

Paul Gadd County Councillor Update

Saffron Walden Town Council 13/11/23

[Items in italics are left over from previous updates]

1. Education

- a. *[On my call in May 2023, ECC confirmed that they will exercise the option to acquire the school site behind Tesco which is part of the Linden Homes land. Their legal function seems to be under a lot of resourcing pressure at the moment, so I've chased to check that they are exercising the option in good time.][I will chase again later in the month for an update.] [Update 5/10/23 – ECC Education have confirmed that there are on track to exercise the option well in advance of the 12 February 2024 deadline, and are intending to do so.] Update 13/11/23 – I haven't heard anything more but will chase again next month*
- b. *[I've now spoken with Essex education regarding the shortage of nursery places locally, and they recognise that there is a real issue which needs addressing, and they intend to do so. They have been contacted by a possible new nursery provider and I am also talking to Cllr Coote in his capacity at the Bell Nursery; he is talking to Essex.] [ECC were going to contact me once they had updated figures at the end of July – I've chased.][Update 5/10/23 - Cllr Coote and I had a call with Essex Education in September; they said that they had no s.106 money for Saffron Walden, but it was apparent from the conversation that they weren't aware of recent house-building contributions, so we sent them the latest UDC housing trajectory list and some sample s.106 agreements showing that they do provide for Early Years Contributions, and asked them to update their records. I have chased and am waiting for an update;] Update 13/11/23 – I've had no response and have chased again*

2. Council Matters:

- a. ECC have launched their consultation on their waste strategy. Like their previous strategies, this one has an unambitious recycling target, adopting just the minimum targets required by law – I'm working with Georgia on a response. The Independent group at ECC proposed a motion at the October Full Council meeting to ask ECC to focus on recycling rather than incineration / waste from energy, but it was defeated;
- b. On the recycling centres, the ECC consultation closes on 19 November, so please participate if you haven't already;

3. Highways

- a. Dealt with separately through Planning and Transport Committee, but just to let everyone know that I have another 18 pothole allocation for the division (!), so please let me know if there are any bad ones – as ever, a what.three.words location and at least one photo please.

4. RAAC:

- a. As you will have seen, there are small amounts of RAAC in the library, which ECC hoped to have had dealt with by now. The timetable has moved slightly, but the works should be completed by Wednesday – I've cut and pasted below the latest update I've received:

“Further to my email last week I was advised yesterday that due to the height of the ceiling on the first floor being over 3.6metres contractors have started installing a scaffold cage above the stairs case to enable safe working on the hoarding which is delaying the works being completed as the additional work was taking longer than planned as we are also enclosing the ground floor entrance to the staircase to restrict and block public access. There is an additional door from the rear staircase that does not have a lock fitted, this will also be blocked up to restrict access, doors will have a coded lock fitted also.

The updated plan is for works to be completed by Wednesday. My apologies for this as we previously advised the library could safely re-open as of Monday however the hoarding has been rather problematic for securing in place due to the overall height and size of the opening, additionally not being able to secure into the ceiling has led us to put in place additional anchor points to avoid the RAAC.

The plan at this stage is for the library to reopen Thursday/Friday next week which is later than originally planned. The positive news is that the delay is due to the size of the space that the contractor is working in, rather than the problem being more extensive or additional unknown problems being discovered. The libraries team will keep library users updated.”