

**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](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- Cabinet 1<sup>st</sup> March - The Cabinet met to vote on the disapproval of the current plans by Sunnica to build the country’s largest solar farm in Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire. Suffolk County Council have asked the Government to reject the plans in its current form, arguing the application fails to properly mitigate the impacts of such a large project.
- In addition, the Cabinet voted on approving the National Grid’s project to scale up its energy infrastructure from Bramford to Twinstead, as part of the Government’s Net-Zero plan to increase low-carbon energy in the UK.
- Full Council 24<sup>th</sup> March - Full Council presented a rare opportunity of solidarity between Councillors, as our Group and the Conservatives shared a single motion in support of Ukraine. Our Group recommended a motion condemning the actions of the Russian government, as well as commitment to supporting and welcoming refugees as they become a part of our Suffolk communities. The Conservatives supported our idea and together we showed how politics can be put aside through difficult times.
- Ukraine Refugees - I have sent all available details of what needs and can be done to help those offering a home to the refugees. There are still many issues to sort out including school places and home inspections, plus visas.
- Cabinet 29<sup>th</sup> March - The Cabinet met to vote on a plan to establish ‘Freeport East’. This is part of a national strategy to create freeports across the country, in an attempt to generate economic activity through tax incentives. Felixstowe Port, Harwich Port, and Stowmarket’s ‘Gateway 14’ Business Park are set to become part of Freeport East. Our Group is severely concerned with this project, as foreign direct investment is being prioritised over local businesses, many of which will now not be able to compete with the foreign businesses receiving tax relief.
- The Cabinet also voted on the Enhanced Partnership between SCC and bus operators, in line with the new Bus Back Better strategy, aimed at improving services across Suffolk. The improvement plan was voted for in October 2021,. Our Group have concerns on the Government’s promise of funding, as no funding has yet been confirmed by the Department for Transport.
- Avian Flu - I have circulated the details of the recent outbreak in Buxhall near Stowmarket and the area for exclusion.
- Network Rail / Thurston Crossing - I still have not had a reply from Christine Thurlow, but have been in touch with Steve Merry to see if he can get some response from Network rail.
- H- Marking on Barton Road - Have these been done yet? I have asked another SCC highways to try to get Ben Cook to contact me.
- Zebra Crossings - you will have details of the works to be carried out , any problems when it starts let me know.
- International Women’s Month, and Day 2022 – #BreaktheBias - In March, we celebrated International Women’s Month 2022. This is a time to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing achievements of women and push further for equality around the world.
- Our group was immensely supportive of this celebration. Suffolk GLI’s Spokesperson for Women, Cllr Caroline Page, called for the flag for Women’s History Month to be flown high next year at Endeavour House. Suffolk County Council agreed this was an important step forward.

**Appendix D**

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

- MSDC Meeting - Mid Suffolk Council was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> April. We discussed and agreed new standards for District Councillors, support for Ukraine and requested the use of hybrid council

meetings. A motion to use an approach developed by the New Forest Council on a toolbox to reduce carbon footprints was adopted.

- Peer reviews - MSDC underwent a peer review with the outcome expected next month. November's peer review of the planning department was published. Good performance was noted in many areas, however, a break down in trust between Officers and Councillors was noted. Meetings lasting 9 to 11 hours were thought to lead to poor quality decision. At least 10 recommendations were made in this report which included a pathway to rebuilding trust.
- Housing Revenue Account - Mid Suffolk District Council tenants have been selected to take part in a satisfaction survey during late March and Early April. Results available in May.
- Council Tax - MSDC is arranging for those eligible in bands A to D to receive their £150 central government payment, whether they pay by direct debit or cheque etc.
- Neighbourhood Planning - MSDC applied for to 'seek leave to appeal the Thurston judicial review into the granting of planning permission for 210 new homes off Beyton Road. The allegation that the planning committee had been wrongly advised on the weight given to the Neighbourhood Plan, which had not allocated that site for development, was upheld by the High Court. (this may be reading too much into things, however, the proposed site has been sown to spring cereal)
- Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) - About 200 potential schemes are summarised within this report which will have been submitted to cabinet on the 4<sup>th</sup> April. Most of the concerns relating to cycling within Thurston have been covered, including School Road and the shared path across New Green
- Ukrainian support - MSDC is still waiting for government guidance on how it will inspect homes of prospective hosts. SCC is responsible for all other aspects.
- Gateway 14 - Government has agreed to include Gateway 14 within the Felixstowe Freeport. Site development is on track.

