|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budget updates** | Proposals for the General Fund budget were approved in this month’s second cabinet meeting, and discussed later on in the Overview & Scrutiny committee on the 19th December. This shows the council’s finances to be surplus, unusual for District councils, in part due to expanded housing developments and income generated from Gateway 14, with these surplus funds being used to proceed with the Mid Suffolk Plan. Key figures include an increase of £1.689m in net revenue service expenditure, a £2.660m increase in gross expenditure, a proposed no increase in council tax from April 25, and a capital budget of £29.986m in 2025/26. |
| **Devolution White Paper** | The White Paper regarding devolution has now been published, which despite not mentioning Suffolk directly, strongly suggests at a change to the current two-tier local government structure. This could potentially suggest a large Unitary Authority covering all of Suffolk, abolishing the district councils altogether. The paper also includes the use of introducing a “Strategic Authority”, which is likely to include a Mayor for both Suffolk & Norfolk. The leader of MSDC expresses concerns over the possible loss of local democracy [Leader’s response to Devolution White Paper - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/leader-s-response-to-devolution-white-paper) |
| **CIL Expenditure updates** | New updates regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy programme were discussed in the first cabinet meeting of this month. This includes approval of half a million pounds of investment into the Stowmarket Health Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF), and £188k of funding for Thurston Community College. |
| **National Planning Policy Framework**  **Joint Local Plan** | Changes have been made to the National Planning Policy Framework to assist with the government’s housebuilding plans. This includes mandatory housebuilding targets for councils, with a priority on brownfield sites. The new plans have sparked both praise and backlash, with concerns over the role of individual councils. Mid Suffolk’s portfolio holder for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure Cllr Andrew Stringer has commented on the new proposals. [Statement in response to Government's National Planning Policy Framework announcement - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/statement-in-response-to-government-s-national-planning-policy-framework-announcement)  At the last full council meeting on November 21st there was discussion of the council’s treasury management. There was also cross-party support to approve supplementary planning documents for   * Housing need and to address the delivery of affordable housing * Intensive livestock and poultry farmimg |
| **Community Funding** | Mid Suffolk’s website now has a new community funding page, which aims to make it much easier for local community groups to understand and apply for grants and funding. So if you are in need of some funding for a project, it’s worth going to the [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/) home page and clicking the ‘Access community funding’ button. There is a £50K pot for Parishes to apply for this winter’s Pride in your Place grant. |
| **Suffolk Economy Strategy** | The Public Sector Leaders Group, which includes Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, has endorsed the Suffolk Economy Strategy.  [Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group endorse the Suffolk Economy Strategy - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/suffolk-public-sector-leaders-group-endorse-the-suffolk-economy-strategy) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| District Councillor: David Penny  Email: david.penny@midsuffolk.gov.uk  Telephone: 01449 760 367 | District Councillor: John Whitehead  Email: John.whitehead@midsuffolk.gov.uk  Telephone: 01449 760 521 |