

District Council District Councillor Report: Andy Mellen - Bacton ward

Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe and Wyverstone

April 2024

Council of the Year Award	Mid Suffolk, with a Green Party administration, and Babergh, with a coalition administration, were jointly awarded Council of the Year at the Public Sector Transformation awards last month. The awards are made by iESE, a not-for-profit organisation created by local authorities as a shared resource to transform public services, and we received the award for our collaboration and transformation over the last few years.
Homelessness strategy	Council has now adopted the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2024 and the associated delivery plan. Together with Babergh the councils want to aspire to go beyond the minimum required provision, and aim to provide a bespoke person-centred and proactive service.
CIL expenditure framework	Full council recommended approval of the amendments proposed to the Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework following the sixth review. The main changes include allowing applications for District CIL from sports clubs, community shops and cafes with provisos to ensure that any profit made by such businesses goes back to the community, and allowing
Suffolk Devolution deal consultation	The County Council has now opened the consultation period on the proposed Level 3 devolution deal for the county. MSDC councillors debated this issue at last week's Council meeting, our views will be fed back but we are not directly involved in the decision to go ahead, which will be made by County Councillors in July. The deal would mean the county council would have some more powers alongside an investment fund of £480M over a 30 year period. If agreed, there would also be a directly elected leader of the County Council, to be elected in May 2025. More information and public consultation can be found here: https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution .
Nationally significant Solar Farm proposal	Proposals have emerged for a new 2000MW solar farm, this would be on farmland in Mendlesham, Thwaite and Wickham Skeith parishes – and close to the edge of Cotton parish too. Due to the size of this proposal it is deemed a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) meaning that the application will be decided at a national level by the Secretary of State, advised by the national Planning Inspectorate. MSDC will only be a consultee, but will work with the developer to provide clarity for local communities about the application. We are expecting further large solar farm applications aiming to connect into the proposed new Norwich to Tilbury pylon line (which
Local elections	An election will be held on Thursday 2 nd May to elect Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner for the next four years. The position has been held by Tim Passmore since 2012. There will also be a district by-election for the Chilton seat in Stowmarket. There will be a general election sometime in the next few months. Mid Suffolk's elections team oversee all these elections. A reminder that you need to bring approved photo ID if you want to vote in-person at a polling station,

Cllr Andrew Mellen

Andrew.Mellen@midsuffolk.gov.uk

07790 992619