despite the fact Richard Smith is listed as being Cabinet Member responsible for “speeding” and “road safety”.

**Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan**

This document was released in June by the ‘Suffolk Leaders Group’ (County, District and Borough Council leaders) as a follow up to the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership report of 2019.

This sets out broad goals for change in behaviours and technology to achieve zero carbon by 2030 by means of measures of: ‘transitioning to a fully decarbonised heat supply for homes; improving energy efficiency; behavioural change to use less energy; low carbon travel; reducing car use; more efficient freight transport; reductions in commercial and industrial carbon use; improvements in renewable energy production and a flexible grid’ among others.

I, with the backing of my political group, will be proposing a motion at the next Council Meeting to require the Council to set specific benchmarks and targets each year up to 2030 to encourage the modal shift in behaviour required as without this we believe that the targets set out, laudable though they are, are unlikely to be achieved in practice.

**Devolution for Suffolk without need for Unitaries?**

In the past the Government have insisted that they want Unitary Authorities with a Mayor before they will hand over extra powers to local government. However, a ‘levelling up’ white paper is to be produced by Government and Robert Jenrick MP (Sec of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) changes the strident tone. He has said that it is now not necessary to be a formal Unitary Authority to receive devolved powers but any authority will have to have a governance mechanism in place that shows District Councils and the County Council working together. Suffolk County Council and the districts have together expressed an interest in talking further with Jenrick on this. There is already a Suffolk leaders group in place which includes the CCGs and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Suffolk Biodiversity policy development panel**

I am on this panel and have attended its first of 8 meetings at which some basic terms of reference were agreed - including reversing biodiversity losses by 2030. I will try to ensure that goals and a strict timeframe are set so that progress can be checked.

The County funded Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service has suffered from cuts and I am keen that its work is re-invigorated rather than abandoned. We will be looking at the verge cutting regime, use of pesticides, use of county farm land, rewilding, planning and a host of other issues.

**ROBERT LINDSAY**

**SEPTEMBER 2021**