

## News from County Councillor Dr Marie Strong

### **Better Broadband for Stiffkey:**

Good news for Stiffkey Parish. There are 169 properties in Stiffkey. 164 are served from Binham cabinet 2 which is planned for a fibre upgrade as part of contract two. With the usual caveats such as difficulties with existing infrastructure the cabinet should go live by the end of 2016. The other 5 properties are served from Cley cabinet 1 but due to their distance from the cabinet, speeds will not improve. However as the current speed for these properties is less than 2 Mbps they will be eligible for the alternative technology Government scheme. I will endeavour to make contact with the residents of these properties and give them details.

### **Broadband Question & Answer:**

Some people have reported that whilst it has been verified that their house can receive fibre broadband their ISP (internet service provider) tells them it is only available to BT or only to BT for the time being. I know the former is incorrect and am informed so too is the latter. Whilst Some ISPs do not wish to offer fibre based services there are over 100 which do. The following Ofcom website provides links to comparison websites which shows which ISPs offer fibre broadband, the speeds and costs. Other than BT it includes ISPs such as TalkTalk and Sky.

<http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio/price-comparison/>

**Budget Consultation:** The county council's re-imagining consultation 2016-19 closed at midnight on 14 January 2016. Over 3,100 individuals, groups and organisations have responded making this one of the largest consultations in recent years. The issues highlighted have helped us to develop Equality Impact Assessments to assess how the proposals may impact on different groups and potentially vulnerable people - this and the consultation findings have been reported to the following service committees - Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Communities Committee, Environment, Development and Transport Committee. Summaries of all the consultation proposals can be viewed at: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/budgetconsultation](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/budgetconsultation). On the 8 February the Policy and Resources Committee will have met to consider the results of the consultation and the discussions from each of the service committees before recommending a budget to the meeting of Full Council on 22 February 2016 for final decision by all councillors

**Westminster and Mobile 'Phones:** On 19 January I went to Westminster where together with Norman Lamb MP and Andrew Wells, District Councillor for Glaven Ward, met with Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture and Digital Economy to discuss infrastructure for mobile 'phones (masts) and specifically MIP masts – designed to eradicate 'not spots', where not even emergency signals can be made and additionally they also provide coverage for any call by all the major operators. On your travels in the late spring you should find excellent signals around Horning and Sedgeford where there will be two new masts. Unfortunately proposed masts for Itteringham and Blakeney failed to meet the prescribed schedule. It was proposed that the Blakeney mast would have covered all or parts of Cockthorpe, Langham, Morston, Stiffkey, Saxlingham, Field Dalling, Letheringsett, Glandford, Salthouse, Newgate, Kelling, Cley-next-the-Sea, Wiveton. On the bright side the Minister, who is very disappointed that not all the masts will be developed, is talking with George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, as to a new way forward to eliminate 'not spots'; Norman Lamb will be adding to this conversation. I have asked the Minister for more details as to the information he requires in support of this project but in the meantime you can express your view at [www.norman.lamb.org.uk](http://www.norman.lamb.org.uk).

**New exhibition at Norwich Castle:** Not everyone knows that as well as libraries NCC is responsible for Norfolk's museums, the jewel being Norwich Castle. The next event at the castle is inspired by

Cressida Cowell's 'How to Train Your Dragon' books. Brush up on your Dragonese and head to Norwich Castle for this new family friendly exhibition – includes storytelling with Thunderous Thor, Viking activities, drama performances, film screenings, glitter dragon tattoos, dragon art and craft activities and a Chinese dragon dance workshop. With daily activities throughout the Half Term and Easter Holidays, youngsters will be kept busy and entertained.

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