

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

- Suffolk County Council Budget - The Suffolk County Council Budget has now been presented to Scrutiny and to Cabinet and will be presented to Full Council on February 11th. Questions from the public must be submitted by 12 noon on Friday 5th February. Key points include:
 - This year’s budget strategy focuses on responding to COVID-19, delivering transformation savings, making use of the risk reserve for this year only to deal with one-off pressures, and looking ahead while continuing to adapt.
 - The net expenditure budget is £597.877m.
 - Basic council tax will be raised by 1.99%, the maximum amount allowable without a referendum.
 - The Social Care Precept will be raised by 2%, rather than the full 3% allowed.
 - £16.702m from risk reserves will be used to balance the budget.

The full detail can be found in the Cabinet papers from January 26th, 2021. Link:

[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(26-01-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(26-01-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

- LDGI Group Budget Amendment - The LDGI Group has constructed a Budget Amendment which will be submitted to Full Council on February 11th alongside the administration’s Budget. The key change proposed by the LDGI Group would be to authorise the use of the full 3% social care precept, unlocking the maximum available funding without impacting SCC’s reserves. This would generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household, freeing up general council tax funds to be spent on other projects and investments including:
 - £700k for establishing a COVID-19 grant scheme for Suffolk charities and arts & culture venues.
 - £500k for a solar energy scheme for Suffolk businesses.
 - £200k for creating an electric bike rental scheme for Ipswich and Lowestoft.
 - £500k to re-enable the use of concessionary bus passes on community transport and demand responsive transport across Suffolk.
 - £1m for a scheme to convert residential 30mph zones to a default speed limit of 20mph over four years where there is local support.
 - £15k for a citizen’s assembly on how Suffolk can build back better while recovering from the pandemic.
 - £75k to enable community reviews of highways signage in the local area.
 - £50k to expand the flood management team to ensure SCC is applying for all flooding grants it is eligible for.
 - A demand-scoping exercise on where demand is for bus routes, a priority list for where future routes need to be, and a feasibility study on establishing an SCC-owned bus company to serve rural areas if commercial bus companies cannot.

By opting not to take the full 3% social care precept, the administration is voluntarily giving up £3.452m of funding for adult social care that must be made up from the general council tax fund, meaning that worthwhile projects such as those above cannot be pursued.

- Streets Guide Consultation - Suffolk County Council is currently running a consultation on a new Streets Guide, which will assist designing streets for new residential developments especially by promoting walking and cycling. The consultation closes at 5pm on 10th February 2020. Parish Councils can submit responses at the link below:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/suffolk-design-streets-guide/>
- Beyton flooding on Thurston Road - following yet again days of excess rain which has cut Beyton off again I have asked John Clients, head of flooding to ensure the work will not be put back again. He has sent a detailed report why it was last time, but that’s obviously not our problem!
- Flooding: I have reported several problems in Thurston.
- Trees: after the tree falling down on Ixworth Toad I have asked SCC to investigate why this was allowed to happen having been reported that it was dangerous.
- Cycle Route: following a meeting on the new proposal this can go ahead without the loss of more trees.

Appendix C and D – Minutes of 03.02.2021

- NETWORK RAIL: I have sent 2 strong messages to Network Rail asking why no action has taken on the promised report to date I have had no response.

