

Suffolk County Councillor report received by Acton Parish Council on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026:

For this week's meeting, I wish to report the following:

- **Suffolk County Council Conservative Administration Rejects Calls for Postponed Elections to take place**

We were gravely disappointed that our efforts as an Opposition were defeated in an extraordinary Full Council meeting on 19 January by 39 votes to 17, with 4 abstentions. Given the importance of the matter, it was concerning that only Conservative Cabinet members made contributions on behalf of the Administration, with Conservative backbenchers seemingly muzzled with no speeches forthcoming.

At the meeting, the Suffolk County Council Reform UK Group was unanimous in its contributions to debate and the final vote that elections should take place on 7 May 2026, as promised by the Government in 2025.

The Conservative Leader of Suffolk County Council will now write a letter to HM Government expressing concerns over capacity of the County Council to implement Local Government Reorganisation (one or three new unitary councils for the ceremonial county of Suffolk). The Secretary of State for Local Government will confirm election arrangements by the end of February. Their decision on one or three unitary councils for Suffolk is possible by mid-March.

- **Proposed Council Tax for 2026/27**

The Conservative Administration has proposed a statutory maximum 4.99% increase in Suffolk County Council's portion of council tax. This equates to:

- **Band B property:** £25.90 per week, an increase of £1.23 a week  
(Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- **Band D property:** £33.30 per week, an increase of £1.58 a week.

Full Council will debate and vote on the proposals on 19 February.

- **New 20mph Speed Limit Application Policy**

The Administration approved a leaner policy to implement 20mph speed limits across the county on Friday. I welcome this in principle, given I have had local speed limit applications rejected outside schools due to unnecessary local by-laws not existing in other parts of England. There should be no obstacles in such areas, and I'm pleased calls I made while serving in the administration have been addressed. I do, however, have concerns on the new policy:

- **Costly referenda:** unclear language on the necessity for a public referendum by local communities in meeting documents, although this was clarified by the cabinet member as a public engagement and promised this would be confirmed in the final written policy.
- **Self-enforcement:** costly highways modifications are often a roadblock for schemes by local communities and the draft policy was unclear on this. The cabinet member assured me at the meeting sign-only schemes would be permitted, where requested.