

District Councillor Report – Councillor Diana Garrod

Birdbrook Parish Council 3rd January 2019

Highway Concerns

In January I hope to have another one-to-one meeting with Jasmine Wiles; Assistant Highway Liaison Officer for Braintree District (Essex Highways). She has been very helpful in addressing issues in Sturmer and if Birdbrook have any ongoing issues, please feel free to discuss them with me and I will see if I can contribute to a satisfactory resolution.

Concerted effort by Essex council leaders to highlight housing issues

A letter signed by every Essex council leader highlighting concerns about families being re-housed from London into the county has been sent to senior politicians in the capital.

Agreed by the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group, the letter raises 11 issues which have been highlighted by housing officers across the county.

Issues include a lack of communication between London authorities and Essex councils informing them of people being moved into the area, families being placed in inadequate housing, and the impact on local services.

It also warns of cases where families have been moved far away from support networks such as friends, family and jobs, meaning their situation can actually worsen.

The Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group includes all 12 district and borough councils, Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock unitary authorities and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The letter, which has been sent to the Mayor of London and the leaders and directly elected mayors of each of the London Boroughs, also details some positive steps to resolve the concerns raised and also invites politicians on both sides of the county divide to work together to lobby government on related national issues.

Neil Stock OBE, Leader of Tendring District Council and chairman of the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group, said the actions of some of the London Boroughs had been despicable.

He said: "We understand why people want to come to Essex, which is a fantastic place in which to live, work and visit, and we don't want to stop people moving to the county. However, this needs to be in the right way and because people want to move here, not because they are being forced to or financially encouraged to by their London council as way of removing a problem.

"So far efforts by individual Essex councils to draw this to the attention of London Boroughs and the Mayor of London have largely been ignored, which is why as a group of leaders we have taken the decision to send this letter.

"We now hope that those in power in London sit up and take notice, and work constructively with us to resolve these issues."

Cllr Graham Butland, Leader of Braintree District Council, said: "We know the impact on Essex has been significant and together we support this move to highlight issues affecting the county. We've only had a small number of families placed in the Braintree District by London councils officially

however we do know that London councils do not always make us aware even though they have a requirement to do so.”

Please be aware of a Council Tax scam requesting bank details over the phone.

A resident in the Braintree District has been contacted by telephone today (3rd Jan. 2019) from someone claiming to be working with Braintree District Council. They requested bank details so they could refund an over payment of council tax.

THIS IS A SCAM and no-one from Braintree District Council would be telephoning customers in this manner. We would send a letter to the customer with a refund claim form.

We have also been alerted about another SCAM where people have been receiving calls from someone claiming to be from HMRC - again asking for bank details. Organisations should never ask you for your bank details over the phone so please be diligent and always ask them to send a letter.

Please share this message with your friends & family.