

From County and District Councillor David Ritchie

Dear all,

Last month I reported on the governments proposed algorithm for calculating the annual number for new build dwellings for each district in the country. In East Suffolk this would require 1,660 houses per year rather than 916. They arrived at this number using household projections from the 2018 survey and the affordability ratio. The new thing is affordability. In areas where house prices are high and wages are low it would seem sensible to build more houses to bring down the prices and make it easier for young people to get on the housing ladder. However, this does not work for districts like ours with very extensive rural areas. House prices are high in the countryside because it is protected from development by local and national policy. We would like to keep it like that and I expect the government would too! They will have to revise their algorithm. At the moment it doubles the numbers for East Suffolk and South Norfolk, but reduces the number for Norwich! A case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing? They will have to change it!

As usual I have attached a report of the work of the county council last month. I would draw your attention to the letter from Matthew Hicks at the start of the attachment. He outlines the work that has been coordinated by SCC to protect the vulnerable in these difficult times. It puts us in a good position to deal as best we can with the future. Since that report was written we now have the announcement of a new lockdown from Thursday with businesses, once again, being asked to close. I am pleased to be able to tell you that there is to be more financial support for businesses of all sizes on the way.

In addition to the extension of the jobs retention scheme, more grants are to be made available to businesses which have to close in three bands – Rateable Value up to £15k – RV between £15-51k and RV above £51k. These grants will again be administered locally and details will, no doubt, be forthcoming from the Minister in the next few days. The Economic Development and Finance teams at East Suffolk Council will, I hope, do another excellent job in administering these further grants but it will doubtless be a few days before the schemes are up and running.

At the moment I am running a low fever nothing serious, and gastric rather than Covid. I am also fed up with all my meetings being on line. However, we all have to keep the show on the road. Much worse things happened for previous generations!

I sincerely hope that you are all keeping well.

Best wishes

**David Ritchie**

**One of your two District Councillors for the Bungay and Wainford Ward.**

**And County Councillor for the Bungay Electoral Division**