

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

- Children’s Centres cuts given go-ahead by Scrutiny Committee - Following the Cabinet’s decision in August to close 10 children’s centres, my group joined forces with the Labour group to challenge this decision. Our challenge focused on concerns over the lack of financial analysis and the lack of clarity over the new outreach model. The challenge was discussed by the Scrutiny Committee on 11 September. Unfortunately, the majority of the Committee voted against our challenge and endorsed the Cabinet’s decision. This means that the planned changes to children’s centres in Suffolk will go ahead. I am still not clear how this will effect the number using the outreach service in Thurston library.
- Suffolk County Council decides to oppose Sizewell C - The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council agreed on 22 September that they can no longer support EDF Energy’s proposals for Sizewell C in their current form. However, the Cabinet maintained their support for the principle of a new nuclear power station in Suffolk. The Cabinet’s key concerns were regarding transport impacts, site design and the environmental impact on the Suffolk coast. The Cabinet also believe that the current proposals do not sufficiently avoid, minimise, mitigate or compensate impacts of the proposed development.
Considering the enormous number of issues I asked “why cannot SCC just say NO now”? I make so apology for including this as the impact on HGV,s on the A14 and increase in goods freight on the train line will be significant. These concerns will be submitted as Relevant Representations to the Planning Inspectorate. The final decision will be the government
- Financial impact of Covid-19 on Suffolk County Council budget - Suffolk County Council has published their Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report. This focuses heavily on the impact of Covid-19 on the council’s finances.
- The council is currently forecasting a net overspend of just £0.4m (0.1%) for the 2020-21 budget. The headline figures are:
 - Additional expenditure from core budget - £41.2m
 - £43.9m – additional expenditure and lost income due to Covid-19
 - Offset by underspend of £2.7m from non-Covid business as usual activity
 - Additional funding - £40.8m
 - £39.1m – non-ringfenced Covid-19 grants from the Government
 - £1.7m – additional funding from business rates
- Boundary review restarts with consultation on draft recommendations - Following a delay due to Covid-19, the Boundary Commission has restarted the boundary review for Suffolk with a consultation on their draft recommendations, which include a reduction to 70 councillors. Any boundary changes will not be implemented until the 2025 elections. I still believe, that with the huge increase in population due to the number of planning approvals the number should remain at 75. The draft recommendations and boundary changes are available to view on the Boundary Commission’s website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/suffolk-county-council> .The consultation on these recommendations will run from 15 September – 23 November and can be found here: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/18495>
- Suffolk County Council Planning committee - I attended this and whilst supporting the application for the car park and sports area I was very unhappy that despite me and the parish council asking for a traffic assessment for Ixworth road, I was told after that this was not necessary. I have had it confirmed that SCC will purchase land to enable the cycle route and footpath.
- Locality Fund - I have agreed to support Thurst café with some funds from this.

Appendix D – District Cllr. Harry Richardson’s Report to Full Council

- Annual Council Meeting - On Thursday 24th September Mid Suffolk District Council held its (virtual) Annual Council meeting, delayed from May due to Covid-19. At our Annual Council meeting we elected a new Chairman, Cllr Barry Humphries MBE, who will chair the Council until May 2021. In addition, we also approved a number of committee placements and outside body appointments, which by-and-large remain the same. After she stepped down as Chair, Cllr Lavinia Hadingham was subsequently appointed as Cabinet Member for Housing.
- Finally, the two substantive items on the Council’s agenda were the proposal to freeze fees for our sheltered housing residents, which MSDC approved, and to consider our response to the government’s new planning White Paper. I am pleased to say that the Council achieved a cross- party consensus in expressing our concerns

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about the proposed reforms to planning and have made our representations to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to register our opposition.

- Across the District more broadly there have been a number of new announcements in recent weeks and I have included summary of these updates below:
- Mid Suffolk communities to benefit from £227,000 funding boost - Housing growth in Mid Suffolk will fund a range of local projects – including railway station improvements, electrical vehicle charging points and new community facilities – following agreement by councillors recently.
- Recognition for Debenham’s plan for a bright future - Debenham Parish Council’s Neighbourhood Plan has been ‘highly commended’ as part of the virtual 2020 Planning Awards held on 9 September.
- Community invited to feedback on plans for Gateway 14 - Businesses and residents have been invited to feedback on plans for Gateway 14, a proposed mixed-use business park outside Stowmarket. Leaflets have been distributed to local households and a dedicated community engagement website has been launched to share draft plans and invite feedback from the local community. The deadline for feedback is 31 October 2020.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk welcome £100,000 government funding to tackle rough sleeping/homelessness - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been awarded £100,000, through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme. This is to help cover the costs of commercial hotels needed to provide accommodation and support during the colder weather.
- Chairman of Mid Suffolk donates to chosen charity - Mid Suffolk District Council Chairman, Cllr Lavinia Hadingham has donated £1,244.78 to her chosen charity, Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk, raised during her term as Chairman.
- New Chairman of Mid Suffolk chooses local charity - Cllr Barry Humphreys MBE, Councillor for Chilton, Stowmarket has been elected Chairman of Mid Suffolk District Council and has selected Stowmarket Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) as his chosen charity for the year.

Report from District Cllr. Cllr Wendy Turner to Full Council

- Annual Council meeting - The annual meeting was held on 24th September. Cllr Barry Humphreys was elected as Chair and Cllr Paul Ekpenyong as Vice Chair. The Committees and Chairs were all agreed, with the Chairperson using his casting vote to elect all the chairs from the Conservative and Independent Group except for Overview and Scrutiny which is traditionally chaired by a member of the opposition group.
- Government consultations on planning - There are two consultation about the future of the national planning system. The Council’s response to the first of these, about the proposed changes to the planning system was discussed at the September Council meeting. The response is to be amended by the Corporate Director in consultation with the portfolio holder for planning and the opposition spokesperson for planning before being submitted. The Council is also preparing a response to the planning white paper. This will be discussed by a cross party working group of members before being submitted.
- Public Realm - Cabinet discussed a review of the management of the public realm in September and decided to continue with an in-house team. The review occurred because Babergh’s contract with a provider is due to end in October 2021. Both Council’s Public Realm will now be managed in the same way in order to manage land more holistically to increase biodiversity in line with climate change ambitions.
- Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan - At the last Cabinet meeting Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan’s examination report was discussed. Subject to some minor changes this will now proceed to the referendum stage.
- Homelessness - Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils have been awarded a grant of £100,000 to help cover the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless people over the winter.

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- Stowmarket Leisure Centre/High School site - Officers are working together with representatives from Stowmarket High School to develop the school and leisure centre site to improve leisure facilities. Stakeholders from local sports clubs will be consulted in order to fully assess what is needed.
- Green Homes Grant - Launched on the 30th September, to improve energy efficiency within the home. This is a voucher scheme Find out more about the scheme Find out more about the scheme
- Locality Budget - There are funds available for groups or organisations that might need help. Please contact me if you know of any organisations that need funding.