

District Councillor Annual Report: Walsham Le Willows

May 2026

Recycling update

The new recycling regime is due to start in June 2026.

Mid Suffolk currently only recycles 42% of waste and is not in the top 150 Councils in the UK.

This is the biggest change in recycling in decades, and the plan is to move recycling rates into the above 60% range.

The delivery of new bins ready for the rollout of Better Recycling has now started. This means the delivery of a new blue recycling bin and the new food caddy and food recycling bins.

The bins are:

Food waste

Green recycling bin – paper and card

Blue recycling bin – glass, plastics, tetrapaks i.e. non paper recycling

Black bin – refuse bin

The planned schedule will be as follows:

Collection	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Food Waste			
Refuse general rubbish			
Paper and Card			
Recycling glass, plastics, metal and cartons			

Planning system	Mid Suffolk's housing target has increased from 535 per annum to 734 (an increase of 37%). If you include a 5% buffer this amounts to a requirement of 15,414 for the period from 2024 to 2044, although 5,475 of these are in the current identified supply. <i>Owing to the change in government housing targets it is vital to create a development plan that meets government targets or we end up with a planning free for all which is what happened 5 or 6 years ago.</i> As part of this process the Council carried out a call for sites. The published map of all sites submitted during the Call for Sites exercises. https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites Note: This is not a list of preferred development locations. Publication promotes transparency and ensures communities have early visibility of what has been suggested. No planning status is granted by submission. Sites do not benefit from any presumption of development. Submissions will now be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria. Further communication of the plan stages will follow.
Council Housing	Mid Suffolk has c.15% of Council Houses that do not meet the Decent Homes standard. We are planning to invest £19m in our Council Housing stock this year alone. Mid Suffolk was successful in obtaining a £1.5m government grant to supplement the £2m already committed by the council to install energy saving measures in social housing. This work not only helps lower income households by delivering warm and energy efficient homes, but also lifts tenants out of fuel poverty by helping to save money on energy bills. Work is well underway to tackle the 100 council properties with the lowest EPC (energy performance certificate) ratings by adding a range of improvements, including cavity and loft insulation, new windows, PV panels and air source heat pumps. The Council has also built about 250 new Council houses in the past 3 years.

Stowmarket Innovation Gateway	Construction work on a state-of-the-art skills and innovation centre at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket has now been completed. New clients will be moving in from July 2026 and a set of training courses is about to be launched. The purpose of the centre is address the skills gap in the district and to encourage high tech companies to locate here.
New fund for sports facilities in rural areas	A £1.5m fund for Sports provision outside of Stowmarket has been established. The aim is to develop sports infrastructure in a rural areas of Mid Suffolk, outside of Stowmarket, by exploring upgrading or extending existing sites, as well as opportunities for new sports provision or facilities.
Temporary accommodation	Demand for temporary housing in Mid Suffolk rose by over 100% since 2020 and there are currently over 60 households in temporary accommodation in Mid Suffolk. Mid Suffolk propose to increase the acquisition of temporary accommodation in Mid Suffolk by up to 30 units. This is to provide better standard accommodation and save the Council money on temporary accommodation.
Pylons	National Grid's plan for more pylons in the Suffolk countryside should be halted, leading councillors from Mid Suffolk District Council have told a public hearing (11 February). National Grid proposes 159km of new overhead lines between Norwich to Tilbury, with the route cutting through the Suffolk countryside. Mid Suffolk has called for a delay to the project so other options can be considered and costed – such as an undersea route or undergrounding of the entire length of the project. They cite serious concerns about the impact on the environment, communities and businesses. This is consistent with the position taken as under previous governments.
Nature recovery budget	Mid Suffolk District Council has allocated a budget of £1.8m to support nature recovery. This covers: • Grant funding for communities • Grant funding for river catchment and landscape • Habitat creation, management and monitoring on new sites • recovery • Pond creation and restoration • Tree planting • Meadow management • Public engagement and awareness / Schools programme

