

# District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

December 2020

Joint Local Plan	Following extensive debate at the Council meeting on 11 <sup>th</sup> November the Joint Local Plan has now gone to the planning inspectorate for consideration. The Regulation 19 pre submission version of the plan is available on the website [ <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/</a> ] and any comments are to be made direct to the planning inspectorate before 24 <sup>th</sup> December.
CIL Charging schedule	The Council has proposed new CIL charging schedule. The changes to the rates are hoped to encourage more development on brownfield sites and the proposed changes to the instalments policy hope to strike a balance between helping the small developer and ensuring that parish councils receive their funds in a timely manner. The proposed changes are subject to public consultation and details can be found on the website [ <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-and-section-106/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-and-section-106/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/</a> ]
Homelessness	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils have been awarded a grant of £100,000 to help cover the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless people over the winter. In Mid Suffolk there are currently only a couple of people sleeping rough. Many others became officially homeless at the start of lockdown and have been accommodated in hotels. This will need to continue for some months at least.
CIFCO acquisitions	Three further properties have been added to CIFCO's portfolio. These new acquisitions are two warehouse buildings in Luton and an office building in Epsom. This now takes the total investment to about £70M out of the total agreed figure of £100M which was agreed by both Councils last year. The Green and Liberal Democrat group at Mid Suffolk continue to question the administration about the continuation of this investment program especially in light of the recent Government decisions about the use of funds from PWLB.
Biodiversity Action Plan	A Biodiversity Action Plan, produced by a cross-party task force, was adopted by MSDC Cabinet on 9 November. The aim is to improve biodiversity in the way that the Council operate, through specific initiatives and partnership working. One such initiative is to plant 500 trees and a kilometre of hedging during 2021/22. The task force will monitor the Action Plan and look for initiatives for increasing biodiversity.
Further COVID support	Further grant funding for businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk has been announced as part of the Government's Covid-19 support packages which include the recently launched Local Restrictions Support Grant. More information and application details can be found on the website [ <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/</a> ]. The deadline for applications is the 18 <sup>th</sup> December.  The Home but Not Alone phone line will remain open. The number of calls is currently quite low, so its use will be monitored.
Leisure centres to re-open	Mid Suffolk's leisure centres in Stowmarket and Stradbroke are set to re-open on Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December at the end of the national lockdown. Suffolk will be in Tier 2 of the new Government restrictions scheme.
E-voting at Council meetings	Electronic voting was used for the first time at Mid Suffolk's Council meeting on 26 <sup>th</sup> November. A motion to publish how all councillors voted was passed in order to keep decisions as open and transparent as possible. A record of each vote at all Council and Committee meetings will be published with the minutes on the website.
New enforcement powers	The Council has new enforcement powers against businesses breaking COVID rules. It is hoped that this does not have to be used as any initial approach will continue to that of support and encouragement rather than taking action to close premises for 48 hours.

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