

## District Councillors' Report – March 2024

MSDC Plan	<p>At the January Council meeting, the priorities for Mid Suffolk District Council were agreed. There was extensive consultation to ensure a wide range of views were taken into account. The core of the plan is putting environmental and social responsibilities at the heart of everything we do, “helping to create thriving and resilient communities in Mid Suffolk”. This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housing and infrastructure</li> <li>- Resilience</li> <li>- Community wellbeing; and</li> <li>- Environmental sustainability.</li> </ul> <p>A key principle is to work collaboratively with communities.</p>
MSDC 2024/25 Budget	<p>The budget for 2024/25 is due to be discussed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. This includes a 2% council tax increase to ensure financial stability for day to day services in the wake of shrinking government grants.</p> <p>A financial reserve has been built up over the last eight years and this will be spent on areas to benefit Mid Suffolk residents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bringing disused land back into use for amenity or other uses</li> <li>- Land for biodiversity and to meet Biodiversity Net Gain</li> <li>- Stowmarket town centre regeneration</li> <li>- New foot/cycle paths to improve connectivity</li> </ul> <p>In the housing budget, in order to be able to fund improvements to the Council’s housing stock, it is proposed that rents increase by 7.7% (in line with the Government formula – CPI+1%). Many tenants receive housing benefit or universal credit and due to recent increases in the rent portion of this, the majority of tenants will not see an increase in rent.</p>
Gateway 14	<p>The proposed Green Skills and Innovation Centre business plan was approved by Council subject to funding from Freeport East.</p>
Stowmarket Sports Health and Leisure Facility	<p>At the Planning Committee meeting last week this Stages 1 and 2 of this project were approved. The initial part of the work providing new and improved Rugby and Cricket facilities and Multi-use games area will start this year. Stage 2 will provide a new sports pavilion and Sports Hall. The new Wellbeing Hub was given outline approval.</p>
Local issues	<p>National government is introducing a requirement for nationally standardised recycling and refuse collection. This will include kerbside collection of glass bottles and jars. Although not required to be implemented until March 2026, kerbside collection could have an impact on the income earned village halls from bottle banks. We are therefore raising this now in case there is a wish to consider advanced planning.</p>
Locality Award	<p>My locality budget for the year is now fully accounted for. I am pleased to have been able to contribute to a range of projects in the ward. As well the ditch at Forward Green this has included a new Multi use games area in Crowfield, support to ensure the survival of the football club and a new speed indicator in Stonham Aspal, and replacement of flood damaged equipment for the Debenham First Responders, who cover a substantial part of the ward.</p>