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Devolution and local government reform	The government has decided that there will be 3 unitary authorities in Suffolk. While details are still being finalised, including names and numbers of Councillors, the three unitary councils, West Suffolk, Central and East Suffolk, and South Suffolk and Ipswich are planned to be in place from May 2028. Elections for the new shadow authorities will take place in May 2027, with the new councils formally taking over responsibilities from May 2028. The idea of the transition period is to enable detailed work for reorganisation to take place, and services will be delivered as usual throughout the process.
Funding for Neighbourhood Plans	Government funding for Neighbourhood plans has been withdrawn although there is no change in weight for planning considerations. MSDC has now introduced funding to support Parish Councils in the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans / Reviews, which seek to allocate sites for housing development that make an agreed contribution to meeting the district-wide housing needs. There is a limit of £20,000 for any specific Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Housing	The council held a briefing session for parishes following the government requirement to increase the number of dwellings in Mid Suffolk. The increase is from the previous 535 dwellings per year up to 734. As a result Mid Suffolk has embarked on a new Joint Local plan to keep policies up to date, this has involved a “call for sites” to help identify any land that may be required for future development as our plans progress. https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites This is massively oversubscribed and most submissions will not be required. No planning status is granted by including a site on this list. Rather, sites will now be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria. Further assessment will be published through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in Spring 2026. It is important to note that we are carrying out this work to ensure any future development is plan lead and not developer lead and to be transparent with residents.

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Solar energy	As a Council our strong preference is roofs first. However, National Planning policy does not allow us to compel developers to put solar panels on new homes, barns and warehouses. The National Policy Planning Framework guides our planning decisions on solar farms below 50MW capacity, but currently does not adequately protect the best and most versatile farmland nor our landscapes. The Council always encourages developers to maximise community and biodiversity benefits when having to approve such developments while recognising the need for government to provide a better coordinated approach to delivering the renewable energy our country needs to become more self-sufficient in food production as well as energy.

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Norfolk to Tilbury pylons	The council has also urged the government to provide a more strategic offshore approach, minimising and mitigating harm to Suffolk's communities and environment.
Stowmarket Innovation Gateway	The construction of this state of the art innovation hub is all but complete and will shortly be opening to provide skills and training necessary to build the future economy of the East of England. Stowmarket Innovation Gateway - Stowmarket & District Chamber of Commerce
Budget	The District Council's share of Council Tax is to be raised by 2.99%. For context, for a Band D property annual charge attributable to Mid Suffolk is £180.26, an increase of £5.23 per year or 10p per week. The previous years rise was 0% (Of the overall Council Tax, about 8% goes to Mid Suffolk District Council.) This rise is unavoidable as the government has now linked future grant monies to the assumption that the share of council tax has risen, so if we had not taken a small increase this year we would be facing a "cliff edge" of funding in the near future. In addition to the day-to-day provision of council services and activities, the 2026/27 budget includes funding for a wide range of programmes, including: • Implementation of the new food waste collection scheme • Enhancements to our current waste depot in readiness for this, plus further support for recycling education • Cost of living support • Council Tax Support scheme • Grants programmes for towns and rural communities outside of Stowmarket • Investment in leisure centre maintenance • Stowmarket sports facilities delivered through the SHELF Project, plus support for wider Stowmarket regeneration • Support for the Cosy Homes insulation scheme which has been expanded to help residents obtain solar panels • Grant funding for nature recovery and community biodiversity groups • Support for new footpaths and cycle ways • Completing the build of the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway • Expansion of the area's temporary accommodation (which avoids homeless residents being put into bed and breakfast accommodation and saves on costs going to private providers.)
Litter	We are grateful to volunteers who have been picking litter and all the community and parish litter picks organised but we continue to urge people to only do this where it is safe and not on fast roads. Hopefully you have noticed that several areas of the A14 have been cleared up recently. This will be ongoing during planned overnight road closures.
Recycling and Waste	Better Recycling collections are coming to Suffolk in June. The national scheme seeks to standardise weekly food waste collections across the country. In addition, across Suffolk plastic film will also be collected. Like many authorities across the country this will mean

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	increased collections in Mid-Suffolk to maximise recycling in an efficient cost-effective manner. Every home across Mid Suffolk that should have them has now received a new blue-lidded bin and a smaller food-waste bin and food waste caddy. Households that require special considerations or have communal collections will have their solutions in place by the beginning of June when new collections start. As always, we want Collections to work for everyone so do contact the team on 0300 1234 000 (option 4) if you have any issues. Further information packs will be sent out with more detail on Better Recycling after the moratorium on potentially political communications from May 8th. The blue-lidded bin will be for glass bottles, jars, tetra pak, plastic bags, cans and plastic bottles. Paper and card will go in the existing green-lidded bin. www.suffolkrecyles.org.uk
Nature Recovery	This new grant launched in January offers small grants up to 2K and larger grants up to £50k for projects that protect and expand wildlife corridors and habitats within the district – including tree planting, wildflower meadow creation, or other environmental initiatives to safeguard natural spaces for future generations. Organisations such as environmental groups, schools and town and parish councils can apply. One application can be made per project, per year. MSDC has also announced a new £525,000 fund to support ambitious nature recovery, flood mitigation and water management projects across Mid Suffolk. The Catchment and Landscape Nature Recovery Grant promotes larger-scale, collaborative initiatives which could span multiple sites and landowners. With a focus on river catchments, it will support projects that benefit communities as they address biodiversity loss, with a particular emphasis on priority habitats and species. It will also support natural flood management, as well as projects to improve water quality and security Funding opportunities and support - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk Mid Suffolk District Council has purchased almost eight acres of land in the heart of Stowmarket to preserve it as a future riverside haven for nature and wildlife for future generations. The land, between Takers Lane and the River Rat, adjoins the council's existing open space at Pikes Meadow – unlocking potential for a new riverside walk, connecting Combs Ford and Gipping Way. The council's investment is a further step as part of work to enhance biodiversity and nature – protecting and strengthening the district's wildlife and habitat diversity – and providing public green space, as well as safeguarding the land from future development.
CIL funding and Locality grants	In the Claydon and Barham ward funding has been given to: • Play equipment renewal • Internal upgrades to a Community Club

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	• Allotment land • A Speed awareness device • Support towards maintaining and improving River Gipping footpath access • Website development • Solar panels and battery storage for a village hall • Support for setting up a new football team • Support for drop-in sessions

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