

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

Plans to close children’s centres confirmed as consultation is launched - on Tuesday 16 July, the Cabinet agreed to press forward with plans to re-organise children’s centres across Suffolk. Of the 38 centres in Suffolk, two have been ear-marked for closure — whilst a further 13-19 could be “repurposed” as either early years or SEND provision. The remaining centres would become Family Hubs, providing a range of support to children and young people aged 0-19 and their families. However, a number of these Hubs would only be part-time. There is also a recommendation to focus on outreach services, although it is not yet clear what the budget for this service would be. This could impact on the work at the library.

The proposals will be consulted on by the county council in the autumn.

New model for specialist speech and language education - the Cabinet also agreed a new model for the provision of specialist speech and language education services. The model focuses on early intervention and diagnosis, by training early years and primary school staff to identify speech and language needs and providing a specialist outreach service to schools. For children with the most complex needs, a new “Communication and Interaction” education pathway has been established for children aged 4 to 16 years, consisting of specialist units and new special schools. This will replace the current speech and language units which only cater for 5 to 7-year olds.

Ipswich Northern Bypass consultation launched - Suffolk County Council, along with the district and borough councils, launched a consultation into the Ipswich Northern Route at the beginning of July. The consultation identifies three potential routes for the bypass, which will link the A12 and A14 corridors.

My group proposed a motion to stop further expense on this. I also don’t think that building a new road fits with the council’s declaration of a climate emergency and commitment to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

The consultation will run until Friday 13 September. You can find the consultation, along with further information, here: <https://ipswichnorthernroute.org.uk/>

Carbon strategy agreed - following the council’s declaration of a climate emergency in March, the Cabinet has now agreed a strategic framework for meeting its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. The report clearly states that in order to be effective, measures to cut carbon and mitigate climate change will need to be made across every department. It also includes a renewed commitment to become the Greenest County.

A cross-party policy development panel will begin in September, tasked with investigating how the council can meet its objectives and what investment is needed to ensure the council is carbon neutral by 2030. It is expected that the panel will report back to Cabinet in early 2020.

Pension fund begins to move away from fossil fuels - Suffolk Pension Fund has agreed to move £150m into a UBS Climate Aware World Equity Fund. Although a very small proportion of the £2.9 billion fund, this is the first step the Council has taken to move investments away from fossil fuels. This will be followed up by a valuation in November to check the performance of the fund, with the hope that a larger amount can then be transferred into the climate-aware fund.

Boundary Commission Review of County Division - my group have put in a submission stating that we wish to retain the number of councillors at 75 due to the increase in properties and therefore electors. Suffolk being a vast rural area. We did consider an increase in numbers but recognise the financial situation for local government.

Meeting regarding proposed developments - at the meeting with yourselves and Bloor homes I re-iterated the on-going traffic issues. The proposal at Ixworth road; reminded them of the changes to school transport which would increase the number of car movements around the college and school areas.

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

At our recent meeting on Thursday 27th June Mid Suffolk District Council approved the draft joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk, which will now proceed to a consultation period. This will run between July and September of this year and will enable residents, local business and stakeholders to express their views and to offer any feedback on the contents of the Plan. The Local Plan proposes a set of planning policies that will be used to inform decisions on planning applications and appeals. The Councils began gathering a range of evidence to inform the preparation of a new joint Local Plan during 2016, which has included studies on retail, economic land needs, housing land availability and housing market assessments. An early draft plan identifying broad issues and options was produced, and consultation undertaken during Autumn 2017. Following submission of more than 14,000 comments from over 1,300 people and input from both statutory consultees and a cross-party working group of Councillors, this preferred options Plan has now been developed.

The key points of the document include:

- A housing requirement of 10,008 new homes in Mid Suffolk between 2018 and 2036, which translates into a requirement of 556 dwellings per year in the District, in accordance with Government guidance based on published evidence;
- Prioritising new retail and town centre uses in the strategically important retail centres of Sudbury, Hadleigh and Stowmarket;
- A drive for 35% of homes in relevant applications for 10 or more dwellings to be affordable;
- A development approach that takes into account the long-term implications of climate change, including flood risk, water supply and biodiversity.

