

District Councillor Report: Walsham Le Willows

March 2025

Mid Suffolk District Council Budget	The Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) meeting on 27th February approved the council's annual budget for 2025/26. No increase in Council Tax: 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.) Fees and charges held at 1.1% A major capital programme was agreed: The Council committed to a capital programme of £36.3m in 2024/25. This will deliver an ambitious pipeline of projects across the district. Among other things, expenditure includes: - Investment in sports and health facilities - Investment in land for biodiversity, public access and flood alleviation - Regeneration activities in Stowmarket - Refurbishment of leisure centres - Major investment in the new Skills and Innovation Centre - Funding for projects in other market towns and rural communities - Investment in cycling and walking infrastructure - An increase in the Locality Award to £10,000 per Ward - Revamp of our recycling facilities - Investment in temporary accommodation - Ongoing support for range of other grant schemes to fund community projects
Local Government Reform	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. In January, Suffolk County Council voted to apply to the 'fast track' version of these changes and requested that elections be cancelled. The government accepted this, resulting in the cancellation of the May 2025 County Council elections. Mayoral authorities – the government has opened a consultation until April 13th. To share your views, see: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation Creation of unitaries:

	- Initial plans are to be sent to the government by 21st March 2025. - MSDC is concerned about the lack of public consultation.
Planning changes	The Joint Local Plan (JLP) for Babergh and Mid Suffolk is being reviewed, to make sure it stays compliant with the government's increased new targets for housebuilding. The timeline for this work is as follows: • Scoping and participation stage, including minimum four-month notification of plan commencement – March 2026 to July 2026. • Plan visioning and strategy development including first public consultation –August 2026 to March 2027. • Evidence gathering and draft the Plan – April 2027 to December 2027. • Second public consultation, proposing changes and submission of the Plan –January 2028 to June 2028. • Examination of Plan including additional three months for Main Modifications– July 2028 to March 2029. • Adoption – April 2029.
Mid Suffolk Magazine	The District Council is producing a regular Newsletter called the Mid Suffolk Magazine to highlight some of the activities of the Council. The first issue has just been sent to all households in the District.
Simonds Bus Service	The new timetable for Simonds 73 Service came into force on Monday Feb 24th. The bad news is that: • this is a reduced service versus what we had a year ago • the bus no longer comes through the village • there is no publicly funded option for students travelling to Thurston The good news is that the expectation is that this new timetable will be viable, and we shouldn't be in crisis mode again in 12 months' time. We were very close to losing our bus service completely.

Cosy Homes

The Cosy Homes scheme allows residents to get a free assessment and installation of insulation measures up to £5k. This installation process uses the latest environmental and building standards to ensure some of the horror stories about faulty insulation are not repeated. The scheme is just being expanded to include solar panels.



Make your home a little cosier

Mid Suffolk
cosy Homes

Save energy, money
and reduce your
carbon footprint

Upgrade your
loft or cavity
wall insulation

Apply for a
FREE Mid
Suffolk
Cosy Home
installation
worth up to
£5,000

If your home has a EPC D rating in Council Tax Bands A-D and you have an annual household income below £80k and less than £40k in savings.

Mid Suffolk
DISTRICT

Apply at www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/cosyhomes

