

District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

February 2023

Budget Proposals for 2023/3	<p>Current proposals for next year's budget include a council tax freeze for residents. There will also be a reduction of up to 100% for residents with the lowest income and a simplification of the existing Council Tax reduction scheme for residents on Universal Credit. The net costs for providing services is set to rise by 41% and the Cabinet have suggested that our surplus will be reduced.</p> <p>Despite the difficulties of the most vulnerable, MSDC are . to increase housing rents by 7% to meet the rising costs of the Housing Revenue Account. This is less than the rate of inflation.</p> <p>The proposed budget will need to be agreed at Full Council on February 23rd.</p>
Planning matters	<p>The application for a fuel station and drive through restaurants on the A1088 roundabout was refused by planning committee. This application has gone to appeal for non-determination, but the decision of the committee will determine how the officers defend the appeal.</p> <p>The reserved matters application for 65 affordable homes to the west of the Bacon Factory was granted at the same committee meeting.</p>
Housing issues	<p>MSDC referred themselves to the Regulator of Social Housing because there were found to be some issues relating to health and safety compliance. The RSH reported their findings and will continue to monitor the Council's housing until the issues are resolved. An action plan has been agreed to ensure that our housing becomes compliant in a timely manner.</p>
Gateway 14	<p>Construction of a state-of-the-art distribution unit for garden and leisure products retailer The Range is officially underway at Gateway 14. There was a ground-breaking ceremony last week. Gateway 14 Ltd hopes to provide a new base for manufacturing, logistics and R&D businesses with a particular focus on innovation and sustainability at Gateway 14 as well as providing innovation space for smaller and start-up businesses that will boost the local economy and attract investment into the region.</p>
Houses for Homes	<p>Babergh an Mid Suffolk aim to reduce the number of long-term empty properties. There are currently almost 600 empty homes across both districts. Houses for homes is a re-branding of the service in the hope that people will engage better with the Councils to bring these homes into use.</p>
SHELF project	<p>MSDC Cabinet have approved the next phase of the business case for the Stowmarket wellbeing and leisure hub. Since the initial plans were drafted last year the project now intends to include a new sports pavilion, a multi-use games area, four indoor sports courts and a multi-agency wellbeing hub.</p>
Elections in May	<p>The local elections are taking place on 4th May. The pre-election restriction period will begin on 23rd March. This year for the first time voters will need to bring photographic ID when they attend a polling station to vote. Details of the types of ID which are acceptable can be found at https://www.babergh.gov.uk/elections/voter-id/ . Residents who do not have any form of acceptable ID need to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate or they can apply for a postal vote.</p>

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