With regards to Thurston in particular, the parish has been designated as a ‘core village’ and so the Local Plan has subsequently fixed the settlement boundary and has not allocated any additional sites for potential development beyond those that have been approved or are pending. The impact of this in practice should therefore be to restrict any additional large-scale developments in future. Though the Plan may theoretically be modified, our expectation is that this will remain in place and will guide the Council’s approach to planning until 2036. Both Thurston Parish Council and residents may submit comments during the consultation phase from the end of July, and I would encourage them to do so. I have included the relevant page in the Local Plan, with the indicative settlement boundary, at the end of my report for your reference. I am pleased to say that the Local Plan enjoyed cross-party support and the Council voted unanimously to advance the Plan to its consultation phase; my sincere hope is that this consensus will continue when the Plan is finalised by the Council later this year.

I was also pleased to see that the Cabinet approved Thurston’s Neighbourhood Plan at their meeting on 12th June, which will now be advanced to a local referendum later this year. This is a significant achievement for which the Parish Council should be congratulated, and I would hope that the settlement boundary outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan will be reflected in the final version of Mid Suffolk’s Local Plan (the two are broadly similar but some distinctions remain).

In addition, the Parish Council (and indeed any other local stakeholders) may like to know that the District Council has commenced its Councillors’ Locality Awards for this year. The programme means that each Mid Suffolk councillor has a £7,350 pot that he or she can use to award to projects or organisations, including community groups and charities, that have a direct impact on Mid Suffolk communities. Applicants selected for an award must be able to demonstrate that their project, event or group meets one or more of Mid Suffolk’s Strategic Priorities and where relevant should be able to demonstrate its sustainability over the coming years. Applications must be submitted to ward members by 31st December 2019, and any prospective applicants should contact Wendy Turner or myself in order to receive the relevant form and/or ask any questions about the scheme.

As per my previous report, I have also been observing the progress of the outline planning application DC/19/02090 that was submitted on 30th April for the erection of up to 210 new dwellings on the land East of Ixworth Road. Given the size of this development this will be discussed at one of the Council’s two planning committees, but we have not yet been informed of the date for this meeting. On a similar note the emerging proposals from Bloor Homes for the erection of 200 new dwellings on the land South of Beyton Road will likely be submitted as an outline planning application in the first few weeks of July.

Appendix C and D – Minutes of 07.08.2019

Across the district more broadly there have been a number of new announcements in recent weeks now that the newly formed Administration has started to resume its normal work following on from the local elections.

A summary of these updates can be found below:

Women's Tour - On Monday 10 June, the OVO Energy Women's Tour headed to Suffolk for the Stage 1 race from Beccles to Stowmarket. The event, which sees the world's top female riders go head to head in stages across the UK, returned for its fifth visit to the county schools, businesses and residents across Mid Suffolk organising community events across the district to show their support for the riders. Details about the day, including where to watch the highlights and more can be found on the Women's Tour website.

Changes to recycling - The Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Gt Blakenham, where recycling collected from Suffolk households is sorted, will be undergoing a major refurbishment. This follows a new contract for the operation of Suffolk's countywide network of 11 Recycling Centres, and will result a state-of-the-art facility for Suffolk, with the latest mechanical and optical sorting equipment. During the renovation period, kerbside recycling will be collected as usual and will be delivered to other UK sorting facilities. Residents should note, however, that drink cartons (e.g. Tetra Pak) and metal pots, pans and trays will no longer be accepted in their recycling bin and instead can be recycled at all 11 of Suffolk's Recycling Centres. For a full guide of what can be put in your bins, please visit the Suffolk Recycling website.

