

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

- Cost of Living help and advice: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>
 - Benefits advice and support: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>
 - Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>
 - Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>
-
- **Energy Developments** - At Council on 21 March, the council debated the impact of the various Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) planned for the county and voted that its strategic vision for the county would be to prioritise offshore rather than onshore coordination of schemes, undergrounding of cables rather than pylons, and protection of best quality agricultural land from solar development.
 - **Libraries Consultation** - On Tuesday 25 March, Cabinet reviewed the results of the recent consultation about the Suffolk library service, which is due to go out to procurement in the summer. Broadly, the members of the public who responded to the survey agreed with what libraries currently provided, including community and digital services, and the mobile library and home library services for people who were housebound. It is also likely that mobile libraries will run from smaller vehicles in future. The successful bidder for the new libraries contract is likely to be announced in November, with the new contract starting from June 2025.
 - **New Suffolk Business Board** - Suffolk County Council will be establishing a new Business Board made up of local business owners, representatives from councils and other organizations to take over LEP functions such as deciding how future government funding for growth should be used, to undertake mentoring of small businesses and building skills in the workforce. The council has been advertising for local business owners interested to be part of the new Board in the last few months, and the transition from the LEP to the new arrangements is due to complete in August 2024.
 - **Growing Biodiversity** - At Cabinet at the end of February we heard about the council’s new responsibilities for planning and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (or increase) from April 2024. This means that developers must protect natural habitats or compensate for the loss of it when they build – for example, if a woodland is destroyed by a road, they need to create another one, either onsite or elsewhere, or enhance the natural habitat onsite so that the effect of the development is to increase nature rather than decrease it. This has been introduced to try and combat the biodiversity crisis in the UK; since 1970 UK wildlife species have declined by 19% on average, with near one in six species threatened with extinction. For more information about the new scheme, please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>
 - **Update on SEND Investment** - Cabinet on 27 February also reviewed the new £4.4m investment in SEND services the new funding will be used to increase capacity and recruit to extra roles in the SEND service, particularly around clearing the back of EHCPs and annual reviews. Since the poor SEND inspection report was published, the council has worked with health to create a priority action plan which was submitted to Ofsted/CQC on 7 March. communicating the children, young people and their families to reduce dissatisfaction, and working with providers of services for social,

emotional and mental health and neurodiverse conditions to improve outcomes in these areas for children with SEND).

There has also been a recent announcement that Suffolk County Council is set to receive an additional £10.9million to create new specialist school places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in the county.

You can read the priority action plan here: <https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/asset-library/suffolk-priority-action-and-improvement-plan-final.pdf>

- **Water Management in Suffolk** - At Scrutiny Committee we heard how despite the wet winter this year, East Anglia is considered a Serious Water Stressed Area by the Environment Agency. By 2050, the demand will be 2538MI/d (mega litres per day) but the amount available will be only 1700MI/d. This will affect water bill prices - and limit economic growth in the region, as although housing developments are always guaranteed a water supply, this is not the case for commercial/industrial developments. The report included plans to preserve water or generate new supplies, including reducing water company leaks, two new reservoirs in South Lincolnshire and the Cambridgeshire fens, plus a small new reservoir in North Suffolk, and an increase in water transferred around the region. The councillors were very concerned about the likelihood of water becoming scarce in the county in the near future, especially as the public seemed unaware. They talked about how the profile of this issue could be raised to prevent people using too much water. It was noted that Essex and Suffolk Water had already declared a moratorium for new industrial/commercial connections to the supply in the Hartismere area of mid Suffolk.
- **Public Consultation on Suffolk Devolution** - Following an extensive informal engagement period throughout January, February and early March, Suffolk County Council's formal consultation for the proposed Suffolk Devolution Deal was launched on 18 March. The consultation and associated materials have been informed by feedback received during the engagement sessions the council held with staff, local businesses, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organizations, county, district and borough and town and parish councillors. The public consultation will run for 10 weeks (closing on 26 May) and has been designed with the help of advice from the Consultation Institute. Once the consultation has completed, the analysed results will be presented in detail to Cabinet in summer 2024.
To read about the proposals and fill out the public consultation survey, please visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>
- **Consultation on Suffolk's next Local Transport Plan (LTP)** - Another Suffolk County Council consultation which has recently been launched is for the next version of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan. The LTP sets out a long-term vision for transport in Suffolk and covers key themes such as decarbonisation of transport, strengthening the local economy, promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion, and creating better-connected places that encourage a range of transport choices. Many people's travel habits have changed over the past few years and since the Covid pandemic, so it is an excellent time to refresh the plan. Public feedback will help Suffolk County Council to draft something new, which will be subject to further consultation later in the year. Learn more and complete the LTP consultation survey: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/ltp4>
- **New EV Funding** - Suffolk County Council has been awarded a £7.3m investment for Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure following successful bids to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver charging infrastructure for residents who do not have off-street parking. Suffolk residents without off-street parking will benefit from £5.9 million to support EV charging, and a further £1.4 million will be used to develop the county's existing EV charging network in community locations. Suffolk residents are invited to 'nominate' their street for consideration for on-street charging points with this online form: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/requestchargepoint/>

