

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

Review of Suffolk County Council Boundaries – public consultation

The Boundary Commission have now announced that they will be looking to reduce the number of councillors at Suffolk County Council from 75 to 70. The next stage of the process is to determine where the division boundaries should be. There is a public consultation which will run until 2 December 2019, available here:

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/18495>

New process for requesting speed limit changes

There is now a new process in place for requesting speed limit changes. The local county councillor must act as a “filter”: all requests for changes need to come through them, and any individual or parish council who requests a change will be referred to the local councillor. The local councillor will need to persuade the officer group to support a request for a speed limit change. The group will then produce a report on the pros and cons, which the local councillor can comment on before the report goes to Cllr Mary Evans (Cabinet Member for Highways) for a final decision.

Sizewell C – response to Stage 4 Consultation

On 24 September, the Cabinet agreed a response to EDF’s Stage 4 consultation for Sizewell C. The Cabinet maintains that they support the principle of nuclear technology, but do not currently have sufficient information to support the proposals for Sizewell C.

My group (made up of Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent councillors) at the county council has called on the Cabinet to reject EDF’s proposals for Sizewell C. Our concerns include:

- EDF will be overcharging UK consumers for electricity from Sizewell for the next 35 years.
 - Impact on the surrounding natural environment, including the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB;
 - Impact on the tourism industry;
 - Additional carbon emissions and congestion from a road-led strategy;
 - Lack of planning for nuclear waste disposal;
 - Unsympathetic design to the surrounding natural area;
 - Additional pylons in an already crowded landscape;
 - Not convinced by EDF’s economic development argument.
- Interestingly **just a day after the cabinet meeting** EDF announced that Hinckley point was vastly over budget and over time

Local Industrial Strategy for Suffolk

It is expected that this Strategy will be presented to central government for approval in October. In September, the Cabinet gave its approval for a draft version of the Strategy. However, my group were concerned that the strategy failed to acknowledge both the current climate emergency that we are facing and the potential impacts of Brexit on Suffolk. We have written to with our feedback, which will hopefully be reflected in the final Strategy.

Delay to children’s centre consultation

Suffolk County Council has confirmed that there is “no firm start date” for the consultation regarding potential closures of children’s centres. Originally, the Council had stated that this consultation would start in September and run for 6 weeks.

Planning and Infrastructure

I will be at the meeting on 14th October, having asked why I was not informed about the discussion with Mid Suffolk on the rail crossing project.

I have had a few emails and photos from a resident complaining at site vehicles blocking the road. One however was a street cleaning vehicle, but it is essential any site management condition is maintained. This was raised at the meeting with highways late last month.

Home to School Transport.

There are still numerous pupils waiting for their bus pass, some have been given temporary ones. I am asking how many appeals have taken place and how many have been successful. Some of these will be officer decisions but many will go to the Transport Appeals Panel.

Appendix D –

District Cllr. Harry Richardson's Report to Full Council

At our recent meeting on Thursday 26th September Mid Suffolk District Council reviewed updates from Cabinet members regarding their respective portfolios. The reports themselves are available on the MSDC website but I have included a few highlights below for your information.

Mid Suffolk District Council, having already obtained its' five-year land supply earlier in the year, has increased its position to 5.61. This is a welcome development as it means that, as a result of planning applications already approved, we have met and exceed the government's target for housebuilding and so are under considerably less pressure to approve additional development, particularly on sites that are not identified in the draft Joint Local Plan.

We have continued with the Active Wellbeing Project, which last year supported 150 older residents to promote their physical wellbeing. This is a three-year programme and year 2 locations have now been confirmed: Debehams, Bidleston, and East Bergholt. In addition, we have also been working in partnership with Suffolk Artlink, Rural Coffee Caravan, and Dance East to provide social and physical activities for older, more isolated residents, particularly in rural areas.

Similarly, alongside West Suffolk CCG and East Suffolk & Ipswich CCG we are continuing the roll out of a social prescribing scheme in the District. This was first piloted in Stradbroke and Laxfield and, following a high uptake and positive feedback, this is due to be extended to Debenham and Eye, with further proposals to extend this scheme across Mid Suffolk in the near future.

The financial year-end position for MSDC for 2018/19 resulted in a positive variance of £3.462m against the planned budget. This was largely due to unanticipated additional income from business rates, planning fees, and CIL revenue, however, and so does not reflect under-spends in Council budgets. Initial data from April onwards suggests this trend is likely to continue, with a reported variance of £180k against the planned budget for Q1 of 2019/20, for similar reasons.

At the Council meeting on 26th September we also debated an opposition motion to increase the number of trees across the District. The principle of this initiative received cross-party support, however the details continued within the proposal – committing the Council to unfunded purchases of unspecified agricultural land – led to its refusal by a majority of Councillors (myself included). Instead, Cabinet members suggested that such proposals could be included within the remit of the working groups set up to support MSDC's net-zero carbon emissions target and to preserve our biodiversity corridors, given the considerable overlap between these pieces of work.