Home-Start Charity Named as Chair's Choice - Cllr Lavinia Hadingham, Councillor for Fressingfield and newly elected Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council, has named Mid Suffolk Home-Start as her Chair's Charity for the year. Home-Start is a charity that recruits and trains volunteers who have parenting experience themselves and offer families informal, friendly and confidential support. Their work emphasises early intervention that prevents situations turning into a crisis. The charity seeks to empower parents to help themselves through the support of volunteers who have parenting experience themselves.

Councils' cutting-edge database shortlisted for Paperless Awards - Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Exacom database has been shortlisted for the Public Sector Paperless Awards' Big Data Project of the Year. The awards, that celebrate what can be achieved through digital innovation, announced their shortlist last week ahead of a national Awards ceremony in July. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Exacom database was shortlisted alongside projects from Dorset County Council, Westminster City Council and North Lanarkshire Council for the Big Data Project of the Year category.

Towns and Parishes get £290k CIL Boost in Mid Suffolk - Town and Parish councils across Mid Suffolk will receive a total of £289,114.30 of community infrastructure funding from the Council's CIL scheme. The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds were collected from property developers between 1 October 2018 and 31 March 2019 will provide a much-needed boost to town and parish councils and parish meetings in the and Mid Suffolk area.

New Electric Vehicle Charging Point come to Needham Lake - Motorists across East Anglia can now recharge their electric vehicles in as little as 30 minutes at one of a network of 11 new rapid chargers, installed along the region's strategic road networks. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are leading a Highways England funded project of seven local authorities, in Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex, working together to install rapid charging points along strategic roads in East Anglia, with one of the first now operational in Needham Market.

District Cllr. Wendy Turner’s Report to Full Council

Draft Joint Local Plan - The Draft Joint Local Plan is out for public consultation from 22nd July until 30th September. Some public consultation events are arranged around both districts. The most local one is to be held in Thurston New Green on 2nd September 2pm to 6pm. Other events may be organised, and details will be posted on the MSDC website, where you can make your response to the consultation. <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/features/have-your-say-on-our-draft-joint-local-plan/>

Five Year Land Supply annual position statement - A four-week consultation period for the annual position statement on the 5- year housing land supply runs from 19th July to 16th August. The statement claims that MSDC has a 5.6-year land supply.

Climate Emergency and Biodiversity motions at Council meeting - at the July Council meeting MSDC acknowledged a ‘Climate emergency’ and agreed to set up a cross party task panel to explore way to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The Green group also proposed a biodiversity motion so that the task panel also explores ways to promote biodiversity, particularly as the accelerating rate of species extinction is now a biodiversity emergency and will be compounded by climate change.

CIFCO annual statement and 2019/20 business plan - the Council noted the annual report from CIFCO which stated a £3.1M loss, which includes the one-off costs of acquiring the assets and an adjustment in valuation following the year-end revaluation. 6 properties have been purchased during this year and the total rental income is now the total annual rent to £3,119,558 (for both Councils).

The 2019/20 business plan is slightly different to the original plan, accepting a slightly lower return and less risky investments due to changes in the market. There will be less emphasis on High Street investments and more on commercial properties, for the second tranche of £50M (for both councils).

Equality and Diversity policy - the council adopted an Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure that MSDC complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Fake Council Tax Refund - both Ipswich and Babergh/MSDC issued a warning for members of the public to be alert to scams for council tax refunds being sent via text messages. The Council do not send texts messages for these types of matters. Please contact Trading Standards on 03454 040506 or Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 if you have been contacted.

Community Energy saving Schemes – to reduce CO2 emissions. Some ideas in the link below of agencies that may help with funding for any future community energy saving projects – i.e. new energy efficient heaters for the community spaces in Thurston (New Green) or vulnerable households. <https://www.buryfreepress.co.uk/news/get-help-with-your-big-idea-9077811/>

Zero Waste Week - now in its 12th year Zero Waste Week 2019 takes place September 2 – 6 and organiser Rachele Strauss is looking for organisations to sign up and play a part in this year’s campaign to help reduce the UK’s non-recycled waste and to rethink rubbish as a resource. <https://www.buryfreepress.co.uk/news/can-you-rise-to-the-challenge-9077813/>