

Mid Suffolk District Councillor's Report – Occold Parish Council, April 2024

Council of the Year award	In March the councils of Mid Suffolk and Babergh were jointly awarded <i>Council of the Year</i> for their collaboration and focus on their communities. This was awarded by the iESE, a not-for-profit organisation created by local authorities as a shared resource to transform public services. It reflects work done by both councils over a number of years.
New Homelessness Strategy	In March the Full Council adopted the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2024, along with the associated delivery plan. Together with Babergh, both councils aspire to go beyond the minimum required provision, and hope to provide a proactive service which makes rough sleeping rare.
Local homelessness concerns	<p>There have been recent reports of individuals sleeping outdoors (rough sleeping) in Eye. Help and support is available to those who need it: if you see anyone you are concerned about please let me know or you can report to Streetlink here: StreetLink - Connecting people sleeping rough to local services (thestreetlink.org.uk)</p> <p>If possible, it is useful to know the time, location and description of the person, and whether this is a regular occurrence. If you have a chat with them please do also reassure them - they are not in trouble, we just want to connect them to the StreetLink team who can visit them and offer help if wanted.</p>
CIL update	The Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework (which covers what CIL funds can be spent on) is regularly reviewed by a cross-party working group. Following the most recent review, the full council has recommended approval of a number of amendments. One change allows applications for District CIL from sports clubs and from community shops and cafes, provided that any profit made by such businesses goes back to the community.
Nationally significant Solar Farm proposal	A 2,000MW solar farm near Mendlesham has been proposed. This is a large, nationally significant energy application; because of its scale, the project will be determined by the national Planning Inspectorate. Mid Suffolk District Council is a consultee, and has asked for more clarity about some aspects of the application.
Suffolk devolution deal	Suffolk County Council (SCC) has now opened the consultation of the proposed Level 3 devolution deal for the county. Mid Suffolk District councillors debated this issue at March's Council meeting, but are not involved in the SCC decision. The deal would mean the County Council would have more local power alongside a fund of £480m over 30 years. This is a small proportion of the total SCC budget. There would also be a directly elected leader of the County Council. More information and public consultation can be found here: https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution
Flood working group update	<p>The Occold Flood Working Group met again in March, we mainly worked on creating a map of ditches and drainage around the village. Work will continue on creating an emergency flood plan, and starting to complete the Section 19 information report.</p> <p>In February Lucy met with County Councillor Andrew Stringer and a Highways engineer from Suffolk County Council Highways, to discuss adding extra drainage near the school; the feasibility and cost of this is being looked into.</p>

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