District Councillor Report:

Walsham Le Willows - November 2026

Council Housing service - result of inspection by social housing regulator	The regulator has awarded Mid Suffolk District Council a **C2 rating** - the second tier on a scale of C1-C4, with C1 being the target grade for all social landlords. This is the highest grading of any district or borough council in Suffolk, and the judgement reflects the good progress made over the last few years from a very difficult position (we self-reported to the housing regulator in 2023 for failures around safety compliance for gas and electrical checks). The regulator was satisfied the council had a timely and responsive repairs service, noting a significant reduction in a repairs backlog in the last two years. A positive council culture of fairness and respect for tenants, tenant feedback positively shaping future services, and a responsive complaints system were among the areas acknowledged. The judgement said that improvement is needed to bring all homes up to the required standards. 13% of Mid Suffolk District Council's homes, did not meet the Decent Homes Standard - a set of minimum conditions covering safety, repair, services, and insulation. This is not a surprise – the Council's stock condition survey had already made clear where the Council needed to prioritise, and these figures are regularly reported and scrutinised. An improvement programme is already under way to ensure all homes meet the standard in the next year.
Joint Local Plan scoping	Mid Suffolk District Council has published the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) as evidence to support the Joint Local Plan and also to support the preparation of neighbourhood plans across the districts. See Mid Suffolk SHELAA – Oct 26 This map is here SHELAA 2026
New fund launched to transform district's high streets	Businesses across Mid Suffolk can now apply for grants worth up to £10,000 to spruce up shopfronts, improve accessibility and implement energy efficiency upgrades. Mid Suffolk District Council's new Town and Village Centre Business Improvement Fund is designed to support projects that make businesses more attractive and sustainable, helping them to remain resilient and open opportunities for growth.

	Funding can support a range of improvements, including new shopfronts and signage, lighting, accessible doors and ramps, customer facilities, security measures, solar panels and other equipment to support business growth or environmental performance. Mid Suffolk launches grants of up to £10,000 for businesses | East Anglian Daily Times
£30k fund helps growing projects take root	Community groups across Mid Suffolk can apply for grants of up to £30,000 to create or expand local food-growing projects thanks to a new funding scheme from Mid Suffolk District Council. The Community Growing Fund is designed to support communities looking to establish new growing spaces or enhance existing sites where there is a clear local need. Grants of between £5,001 and £30,000 are available to local VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise) organisations for the purchase of land and the development of projects such as community gardens, orchards and other food-growing spaces. Part of the council's broader Food and Drink Action Plan, the fund aims to increase access to locally grown food, strengthen food security and encourage more sustainable food systems. As well as supporting food production, projects funded through the scheme will also help bring people together, improve health and wellbeing, and give residents opportunities to develop their skills and confidence in growing food. £30k fund helps growing projects take root - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk
Fire Station community hub investment	Stowmarket charity Red Gables is redeveloping the Lockington Road site, which has been empty since Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service moved out in March 2023. New life for former Stowmarket fire station as community hub | East Anglian Daily Times
Living Well in Winter Grants	Living Well in Winter Grants for 2026/27 have now opened for applications, until 22nd November. The Living Well in Winter grant is now in its fourth year and exists to help local VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise) organisations deliver accessible, inclusive spaces and affordable activities during the colder months. Since its inception, the grant has supported dozens of projects designed to bolster the wellbeing of residents – particularly in rural areas. Last year, successful projects included everything from warm spaces with coffee and meals to craft workshops and indoor activities. Eligible projects might include lunch clubs, after-school clubs, low-cost sports sessions, community cafes, or any other initiative that brings people together during a time of year where many may feel isolated. Up to £2,000 can be applied for.

Vape shop shut down after discovery of illegal tobacco stash	A shop in Stowmarket has been forced to close for three months after a joint operation discovered illegal and potentially harmful vapes and tobacco – including goods with a street value of almost £16,000 stashed under a concrete floor. A successful joint operation between Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk Trading Standards and Suffolk Police has today seen a closure order served on Diamond Vapes in Ipswich Street, Stowmarket.

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