

Appendix C – County Cllr. Penny Otton’s Report to Full Council

- COVID-19 Update - Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus
Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Virtual SCC meetings - SCC will be holding some meetings virtually. If they are public meetings, they can still be attended by members of the public. The link to the virtual meeting will be included on the agenda for the meeting. If meetings are cancelled, the Chief Executive will use her emergency powers to make any necessary decisions on behalf of the Cabinet/Council through the delegated decision-making process. Details of any decisions made will be published on the SCC website. I have been having regular meetings with the chief executive and group leaders to raise any issues and get updates from them. I have also held virtual meetings with the directors which has been extremely informative. I have to say that the staff at SCC have worked tirelessly dealing with all that has been thrown at them and still continuing to do their day job.
- Supply of PPE - Suffolk County Council are supplying emergency PPE to all primary care providers who are unable or struggling to source their own supplies.
More information on who is eligible to order PPE, and how to make an order, is available at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolks-response/personal-protective-equipment-for-frontline-workers/>
Questions about ordering PPE should be sent to PPE@suffolk.gov.uk
- Funding from Government - Suffolk County Council has received £34.7m from the government to help with the council’s coronavirus response. However, the council is currently forecasting that the financial impact of the crisis will be at least £56m (due to both extra expenditure and lost income) by the end of March 2021, and so more support from the government will be needed.
- Street closures to protect walkers/cyclists exercising outdoors - My group are encouraging Suffolk County Council to close roads that are used by residents to get their daily exercise, to ensure that walkers/cyclists can exercise safely and maintain social distancing. The county council have indicated that they are willing to consider these closures and have already closed Ipswich Waterfront to through-traffic for 3 weeks. If you have suggestions for roads that could benefit from a temporary closure, please let me know and I will pass it on to the Cabinet Member.
- Delay to review of Suffolk County Council boundaries - The Boundary Commission have announced that they will be delaying their review of Suffolk County Council’s electoral arrangements and division boundaries. The Commission was due to publish their draft recommendations and consult on them in May-July 2020, with the intention of implementing the new electoral arrangements (including a reduction in councillor numbers) at the 2021 local elections. Given the delay to the consultation on draft recommendations, the new arrangements will now not be implemented until 2025.
- Cost of post-16 Home to School transport increases by £90 - Plans to increase post-16 school transport were approved by the Chief Executive using delegated decision-making powers, because the Cabinet were unable to meet. The cost of mainstream post-16 school transport has been increased by £90, whilst the cost of post-16 transport for SEND students has increased by £30. This is despite the fact that a consultation on the proposed increase indicated that 75% of parents who responded felt that the increase would have an impact on them.
- If families are concerned about their ability to pay for school transport, they can apply for the 16-19 Bursary Fund which is managed by post-16 provisions and can support eligible disadvantaged young people by up to £1,200.
- Increase in social worker pay - Suffolk County Council has agreed to increase the pay of children’s social workers to match the remuneration offered by neighbouring councils, in order to attract and retain skilled social workers in Suffolk. It is estimated that the pay increase will cost £1.4m and will be funded from council reserves.
- I am pleased that the council has taken this step, because my group proposed this exact policy as part of our budget amendment in February.

- A14 Closure - following a meeting with highways England I have sent all clerks the info about the road closure which will be overnight from 11th May for 12 weeks. You will be contacted by them.
- Thurston Rail Crossing - I have agreed to join the meeting on 21st May, hopefully we may have some positive answers.
- Planning Application - DC/20/00608 - I have put in my objections.