#### **District Cllr. Austin Davies' Report to Full Council –**

- Climate Change and Biodiversity - This month Mid Suffolk published the first climate change and biodiversity annual report for the district. Over the last year, MSDC reached some significant milestones in achieving the ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and protect and strengthen our districts' biodiversity. These include:
  - Becoming the first rural UK councils to transfer our fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) reducing our emissions by 90%
  - Reaching the halfway mark of our £2.8m investment, thanks to Government grants, in solar at our leisure centres - this has seen over 1,000 solar panels placed on the roofs of council-owned centres to help power them with renewable energy
  - Being the first rural UK councils to commission a full tree canopy survey, as well as mapping of our existing and potential wildlife corridors, so we can ensure we're putting the right trees and measures in the right places to support net biodiversity gain
  - Installing a new water filtration system at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury, providing an energy-efficient way to clean waste pool water. If successful, it will be considered for the three other council-owned leisure centres across both districts
  - Launching several multi-million-pound grant schemes to improve the energy efficiency of homes in our districts, including most recently Warm Homes Suffolk
  - Hosting our first Local Energy Showcase, with 200 attendees from both community groups and businesses hearing from experts how they could cut their carbon emissions
- But there is still more to do, so over the coming year Mid Suffolk are hoping to:
  - Complete the remaining works to install 110 solar carports at our leisure centres, as part

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- of our £2.8m investment in solar. This will increase our number of EV charging points as well as help further power our leisure centres with renewable energy
- Apply for Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) funding to significantly increase
- our number of EV chargers in our car parks, by almost 30
- Publish the results and interactive map for our tree canopy survey, biodiversity wildlife corridor mapping, as well as a tree management strategy for the district
- Approve our first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to increase opportunities for active travel
- Compile a biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help reduce artificial lighting across our districts
- Relaunch our tree planting scheme for town and parish councils for it's second year, and re-open applications for our annual Tree for Life scheme which has gifted over 1,000 trees to new parents to mark a new arrival
- Consider, as part of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, the implications of the Government's Recycling and Waste Strategy once published
- Sustainable Travel - Pedestrian and pedal-power gears up next month, as councillors consider plans to improve the walking and cycling network across Babergh and Mid Suffolk in a bid to tackle climate change. At cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> April councillors at Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are set to approve their first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The plan sets out the councils' approach to improving and developing the local cycling and walking network across the district over the next 10 years, to support residents in shifting towards more sustainable transport. It identifies almost 200 potential infrastructure improvement schemes across the two districts. These have been prioritised according to a variety of factors such as effectiveness, policy, economic factors and deliverability. This prioritisation will be key to obtaining local, regional and national funding towards improving sustainable travel facilities and routes in the districts.
- Energy Bills - Residents, tenants and landlords across Mid Suffolk are being offered help to reduce the environmental impact of their homes, improve energy efficiency, and lower their energy use with a range of council support. "Low Impact Living in Suffolk" is a new campaign making it easier for residents to understand how to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and lower their energy use. Our homes are responsible for generating 20% of all UK carbon emissions, primarily through the heating and energy they use. There are many ways to reduce these emissions, with Low Impact Living in Suffolk sharing steps through the Green Suffolk website. Information is available to demystify the products, technology and grants that help reduce the impact of our homes on the environment and save money on increasing energy bills. Residents can find out their carbon footprint, look for green energy tariffs and compare new, more sustainable heating systems including ground and air source heat pumps, biomass boilers, heat recovery, hydro and wind electricity. Detailed information on solar panels, including buying schemes, water heating and electricity sits alongside up to date advice on recycling. Options for improving or replacing windows across properties that vary in age, materials, location, and style are also available. Anyone struggling to heat their homes can get expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and possible home upgrades through Warm Homes Suffolk website, offering funding and free advice. The scheme can offer eligible residents a range of home upgrades, including cavity, loft and external insulation, installation of solar photovoltaic systems and switching central heating to more efficient low carbon heat pumps.