

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

- Biodiversity strategy adopted - At Full Council on the 3rd December, Suffolk County Council unanimously passed a motion that will see Suffolk County Council developing a biodiversity strategy and embracing biodiverse land management practices. The motion was proposed by the LDGI Group and supported by all other groups. The motion will ensure:
 - Delivery of a biodiversity strategy that will set out how we could increase Suffolk’s biodiversity, halt the loss of habitats and species, and reintroduce declining species in suitable locations.
 - Assessment of how the council can lead organisations across the county in efforts to improve biodiversity.
 - Adoption of biodiverse land management options on council land.
 - A letter to the Secretary of State asking what further support can be made available to local authorities to enhance bio diversity within their areas.

“I’m really pleased that this motion has been met with such overwhelming support from the council. Our efforts can feel like a drop in the ocean, but by working together and listening to each other we can make a difference. Suffolk County Council has today taken another step on the path to making that difference. By working together, across political party lines, we can have a real impact.”

“Good biodiversity supports healthy ecosystems which protects our food security, cleans our air and water and enhances our lives in many ways. I would encourage everyone to do their part to support our native species, and I am thrilled that the County Council will now be doing the same thing.”
- Resisting the decision to reclaim local highways budgets - The Suffolk County Council cabinet will be reclaiming unspent Local Highways Budgets from councillors on the 31st of December. Local highways budgets can be spent by councillors in their divisions, on projects like new yellow lines, resident parking areas or zebra crossings. The LDGI Group has fought against this decision, arguing that the pandemic has increased delays to work which was already difficult to complete due to cumbersome processes and excessive red tape. Lockdown meant that officers weren’t allowed to go out and look at sites, and teams were overwhelmed by the amount of work caused by the pandemic. Some larger projects will not be ready to receive payment by the 31st. This reclaiming of the budget would not have become absolutely necessary until March, when the financial year ends.

The LDGI Group has been fighting against this decision, taking it to Cabinet and senior officers, as well as the press. Cllr Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Leader of LDGI Group, commented that the decision means that dozens of projects will now remain unfinished and local communities will not benefit from the money.
- Preparing budget amendments for 2021-22 budget - SCC is currently preparing its budget for 2021-22 and the LDGI Group has been preparing its amendments. My Group has chosen three key priorities for our budget amendment: Warm homes, Supporting community groups and charities through the pandemic, and Income generation & the climate emergency. We will be proposing multiple projects and policy decisions around these three key themes.
- Consultation on the Suffolk Climate Change Action Plan - SCC is currently running a consultation on its proposed Streets Guide, which will assist with the design of new residential developments showing how best to create sustainable transport layouts that promote walking and cycling. A new Street Guide has been commissioned to update guidance for residential streets. Comments on the draft guide are welcomed and there is a survey to complete. The consultation closes at 5pm on 10th February 2021.

Link:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-developmentadvice/suffolk-design-streets-guide/>
- Consultation on the Suffolk Climate Change Action Plan - SCC is currently running a consultation on the Suffolk Climate Action Plan. The consultation is running until January the 4th and you are invited to comment on the following areas:
 - Sustainable Buildings

- Large Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Transport & Air Quality
- Small Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Energy & Planning
- Community Action & Schemes

Link and further information here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/initiatives/pledge-to-climate-emergency-declaration/>

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

- Mid Suffolk District Council did not meet in December as per our usual timetable, so in lieu of a full report I have included below a summary of the major updates across the District:
- An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk - Regular bulletins are being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk’s Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins via the Suffolk County Council website.
- Support payments available for those told to self-isolate on low incomes - More residents on low incomes or benefits can now get financial help if they are told to self- isolate due to COVID-19 as Suffolk councils extend support payments to help more people.
- 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.
- Councils look to slash fleet emissions - Babergh and Mid Suffolk will consider proposals to cut their fleet’s carbon emissions by up to 90% – supporting the councils’ carbon neutral aims.
- Green light for Emergency Services Hub funding Mid Suffolk District Council recently approved £431,740 in funding from housing growth to progress plans for a shared Emergency Services Hub in Stowmarket – paving the way for collaborative working and enhanced 999 services.
- Voting safely at this year’s elections - On Thursday 6 May 2021, residents in Suffolk will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them at Suffolk County Council and who will represent them as the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner. The elections may be a way off, but we are already making plans to help residents stay safe while casting their vote.

Report from District Cllr. Cllr Wendy Turner to Full Council

- COVID-19 - The whole of Suffolk moved into Tier 4 on Boxing Day. This means we should all remain at home apart from essential activities. The Home but not Alone service was operational over the Christmas period and will continue to be available for those who need help. The phone number is 0800 876 6926
- Draft Budget and Housing Revenue account 2021/22 - The draft budget and housing revenue account for the coming year will be discussed by Cabinet in early January. The proposals include a 1.66% increase in Council Tax. The HRA proposals suggest that Council house rents are likely to increase by 1.5%. Sheltered housing service charges look set to increase by £1 per week, and both garage rents and sheltered housing utility charges are to remain at the same level. The Green and Liberal Democrat group will be discussing their alternative budget arrangement with officers over the next few weeks.
- Christmas Tree Re-cycling - All Brown bin customers can leave their Christmas Tree next to their brown bin for collection in January. For those residents who don’t have brown bin collections there

Appendix C and D – Minutes of 13.01.2021

are a number of drop-off recycling points across the district. Please check <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/waste-services/christmas-collections/> for your local ones and the deadline date for collection.

- Waste fleet - The Cabinets of both councils are to discuss the use of hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) as a fuel for the waste fleet. If this is agreed, it will mean up to 90% reduction in carbon emissions as it is using a waste product. Conversion of the tankers to use the new fuel is expected to be about £50k, but it should result in lower maintenance costs in the longer term, as well as helping the environment.
- Locality Budget - The deadline for applications for grants from the Member Locality Budget scheme has been extended to Friday 26th February 2021. Please contact me for further details and an application form if your group would like to apply for funding. <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/locality-awards-2020-21/>
- Housing numbers - The Minister for Housing and Communities issued a statement about housing numbers just before Christmas. It is confirmed that the number of new houses in Mid Suffolk will not be changed, so that the basis on which the JLP was written remains unchanged.
- Covid 19 Grants - Covid 19 business grants continue to be paid out, £777,624 of which has been paid to 527 businesses in Mid Suffolk. The Additional Restrictions Grant, which requires businesses to supply more evidence of the financial impact of lockdown has so far paid £114,000 to 63 businesses in both district Babergh and Mid Suffolk.