Appendix D –

District Cllr. Harry Richardson's Report to Full Council

- £17m COVID-19 grant funding unclaimed by small businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk - Over £28m has been awarded to eligible small businesses, shop owners and leisure organisations in Babergh and Mid Suffolk since the launch of the Government's Small Business Grant and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants at the end of March.
- Green light for £2.2m extension at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre - Plans for a £2.2m development and refurbishment at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket have been given the go ahead.
- Online democracy in action - Mid Suffolk District Council today held its first planning meeting using virtual technology – allowing public meetings to continue safely despite the lockdown.
- Local community groups to receive over £64,000 in emergency funding - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have approved grants totalling more than £64,000 to support local communities in their response to COVID-19.
- Council rejects homes to protect Haughley's heritage - Mid Suffolk District Council today refused outline planning permission for 120 homes to be built in Haughley, citing poor connectivity and harm to local heritage.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk communities receive funding boost of more than £4.5 million Communities across Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been awarded Community Infrastructure Levy funding in excess of £4.5 million since the start of the year.
- Cyber cons capitalising on coronavirus crisis - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are urging vigilance against rising numbers of coronavirus cons, with over 2,000 online scams identified nationally in the last month alone.
- Council meetings to resume remotely - Council meetings for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are set to resume remotely following the Government's decision to grant local authorities' powers to meet and make decisions using digital technology to ensure public safety.
- It's gOasis for Mid Suffolk winter sports complex - Major proposals to build a £500 million snow centre, creating over 5,000 jobs in the area, have been finalised.
- Gateway 14 appoints Jaynic as development manager for new Stowmarket mixed-use business and logistic space - Mid Suffolk District Council's vision for Stowmarket has taken a major step forward with the announcement of a partner to deliver Gateway 14.
- Small businesses in Suffolk urged to access £200m pot of COVID-19 aid - Eligible businesses across Suffolk are being urged to access grants of £10,000 or £25,000 to help them through COVID-19 crisis.
- Further financial support for struggling households in Babergh and Mid Suffolk - Families already struggling with financial hardship are to be given further support to reduce their council tax bills, with letters due through the doors of more than 4,000 households in Babergh and Mid Suffolk over coming days.
- Joint statement on COVID-19 from Babergh and Mid Suffolk's political group leaders Although the political make up of both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils is varied and diverse, the resolve to work together to look after our communities, protect the vulnerable and safeguard our local economy during the COVID-19 pandemic is entirely the same.
- Businesses urged to access financial support and guidance during COVID-19 crisis - Businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk are being urged to find out what financial support is available to them as well as seeking advice and guidance in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

- Emergency funding pot available to help local community groups - Community groups and organisations can now apply for immediate grants of up to £2,500 as part of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' response to COVID-19.

Report from District Cllr. Cllr Wendy Turner to Full Council

- Decision making and committee schedule - At the beginning of the lockdown all meetings and briefings were cancelled. Now that new legislation has been adopted 'virtual' meetings are now able to take place. The first planning committee is to be held over Skype on Tuesday 28th April. The Senior Leadership team has been using emergency powers to make some decisions and there are regular online meetings and briefings with the group leaders and cabinet members. From the beginning of May there will be a reduced timetable of virtual Cabinet meeting and Overview and Scrutiny meetings. The Annual Council meeting which was scheduled for 18th May and will hopefully be held later in the year.
- Planning matters - Due to the difficulty of taking planning decisions to committee, the senior planners have catalogued all the major decisions in order to prioritise. Where there is a possibility of a delegated decision planning officers are discussing cases with ward members before deciding whether to take each case to committee.
- Community Infrastructure Levy - Developers are still liable for paying CIL contributions but a 3-month interest free delay is being brought in. The new CIL expenditure framework has been agreed by the Chief Executive using his emergency powers and the new bid round will begin on 1st May. The normal process for determining bids will continue as decisions on new bids is not due until September. The new expenditure framework can be found on the website:
<https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=571>
- Communities - Officers from other department have been seconded into the communities team to help with responding to calls for community support. Grants are available for communities with help to set up groups aimed at helping vulnerable members of the community and other action groups. Any funds which were remaining after the last round of Member Locality Grants were made available to help communities cope with the extra pressures of the COVID-19 outbreak. Locality grants have now been given to individual Councillors to award, a total of £7,350 each.
- Housing - Officers have been extremely busy attempting to house all rough sleepers as well as sofa surfers in order to reduce risk of virus transmission. Council houses falling vacant are not being inspected and repaired for reletting as 'moving to a new house' is discouraged by government at present. This is creating extra pressure. Achieving these actions has required the renting of two entire hotels in the district.
- Civil Parking Enforcement - The new legislation for Civil Parking Enforcement begun on 6th April. Babergh and Mid Suffolk enforcement is effectively contracted out to either Ipswich or West Suffolk Councils. There is a map on the website and further information about the powers of enforcement officers. <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/parking/civil-parking-enforcement/Enforcement> officers are dealing with both on and off-street parking offences but due to the current situation a common-sense approach is being used regarding fixed penalty notices.
- Waste collection - The Household Waste and Recycling Centres are all currently closed. Brown bin collection service has been suspended and all subscribers should have been informed as their payments are put on hold. Residual waste and recycling bin collections are continuing as normal.