

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

- COVID-19 - Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/> .Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus. Vaccination Appointments can be booked here: www.sneevaccine.org.uk.
- Cabinet Meeting - The Cabinet met on 7th December and voted unanimously to approve additional investment in highway drainage and footway infrastructure. £10m has been approved to replace broken pipes, as well as new installations, and £10m has been approved to increase the maintenance of selected footways. The Cabinet also voted to approve Suffolk County Council’s new Housing Joint Venture. The Council wish to enter a contractual agreement with a private developer, aiming to deliver up to 3,000 new homes across Suffolk.
- Scrutiny Meeting on SEND Report - The Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the damning SEND report, which outlined the various failings of the local service in dealing with children with special needs and disabilities. A new report from the SEND services was presented, which included the progress of improving the service. This included extended training, newly appointed managerial posts, and new accountability structures to help deal with the issues outlined in the previous report. Our Group brought up issues of a lack of representation in their ideas and asked for a wider pool of representatives.
- Significant Investment in Firefighting Equipment - Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has recently added to its lifesaving kit – cementing the service’s commitment to protecting its staff and Suffolk residents. A significant investment has enabled improved digital radios, smoke hoods and smoke curtains to be provided to every crew in the county. This equipment can be used in a range of incidents, with it already proving invaluable in Lowestoft, when two occupants were rescued after a kitchen fire. Although crews are ready to attend emergencies with this new kit, it’s important that every home has its own lifesaving equipment – smoke alarms, which should be fitted and tested regularly. For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/significant-investment-in-firefighting-equipment-secures-safer-future-for-suffolk>.
- Free Bus and Taxi Services for All Travelling for a Vaccination - Stuart Keeble, the Director of Public Health at Suffolk County Council, expanded the ‘Vaxi Taxi’ service to all members of the public. The original campaign was for those who were strictly eligible, but the Council has opened up the offer to anyone who needs it, in order to get to their appointment for a first, second or booster vaccination. For a list of the taxi companies who have signed up to the scheme, please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/GetVaccinated - or for further information, go to <https://sneevaccine.org.uk/>.
- ‘Support Social Care’ Campaign - A new campaign was released in December aimed to help the public understand more about the Social Care sector in Suffolk. The campaign wants to celebrate the care professionals, and asks the public for a little patience and flexibility whilst the Council navigates through another tough winter. Every day, Suffolk receives 551 calls from people on adult social care, and on Christmas there will be around 1,200 care home staff working to ensure Residential and Nursing Homes have a good Christmas. You can support for Social Care on social media by using the hashtag #SupportSocialCare, or by offering to collect a neighbour-in-need’s prescription, or simply paying them a visit.
- Parish Noticeboards - I can put in an application to my locality fund when you have the full costs.
- Highways - once again the problem of the traffic lights. I’ll ask if the Meadow Lane ones can be removed.
- Streetlights, Ixworth Road - I have also queried the effect of the new streetlights on Cedar Close. Is this a MSDC planning issue or SCC Highways?

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

Appendix C and D – Minutes of 12.01.2022

- Mid Suffolk District Council – The Council did not meet in December, but I thought it would be useful to provide an update on the upcoming by-election. Wendy Turner formally resigned from the Council just before Christmas, and so a by-election has been formally triggered in the Thurston ward for Thursday 17th February, with nominations closing at 4pm on 21st January.
- 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:
- Blueprint for districts' future development to progress - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have welcomed a decision by Planning Inspectors to allow work on their Joint Local Plan to continue – meaning the councils can ensure the right developments happen in the right places at the right time. Public examination of the Local Plan, the strategic outline for future development of the districts, was paused earlier this year to allow the councils further time to review their evidence. An exploratory meeting was held with the councils and inspectors on Thursday (December 16) during which a proposed work programme was agreed that would see the councils have an adopted plan next year, helping to shape the future for Babergh and Mid Suffolk's communities.
- Work begins on carbon-cutting solar carport schemes - Works have begun on installing solar carports which will help power and slash the carbon emissions of two council-owned leisure centres - as part of council plans to tackle climate change. Phased works to install 70 solar carports at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket have now begun, with further works to install an additional 40 carports at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury due to fully start in January next year. The schemes form part of a £2.8m investment in solar at the councils leisure centres; with £1.4m in funding for the solar carports pilot, and a further £1.4m in funding to install solar panels and other energy saving measures on the leisure centre buildings.
- Freeport East passes major milestone - Freeport East has moved a significant step closer to fulfilling its vision. The outline business case has been formally approved by Government, the three tax sites in Felixstowe, Harwich as well as Gateway 14 have been agreed, published on GOV.UK and Statutory Instruments laid to enshrine them in legislation. The tax reliefs that will be available in the designated tax sites are Stamp Duty Land Tax Relief, Enhanced Capital Allowances, Enhanced Structures and Buildings Allowance, National Insurance Contributions rate relief and business rates relief. Freeport East will create a global trade hub, resulting in economic growth, bringing more jobs and prosperity to the region. In addition to the three tax sites, Freeport East will have customs sites at Felixstowe, Harwich, Gateway 14, Port One Logistics Park, Horsely Cross, Uniserve and PD Ports. The Freeport East partnership includes Hutchison Ports Port of Felixstowe, Hutchison Ports Harwich International, Harwich Haven Authority, Haven Gateway Partnership, New Anglia and South East Local Enterprise Partnerships, Suffolk and Essex County Councils, East Suffolk Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Tendring District Council.
- Councils urge National Highways to 'unblock Copdock' - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have submitted a joint response to a consultation by National Highways on proposed improvements to the Copdock Interchange – urging the creation of a new link road to keep business traffic flowing freely. The A14 junction 55 is a vital interchange for the region, linking the Port of Felixstowe with the Midlands and beyond via the M6 and M1, and Colchester, Chelmsford, London, the M25 and Stansted Airport to the south. As part of an informal pre-application consultation on potential improvements to the junction, National Highways sought feedback on two possible options: either improving traffic flow by widening the existing carriageway and introducing left turn lanes, or slashing the volume of traffic using the junction by building a new link road for traffic travelling between the A12 (South) and A14 (East). In their joint response, the councils back the new link road as the best way of tackling existing congestion and ensuring the efficient movement of goods from Freeport East, including Stowmarket's Gateway 14 - helping to ensure national, regional, and local economic prosperity and delivering the greatest benefits to the districts' communities and businesses.