Funding for study to resolve on-going issues at Thurston station	Mid Suffolk District Council has allocated c. £500k of CIL funding to Network Rail to produce the options to resolve the issues with the need for passengers to physically cross the railway track at Thurston station.
Stowmarket high street investment	Mid Suffolk District Council launched a dedicated £1.5m fund, and associated framework, to support a thriving Stowmarket high street and town centre area Funding has been recently agreed for £615k towards the John Peel Centre and £125k for the Community Darts Venue including a darts retail area
Cosy Homes	Cosy Homes is an energy efficiency initiative dedicated to making private sector homes in Mid Suffolk: • warmer • more economical to heat • more environmentally friendly Residents need to meet certain criteria but any works are carry out for free. The initiative aims to help residents in the district improve the energy efficiency of their home - which will help them save on energy usage and reduce their carbon footprint. The Cosy Homes scheme has been extended to include solar panels as well as insulation measures.
Solar for Business	Businesses can reduce their carbon emissions and save money on energy bills by signing up to have solar panels provided and installed on their premises, for free. Electricity generated by the panels is then sold to the business at a rate lower than their current tariff, helping to slash energy bills and improve their bottom line. Solar for Business has been running successfully in West Suffolk for nine years – helping more than a hundred companies to save a total of around £700,000 and 2,000 tonnes in harmful CO₂ emissions per year. The initiative has now being extended, with businesses across Babergh and Mid Suffolk also able to sign up to the scheme.

Elmswell / Woolpit cycle way and footpath	This is a £3.5m project is funded via CIL and S106 working with Suffolk County Council's Local Cycling Walking team. This project will link the two villages which share key services and infrastructure such as Elmswell Railway station, Woolpit Medical Centre, Woolpit Business Park, village halls and sports facilities. Due to Elmswell Primary School being at capacity, Woolpit Primary School will be providing schoolplaces for some Elmswell children in the future. It is therefore essential for a safe walking/cycling route to be built between the two villages
New REACT team now live	The two-person "respond, enforce and clean team" - or REACT – has been set up to patrol litter hotspot areas in the Mid Suffolk District Council area. It will be funded by £360,000 from the council-owned Gateway 14 development. Introducing REACT operatives mean reactive cleansing incidents, such as fly tipping, and our scheduled work,aren't competing for resource and time. According to the latest figures released by Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), local authorities in England dealt with 1.15 million fly-tipping incidents last year, an increase of 6% from those reported in 2022/23. In Suffolk, there were a total of 4,099 incidents of fly tipping reported in 2023/24. In the area of Mid Suffolk District Council there were 399 reported incidents, with the majority of them being on highways.
Food Museum in Stowmarket receives £3.9m from the Heritage Lottery Fund	The Food Museum is now able to start a £5.5 million project thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Mid Suffolk District Council. The ambitious scope covers conserving and developing three historic buildings - the barn, the factory and the house and linking them together to create a coherent visitor experience. A good museum significantly benefits a town by boosting tourism, enhancing the local economy, fostering community development, and contributing to cultural enrichment.
Mid Suffolk budget and Council Tax	Mid Suffolk Budget Scope In addition to the day-to-day provision of the current services and current activities the 2026/27 budget includes further funding for: • Major implementation of food waste collection and better recycling • Enhancements to our current depot in readiness for Better recycling • Further support for recycling education • Cost of living support and Council Tax Support scheme • Support for our towns and rural communities outside of Stowmarket in the wider District • Support for sports and leisure facilities in the wider district • Sorting out various long standing property issues in the District • Communities Infrastructure projects • Leisure centre maintenance • Stowmarket sports facilities - SHELF Project

	• Support for Stowmarket regeneration • Support for the Cosy Homes scheme which has been expanded to offer solar panels • Funding for the Reach Retrofit Hub to be an advice centre for the district • Grant funding for nature recovery and community biodiversity groups • Support for new footpaths and cycle ways • Completing the build of the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway • Developing the skills offering for the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway • Funding for disabled adaptations and the disability action plan • Expansion of temporary accommodation to avoid homeless residents being put into bed and breakfast accommodation and save on costs going to private providers • Use of Land Transfers and/or Capital Receipts to alleviate the pressure in the HRA • Support for planning such as neighbourhood plans • Support for local food production • Support for local energy production Mid Suffolk District Council is increasing Council Tax by 2.99%. About 8% of the total Council Tax bill is attributable to Mid Suffolk District Council and this % has been reducing. For context for a Band D property the increase attributable to Mid Suffolk is about £5.23 per year or 10p per week.
Mid Suffolk Magazine	A regular magazine released in September and February has been introduced to keep residents informed of what is going on in the district.

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