- **Ixworth Road** - following my heated discussion with the cabinet member at last there seems to be some action.
- **Flooding Meeting** - at the meeting in Beyton with the affected parishes Beyton has engaged the services of an expert for advice on how the volunteers can assess the ditches and what would need to be done to stop future flooding. This also included landowners where they have diverted water courses which appear to have exacerbated the problem.
- **Network Rail** - I have asked why we have not had an update meeting and what were the results of the survey
- **Suffolk NSIPs** - Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are major infrastructure projects of national importance, and the majority of Suffolk's NSIPs are associated with the generation or transmission of electricity. The decision to allow an NSIP to proceed is made by the relevant Secretary of State, not councils, although the county council is a statutory consultee for many projects. There are a high number of projects in Suffolk currently, with more in the pipeline:
 - East Anglia Three offshore windfarm is under construction
 - Two new offshore windfarms, East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two, were approved by the Secretary of State in March 2022
 - EDF began construction of Sizewell C nuclear power station in January 2024
 - National Grid are proposing grid reinforcement works from Bramford to Twinstead, with a decision expected later this year
 - National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury stretch of the 'Great Grid Upgrade' programme, a controversial pylon route through the middle of the county
 - LionLink (previously known as Eurolink) proposes undersea cabling to link the UK with the Netherlands, with landfall proposed either above or below the Blyth estuary.

Appendix D - District Cllr's Report to Full Council – Cllrs. David Bradbury and Austin Davies –

- **MSDC Meeting** - Mid Suffolk District Council meeting in March had a presentation and discussion on the proposed devolution bill with a new role of 'Mayor of Suffolk'. It is currently unclear how this new position would work and whether it would bring new funds to our county or just redirect existing moneys.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy** was reviewed and approved for the coming year (Cllr Bradbury was appointed to the committee) as was the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. Our council continues to focus our services and network with other agencies to minimise the number of cases.
- **Planning** - MSDC case on the Gladman appeal was heard on 30th January, however, the decision has not been announced. Further details and information has been requested by the planning officer and so the target date has been re-set as either the end of April or early May for applications DC/23/02429 and DC/23/02430.
- **Network Rail** - Still no sign of the final report which was due by the end of November.
- **Thurston** - BMSDC Chief Executive Officer was escorted by Cllr Bradbury on a tour of the village which involved visits to the various developments, the railway station with its Barrow crossing. Arranged for a meeting to be held at the Parish Offices with the strategic Planning Officers. The objective being to have a clear agreement that any future developments meets the needs of our community.
- **Locality grants** - we have now been able to support Norton village hall. All funds have been allocated before this financial year end. This link gives the detail for both Cllr Bradbury and Cllr Davies.
<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/msdc-locality-awards-27-march-2024>

Briefing Note for town and parish councils – from Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils -

[Mid Suffolk named UK Council of the Year at prestigious awards ceremony](#)

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have taken the top honour at a prestigious local government awards ceremony.

[Upcoming elections and referendums](#)

The next election within our district is on Thursday 2 May, and deadlines to register to vote, apply for a postal vote and get appropriate voter ID are fast approaching. More details about this election, including relevant links and information about all deadlines can be found [on the council's website](#).

[£3.8m pledged for energy efficient council homes](#)

Work to make council homes warmer and bring down energy bills for tenants across Babergh and Mid Suffolk received a £1.6m boost in government funding during March. The funding is to be added to the £2.25m already committed by the councils to install energy saving measures in social housing, taking the total investment pledged for retrofitting and decarbonising to £3.85m across both districts.

[Councils pledge further help to prevent homelessness](#)

More than 1,500 households at risk of homelessness have been helped to keep a roof over their heads by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils since 2019, with both councils pledging further support as part of their joint homelessness reduction and rough sleeping strategy.

[Council wants clarity from developer over major solar farm proposal](#)

Mid Suffolk District Council says a developer must provide more clarity around its plan for a 'nationally significant' new solar farm in the district.

[Grid reinforcement can't come at any environmental cost](#)

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have formally objected to National Grid's plans for more electricity pylons between Bramford and Twinstead – saying the impact on the countryside is too great.

[Cash injection for local community projects](#)

More than £510,000 is set to be reinvested into Babergh and Mid Suffolk communities thanks to funding collected from developers.

[Planning application submitted for new distribution hub at Gateway 14](#)

A planning application has been submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council to construct a 44,000 sq ft distribution hub at Gateway 14, Stowmarket, for a major supplier of eco-friendly construction materials.

[Cancer conman caught as part of councils' crackdown](#)

A former tenant who pretended to have cancer to try to con his way up the council housing list is amongst the fraud and corruption tackled recently by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, according to an annual report.

[Mid Suffolk's community spirit inspires 'Musical Memories'](#)

Months of musical workshops came to crescendo in Stowmarket during March, after a long-running partnership between Mid Suffolk District Council, national charity Orchestras Live and a renowned professional orchestra.

Fun for families over the Easter holidays

There is a wide range of activities on offer for children during the Easter holidays in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Works underway to create Changing Places facilities in Stradbroke

Works to create fully accessible toilet facilities have started at a council-run leisure centre, as part of work across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to improve facilities for those with additional needs.

New Suffolk campaign urges drivers to switch their engines off

A new campaign urging Suffolk's drivers to switch off their engines when parked is running across the district.