

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

Suffolk County Council announces funding cuts to subsidised bus routes - Suffolk County Council has announced that 23 subsidised bus routes will no longer receive funding from the council, in a bid to save £340,000. The decision was made in February I spoke against this cut at the time, as well as other cuts that will affect bus users such as the decision to no longer print bus timetables. More details of which routes will be affected can be found at: <http://www.suffolkonboard.com/>

I have sent the list to all parish councils. The council say that they will be engaging with bus operators to determine whether the routes can continue to run without council funding. I will keep you updated if there are any further developments.

Cross-party call for independent inquiry into SEND services - On 14 June I signed a cross-party letter to the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, asking her to establish an independent inquiry into the provision of SEND services in Suffolk. This follows the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission reinspection earlier this year, when Suffolk County Council’s SEND services were deemed to have made insufficient improvement.

Reports that health visitor numbers will be cut - It was reported in the Guardian and Observer that Suffolk County Council is planning to dramatically reduce the number of health visitors in Suffolk in order to make savings. These plans have not been shared with councillors or the public yet, however the media claim to have seen internal SCC documents showing that the number of health visitors will be reduced by 25% through redundancies in order to save £1m. Health visitors would also have a reduced workload and only focus on the most vulnerable families, rather than all families in Suffolk. The rest of their current workload would need to be picked up by nurses or social workers.

Field of Dreams: I have asked whether they need a licence if selling alcohol and followed up the enforcement outstanding.

Final Council overspend on 2018-19 budget - the final outturn figures for the 2018-19 budget have been published, showing that Suffolk County Council overspent by £4.5m (0.88% of the budget). Key areas of overspend included:

- Home to School Transport (£1.7m), due to the increasing demand for out-of-county SEND transport arrangements;
- Adult Care Purchasing Budget (£4m);
- Early Help and Specialist Services (£4.8m), due to the increasing number of children in care, especially those requiring specialist placements.

These areas of overspend were mitigated by underspends in other directorates.

SCC releases breakdown of Upper Orwell Crossing spend - The final costs of the abandoned Upper Orwell Crossings project have been released and show that Suffolk County Council spent a total of £8.1m before deciding to not build the Crossings. Of this, over £4m was paid in fees to consultants.

More detail can be found at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-transport-and-transport-planning/Upper-Orwell-Crossing-Final-Report-on-Project-Costs.pdf>

SCC misses children's care plan targets in 75% of cases - The Department for Education has published figures showing that Suffolk County Council exceeded the legal time limit of 20 weeks for issuing new education, health and care plans (EHCPs) in 75% of cases in 2018. This means that hundreds of children were left waiting for the appropriate support and is a significant increase compared to 2017, when 53% of cases went beyond the legal time limit. Suffolk County Council has admitted that there needs to be rapid improvements to this process, and in the last few months it has managed to increase the proportion of EHCPs completed within the legal time limit to 42.5%.

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

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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.

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 - A preliminary copy of the draft Joint Local Plan was published as part of the papers for the Council meeting on 27th June. This is the Regulation 18 version and includes maps of allocated sites and settlement boundaries. It has now been agreed that the Draft Joint Local Plan will go out for a 10-week public consultation in July. Our amendment was passed to allow ward members to engage with the Planning Policy to make some minor changes to the settlement boundary and site allocations maps in the next week.

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/joint-local-plan-consultation-document/>

Page 266 contains the Map of Thurston

Councillor Locality Budget - Another round of Councillor Locality Budgets has been launched. Each member has £7,350 to allocate to community projects and groups in their ward. The closing date for applications is 31st January and any community group wishing to apply for funding needs to contact the ward member. The minimum award amount is £250 and any grant awarded must meet one of the Council's strategic objectives.

Bin collection day change - In order to optimise bin collection routes there will be some changes to bin collection days from July. The new schedule should be published on 1st July and the new routes will become operational week commencing 15th July.

Housing delivery test action plan - As part of the Government's housing reform a Housing Delivery Test has been introduced to monitor housing within local areas. The Council has to publish a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan because it was only meeting 81% of the target figure. Some of the recommended actions include better engagements with developers of stalled sites. This action plan was agreed by Council on 27th June.

Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan - Stowupland Neighbourhood plan held its referendum earlier on 6th June. The results showed a 92% vote in favour of the plan and it was adopted as planning policy by Council on 27th June. This is the fourth neighbourhood plan to be adopted in the district.

New directors for CIFCO - Three new directors for MSDC (Suffolk Holdings) Ltd. The directors are now Cllrs Gerard Brewster, Rick Meyer, Peter Gould and Paul Ekpenyong.