Across the District more broadly there have been a number of new announcements in recent weeks:

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Green light to transform Stowmarket Middle School into much-needed homes - Planning permission has been granted to transform the former Stowmarket Middle School site into 38 affordable homes for the town. At a meeting of Mid Suffolk's Development Control Committee on 18th September, Councillors voted to grant permission for the redevelopment of the site in Walnut Tree Walk, which has been redundant since the closure of the school in summer 2015.

Official opening for expanded Botesdale Health Centre - An official opening event took place on Monday 9th September for a new two-storey extension at the Botesdale Health Centre, funded in part by money raised by Mid Suffolk's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The expansion, which provides two new GP and two new health care assistant consulting rooms, a triage room and a training-meeting room, will enable the practice to better meet the demand for primary care services in the area.

Joint Local Plan consultation closes - thank you to all our Town and Parish Councils, and to all residents, who took part in our Joint Local Plan consultation. This has now ended, with the deadline for responses arriving yesterday (30 September). Our Strategic Planning Team will now be going through all of the comments received and considering how to amend the draft plan accordingly.

Recycling information at your fingertips -June's parish briefing included information about the renovation of the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Great Blakenham as well as helpful online links to find up to date information on recycling in Suffolk. With recycling included on the agenda for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September, and in line with our 2030 carbon reduction and greenest county ambitions, we have highlighted the key online resources available to our parishes and residents 24/7 when navigating the 'dos and don'ts' of recycling.

District Cllr. Wendy Turner's Report to Full Council

Trees in the district - the Green group proposed a motion for the Council to pledge to increase tree cover across the district, to work with communities to encourage the development of community woods and orchards and promote parish tree wardens. The Administration of the council voted against the proposal so it was not agreed, despite a climate and biodiversity emergency having been declared in July.

Planning Policy - the consultation period for the Joint Local Plan ended on 30th and officers will now be collating all the comments and considering how to amend the plan accordingly. Rickinghall and Botesdale's Neighbourhood Plan has been through the inspector and is now recommended, with some minor amendments, to go forward to a local referendum.

Treasury Management Report - full council discussed the Half Year Treasury Management Report at last month's meeting. To March 2019 CIFCO Ltd made a loss of £4.6M (split evenly across both councils). This is mainly due to the downward valuation of the company's investment properties. MSDC also made a loss of £1.5 on the Gateway 14 project as this is still in the early stages of development and has yet to start generating income.

Housing - Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building services are looking into creating a joint venture business case with Flagship Housing in order to improve the services for tenants.

Waste collection - the changes to the Waste collection rounds were discussed by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September. The main comments were made about moving personnel from one location to another, and the ability of the control room staff to handle calls efficiently. Hopefully lessons have been learnt and the Waste Collection rounds now seem to back to normal regarding the number of missed bins.

Needham Lake Visitor Facilities development - MSDC has plans to create new visitor centre at Needham Lakes. There is to be a public consultation event at Needham Market Community Centre on 10th October.

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It is hoped that the new facility will encourage more visitor to the Lake, and the council are seeking tenders for the management of the facility.

BREXIT preparations - MSDC is working with the rest of the Suffolk local authorities to prepare for the implications of Brexit at the end of October, to form some sort of resilience plan. This was discussed by the Public Sector Leaders Group last week.

Thurston Neighbourhood Plan - had a successful referendum, with the overall turnout of over 30% and the Yes vote being 824 (95.8%) and the No being 35 (4%). The Neighbourhood plan will go before full Council on the 24th of October for Adoption.

Affordable homes in Stowmarket – planning permission has been granted to transform the former Stowmarket Middle School site into 38 much-needed affordable homes for the town. At a meeting of Mid Suffolk's Development Control Committee on 18th September, councillors voted to grant permission for the redevelopment of the site in Walnut Tree Walk, which has been redundant since the closure of the school in summer 2015.

Jo Churchill - having written to Jo Churchill to find out why the Parish Council or myself were not included in her village walkabout in August she responded to my letter. She has written to the CEO of the Council expressing the concerns of the Thurston residents in regards to the large developments in the village. Jo Churchill has also asked Mid Suffolk District Council to co-host an event with herself, where residents of Thurston are able to question the council and planners.

Hopkins Homes - after receiving a complaint about lorries turning in Cloverfields, I've met a representative of Hopkins Homes to set up a direct line of communication between myself and Hopkins Homes in case further issues arise in the future. In the near future Hopkins homes will be sending out more leaflets to residents explaining a timeline of events.

Locality Budget - Locality Budget Awards have been granted to Thurston New Green towards upgrading CCTV, Thurston PC towards the proposed Gym Trail. More applications for funding have been sent out.

Thurston Railway Bridge - a meeting has been set up with the PC, District Councillors, Network Rail and Highways to discuss the issues and proposed solutions surrounding road safety with the increased development in the village.

Land off Beyton Road – Field of Dreams - Appeals have been submitted to The Planning Inspectorate by the appellants in respect of the enforcement notices – therefore the compliance date on the notices do not come into effect pending the outcome of the appeals by The Planning Inspectorate.