

County Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

July 2026

RAF Barnham	You will no doubt be aware that it was announced on Friday 26th June that the Ministry of Defence facility at RAF Barnham, near the Norfolk border with Thetford, is intended to be used to accommodate up to 1,250 asylum seekers toward the end of the year. From an operational perspective, the local response is being led by West Suffolk Council and I would particularly like to thank my District Councillor colleague Andrew Smith for his swift, visible, and proactive leadership in representing residents on this contentious matter. From Suffolk County Council's perspective, contact has been made with Barnham primary school to offer them whatever support is needed given their close proximity to the new site.
A143	Following the damage to the A143 during the May heatwave, Highways officers conducted twice-daily site visits during the recent hot weather in June to assess the state of the road surface. For the time being it remains structurally sound but has deteriorated in places, though it continues to remain open. Following the emergence repairs conducted in May, redressing of the road will take place between 1st – 3rd August. This will be at the expense of the contractor given the initial installation of the 'membrane' beneath the road surface last year was found to be defective. However it should also be noted that there will be further roadworks along the A143 from 13th July to 23rd November as part of the highways improvements associated with the Bloor Homes development in Stanton (specifically widening of the road, introduction of a new bus stop, new footpath, extension of the 30mph zone and a signalised junction). The A143 will therefore have two-way traffic lights with one lane open during this period.
CQC inspection	Adult social care services at the County Council received a rating of 'Good' when assessed recently by the Care Quality Commission ('CQC'); this is unchanged from the previous inspection. Committed and compassionate care staff were noted as strongpoints, but the CQC's report emphasised the need to improve waiting times to access services.
Local government reorganisation	The new administration at Suffolk County Council confirmed at a Cabinet meeting on Monday 29th June that they formally intend to launch a Judicial Review to the High Court over the decision to proceed with three new unitary authorities in Suffolk. This will be at a cost of £500,000 which will be met from (as yet undetermined) earmarked reserves. The timescales for this are unknown but will likely depend on whether the High Court believes there is a 'case to answer'.

Bus routes	Although we are waiting for final confirmation, the County Council has indicated there is sufficient funding for the 70 and 73 bus services to continue in their current form until April 2028. However there are still some areas without coverage, such as Hepworth, and this will be a focus of mine in the coming weeks. Whether there is sufficient funding for the 332 to be extended to Thetford will become clearer later in the year.
Armed Forces Day	Armed Forces Day commemorations took place at King's Meadow Recreation Ground in Stowmarket on Saturday 27th June, bringing together service personnel, veterans, families and the wider community to recognise the county's armed forces community. The programme included a cadet and Standard bearers' parade, a royal salute to HM Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk, the national anthem, and performances by The Vibettes, the RAF Honington Voluntary Band and the Honington Military Wives Choir. Attendees also visited local stalls and displays from Suffolk's Regular, Reserve and Cadet Forces, alongside family activities. Speeches from Cllr Darren Dordoy (Mayor of Stowmarket), Cllr Lorraine Baker (Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council), and Mark Pendlington, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk, highlighted the importance of the armed forces community and expressed thanks for their service. The event concluded with an AH-64E Apache helicopter flyover.

Cllr Harry Richardson

E: harry.richardson@suffolk.gov.uk

T: 01359 265089