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

- Mid Suffolk District Council met for the first time this year on Thursday 21st January to consider a number of agenda items.
- The substantive items centred on the Council’s Treasury Management Plan, and our Strategic Asset Management Plan. The former sets out the key indicators that we aim to achieve for credit risk, liquidity, interest rate exposure, and maturity structure of borrowing. The Plan is agreed on a bi-annual basis, and all of our key targets were met for the previous six months.
- The Strategic Asset Management Plan has been developed to document the strategy the Council has for using and managing its land and buildings to support its strategic outcomes and priorities. It sets out the future vision of where the Council wants to be in terms of its land and property assets and maps out the journey required to achieve that vision over a five-year period, from 2020-2025.
- In addition, the Leader of the Council put forward a motion to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition of anti-Semitism. This motion was adopted by the UK government in 2016 and has since been adopted by the Scottish and Welsh governments, the London Assembly, and more than 120 local councils in England. Mid Suffolk District Council agreed this motion with 30 votes in favour and 0 against, with 4 abstentions.
- There have also been a number of initiatives launched in the previous weeks and so I have included below a summary of the major updates across the District:
- Additional Restrictions Grant reopens for businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk -
 - Business owners in Mid Suffolk are being urged to explore the range of Covid-19 support grants open to support them through the current national lockdown.
 - The Covid-19 business support grants cover different periods of national and local lockdown restrictions and are available to businesses with a rateable property who have been mandated to close as part of the national restrictions as well as those who have been significantly financially impacted by lockdown measures.
 - Mid Suffolk District Council have also opened phase two of the Additional Restrictions Grant, which unlike the other business grants, is a discretionary grant with criteria and eligibility set by the local authority.
 - The Additional Restrictions Grant is open to non-business rate paying businesses that are required to close such as mobile businesses or those who operate in a shared space as well as other businesses not required to close but who have seen a significant loss of earnings as a result of lockdown restrictions.
 - Businesses who received the national lockdown grant in November will automatically receive payments for the Tier 4 and current lockdown restrictions as long as their circumstances haven’t changed. Any business owner who believes they are eligible but have not been contacted, or who are yet to claim a business support grant, should submit an application form.
- Councils help combat holiday hunger - Food parcels, containing ingredients for five meals for a family of four, will be distributed throughout Mid Suffolk by the District Council in the February half-term. The box also includes recipe cards and links to online cooking tutorials, to help families prepare filling, tasty, and healthy meals. In addition to this, a bird box making kit and other activities to encourage families to get outdoors will be provided.
- Councillors to consider budget for 2021/22 - Councillors are set to discuss the first draft of Mid Suffolk District Council’s budget for 2021/22 – designed to deliver a healthy future for post-Covid Mid Suffolk. This will come first to Mid Suffolk’s Cabinet on 8th February and will then be considered by the full Council at the end of February.
- New Year, New Homes - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have invested more than £40m buying 230 new homes for low-income house-hunters. This multi-million-pound investment in social housing will see new properties added to their existing council house stock of more than 6,000 homes, or made available to buy as shared ownership homes – helping low-income families onto the first rung

of the property ladder. The purchases include 97 new-build homes from developments at Haughley, Stowmarket and Woolpit for Mid Suffolk.

Report from District Cllr. Cllr Wendy Turner to Full Council

- Housing acquisitions - MSDC has purchased 97 homes on new housing developments in Haughley, Woolpit and Stowmarket. These new homes form some of the S106 affordable homes contributions from these new developments. These will help to redress the loss of council houses which have been sold under the Right to Buy scheme. Work is currently underway building more council houses on both the Middle School site and the former Council office site in Needham Market.
- Waste services - A new awareness campaign to get Suffolk's recycling right has been launched. A leaflet explaining what can and can't go into recycling bins will be delivered to all homes, and this will be followed up with social media and press articles. Artwork is to be put on the waste tankers. More details can be found at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/news/new-recycling-campaign-aims-to-get-suffolks-recycling-right/>.
- Brown bin collections have been temporarily paused during lockdown to ensure that the Council delivers more critical services.
- Strategic Asset Management Plan - MSDC has approved and adopted a Strategic Asset Management Plan for 2020-2025. This is a document outlining how the Council uses and manages all the land and buildings in order to support the strategic priorities. The main objectives include generation of income, asset management and development of long-term housing procurement. This plan covers the Council assets, not CIFCO's.
- Treasury Management - The half yearly Treasury Management report was discussed at Full Council in January. There was full compliance with the CIPFA code of practice. The COVID pandemic has had effects on the global markets. MSDC's overall debt reduced by £6.5M due to some repayments being made on PWVB loans and short-term loans. CIFCO has recently invested £5.7M in a Basingstoke business centre.
- Anti-Semitism Declaration - Mid Suffolk Council has agreed to adopt the definition of antisemitism as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and pledged to combat anti-Jewish racism, in line with the Government ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January.
- COVID vaccination programme - A Suffolk wide webinar was held with officials from Health services for Councillors across the county to ask questions about the vaccination programme. Information is also available for members of the public. More information can be found at <https://sneevaccine.org.uk/> Council Officers are working with Woolpit Health Centre and David Wilson Homes to create space for a temporary carpark to enable Woolpit Health Centre to deliver vaccines more efficiently.
- School Road development in Elmswell - Outline planning permission for 86 new homes and land for a new pre-school in Elmswell has been approved. This development includes highways improvements at the School Road - Church Road junction, an off-road cycle cycle/pedestrian path along School Road as part of the link to Woolpit. The Oak Tree on School Road is to be preserved and a TPO is in progress.