

## District Councillor Report: Onehouse Ward - March 2025

<p><b>February Council meeting - annual budget</b></p>	<p>The Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February approved the council's annual budget for 2025/26. Details can be found here: <a href="#">(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Mid Suffolk Council, 27/02/2025 17:30</a></p> <p><b>No increase in Council Tax:</b> The council tax bill for a Band D property remains at £175.03. That works out under £3.37 a week to cover all district council services, including waste collection, licensing, planning, public realm and supporting the local economy, culture and communities. (Council Tax overall is expected to rise, however, as MSDC only sets and receives a small portion, with the bulk going to the County Council, plus Police and parish precepts.)</p> <p><b>Capital programme agreed:</b> The Council committed to a capital programme of £36.3m (£26m committed, with another £10m proposed 'capital ambition' projects), partly funded from reserves.</p> <p>Among other things, expenditure includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investment in sports and health facilities in Stowmarket and Stradbroke</li> <li>• investment in the new Skills and Innovation Centre</li> <li>• £1.5m fund to support High Street regeneration in Stowmarket</li> <li>• £300k per year funding pot for projects in other market towns and rural communities</li> <li>• investment in cycling and walking infrastructure</li> <li>• an increase in the Locality Award to £10,000 per Ward,</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local Government reform</b></p>	<p>The government has announced major changes to the way local government is organised. This includes the creation of new mayoral authorities, and the combining of District and County Councils into unitary authorities.</p> <p>In January, Suffolk County Council voted to apply to the 'fast track' version of these changes. The government accepted this, resulting in the cancellation of the May 2025 County Council elections.</p> <p><b>Mayoral authorities – the government has opened a consultation until April 13<sup>th</sup>.</b> To share your views, see: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation</a> It is clear there will be an election for Mayor of Suffolk + Norfolk in May 2026.</p> <p><b>Creation of unitaries:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial plans are to be sent to the government by 21st March 2025.</li> <li>• MSDC is concerned about the lack of public consultation on this aspect of the reforms.</li> <li>• An Extraordinary meeting of Mid Suffolk and Babergh Councils to discuss the issues was rescheduled from Feb 10<sup>th</sup> to April 10<sup>th</sup> to allow more time to review emerging details.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Planning Policy updates</b></p>	<p>Joint Local Plan (JLP) for Babergh and Mid Suffolk is being reviewed, to make sure it stays compliant with the government's increased targets for housebuilding and end date 2044. The timeline for this work was approved at the February Council meeting. Further information can be found here: <a href="#">babergh-and-mid-suffolk-joint-local-plan-review</a></p> <p>The Cabinet member for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr Andrew Stringer, has highlighted the importance of Neighbourhood Plans, which form part of the District's local plans.</p>
<p><b>Funding for community projects</b></p>	<p>Details of Mid Suffolk Council's community funding can be found at: <a href="http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk">www.midsuffolk.gov.uk</a> – click on the 'Access community funding' button.</p> <p>For advice or further information, please email the grants team at: <a href="mailto:BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>

Councillor John Matthissen  
councillor@matthissen.net

07976 308128