

District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

January 2025

Budget updates	Proposals for the General Fund budget were approved in December's cabinet meeting, and discussed later on in the Overview & Scrutiny committee on the 19 th December. This shows the council's finances to be surplus, unusual for District councils, in part due to expanded housing developments and income generated from Gateway 14, with these surplus funds being used to proceed with the Mid Suffolk Plan. Key figures include an increase of £1.689m in net revenue service expenditure, a £2.660m increase in gross expenditure, no increase in council tax from 2024/25, and a capital budget of £29.986m in 2025/26.
CIL Expenditure updates	New updates regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy programme were discussed in by cabinet. This includes approval of half a million pounds of investment into the Stowmarket Health Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF), and £188k of funding for Thurston Community College.
Devolution White Paper	The White Paper regarding devolution was published in December, which despite not mentioning Suffolk directly, strongly suggests a change to the two-tier local government structure. This could potentially suggest one or two Unitary Authorities covering Suffolk, abolishing district councils. The paper also includes the use of introducing a "Strategic Authority", which is likely to include a Mayor for both Suffolk & Norfolk.
National Planning Policy Framework	Changes have been made to the National Planning Policy Framework to assist with the Government's housebuilding plans. This includes mandatory housebuilding targets for councils, with a priority on brownfield sites. The new plans have sparked both praise and backlash, with concerns over the role of individual councils. Mid Suffolk's portfolio holder for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure Cllr Andrew Stringer has commented on the new proposals. Statement in response to Government's National Planning Policy Framework announcement - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk
Locality Budgets 2024/25	Reminder that we are still welcoming Locality Budget applications from local community groups. Do get in touch with either of us to discuss options. Information and application forms are available on the website: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/locality-awards
Eurogarage service area A1088/A14 junction	Concerns have been raised regarding the signage for the new service station at A1088/A14 junction. The totem signs were refused planning permission last month, but seem to have been erected anyway, and there may be other planning breaches. Drivers are turning the wrong way into and out of the service area. BMSDC and SCC Highways expect to issue a Breach of Condition Notice and stop notice this week.
Councillor drop-in sessions	Jen and Sarah hold regular drop-in sessions, at either Teacups Café, Woolpit or Wesley Café, Elmswell. We are not meeting in December. The next session is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Thursday 13th February 10 – 12 at Teacups Café

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