**District Councillor’s Report : Nicola Fowler – February 24**

In my recent absence due to work commitments, my colleagues in the Labour Group of South Norfolk Councillors have been very busy and I would like to update you on what the Labour Group has been up to as an effective opposition.

**Budget**

Members of the Labour Group have met with senior officers of the Council to understand fully how the Budget process works. They have scrutinised the proposed Revenue and Capital Budgets in detail and made representations for amendments and additions. They are pleased to have had accepted some changes to the Budget to support residents in South Norfolk who are struggling financially and support departments within the Council to work more effectively.

The Budget has been reviewed by the Audit Committee, the Cabinet and the Scrutiny committee and it will be presented to the Members at a Council meeting on Wednesday 21st for agreement.

**Scrutiny**

After the election in May last year, the committee structure at the Council had to change to reflect the balance of the political parties now being represented. My colleague, the Councillor for Loddon and Chedgrave Jeremy Rowe, was elected Chair of the Scrutiny committee.

He is undertaking an overhaul of the committee so it is fully functional in the role intended for it of monitoring the effectiveness of policies and decisions that have been implemented. Providing constructive challenge to achieve better outcomes for residents.

As part of this, the Chair is encouraging Members to become more engaged with the process and is working with the administration as well to further understand how the Council works, if it is giving its best service and how it uses its resources.

Current subjects up for review include the Revenue and Capital Budgets, the Help Hub service and the move to the Horizon Building.

As part of this he would like to let Parish Councils know that they can make representations for decisions to be reviewed. At first this will need to be via an elected Council Member, but the Council is reviewing the rules to see if Parish Councils can make direct requests themselves.