

District Council Report

to parish councils in Claydon & Barham Ward, September 2016

Local Government Boundary Commission Review

Mid Suffolk DC last carried out an Electoral Review in June 2001. Since that time the pattern of settlement development and population growth has changed the overall electoral equality across the district. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has an obligation, set out in law, to deliver electoral equality where councillors represent a similar number of electors. In Mid Suffolk 37% of wards (11 out of 30) have variances of over 10% from the average and one, Stowmarket North has a variance of over 30%. We will therefore be having a new review in 2016-17.

The electoral review, to be carried out by the LGBCE, will have two distinct parts. Before ward boundaries are re-drawn, the Commission will come to a view on the total number of councillors to be elected to the council in future. The Commission makes a judgment on council size by considering (i) governance arrangements (ii) the council's scrutiny functions (iii) the representational role of councillors in the local community. This process will be undertaken between now and the end of 2016. Once that is concluded, the Commission will re-draw ward boundaries so they met the statutory criteria. There are three main elements to these criteria – (i) electoral equality for local voters (ii) the interests and identities of local communities (iii) effective and convenient local government. The electoral equalities aspect will use forecasts of population and growth over a 5-6 year period as required by law. The warding pattern consultation process will take part in the first half of 2017 after which full draft proposals will be published. A further consultation period over the summer should then result in final recommendations being issued in October 2017 before going before Parliament in November 2017. The new electoral arrangements will be effective in time for the next (May 2019) district elections.

We understand that the LGBCE will be holding briefing meetings locally for representatives of the parishes and residents' groups. They will also use the local press and media to encourage engagement in the process by local people.

MSDC Buys Middle School Site for Redevelopment

MSDC recently announced that it had bought the redundant Middle School in Needham Market from SCC and it will now be looking at plans to redevelop the site. Proposals for a housing scheme are being drawn up which will be subject to public consultation through the usual planning processes. As well as new homes there will be community facilities as the site currently includes the library and an internet café.

Performance Outcomes Update

A two-page summary of MSDC Performance Outcomes has been presented to the Executive Committee in September. Included below are some of the key bullet points which we will be happy to expand on should parish councillors require further details.

1. **Housing Delivery** (more of the right types of homes, of the right tenure in the right place)

- Development of new Joint Local Plan underway covering period to 2036
- 2nd 'call for sites' issued in July 2016 to assess the capacity to deliver sustainable growth.
- Since April 2016 over 150 planning applications with CIL liability granted to provide £1.3mIn towards infrastructure improvements with approx. £200,000 going directly to parish councils.

2. Community Capacity Building and Engagement (all communities are thriving, growing, healthy, active and self-sufficient)

- 33 engagement events held with communities to discuss housing-led growth. Over 600 people attended, over 200 surveys completed and nearly 2,000 comments received.
- 150 people attended the first joint Community Achievements Awards event with 30 awards given to volunteers
- Mid Suffolk hosted the Suffolk Armed Forces Day event at Pikes Meadow, Stowmarket.

3. Business Growth and Increased Productivity (encourage development of employment sites and other business growth of the right type in the right place)

- Business survey completed to update our intelligence. Businesses allocated dedicated Business Account Managers.
- Principles agreed for delivery of Enterprise Zone sites – Stowmarket (270 new businesses and 1,600 fte jobs over 25 years) and Sproughton (23 new businesses and 800 fte jobs).
- Phase 2 rollout of MyGo scheme – website now includes 120 employer profiles. Involvement with the Suffolk Skills Show.

•

4. Assets and Investments (improved achievement of strategic priorities and greater income generation through use of new and existing assets)

- Developing a Capital Investment Strategy to provide a return on our investment providing income to the General Fund. Real Estate advisors Jones Lang LaSalle appointed.
- Working with SCC to make use of redundant buildings for new homes. Three buildings under negotiation including the Needham Middle School mentioned on page 1 of this report.
- Using Right To Buy receipts 13 homes have been purchased in Mid Suffolk by the Council – 7 in 2015/16 and 6 more in 2016/17 year-to-date.

05/09/16 – James Caston 07789957444 and John Whitehead 01473 833279