

District Councillor Report: Andy Mellen – Bacton ward

(Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe and Wyverstone)

April 2025

Death of Cllr Rachel Eburne	I report with great sadness that Cllr Rachel Eburne, the Deputy Leader of Mid Suffolk Council, cabinet member for finances and resources, and member for Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden, passed away on the 14 th March after a long illness. Since being elected as a councillor back in 2010, Rachel was a champion for her local community. As a result of her death, a by-election will take place in June. Cllr Richard Winch is now the new Deputy Leader, whilst Cllr Janet Pearson is the new cabinet member for finances and resources.
Devolution and local government re-organisation updates	Following central government's plans to re-organise Suffolk's councils into unitary authorities, the District Councils submitted their interim proposals on the 21 st March. Whilst Suffolk County Council is in favour of a single Unitary Authority covering all of Suffolk, the District Councils have opposed this model, and have instead opted to support multiple authorities (2 or 3) for the county, although the exact number and the boundaries of these authorities remain to be agreed. There is a proposal for a South-East Suffolk unitary centered around Ipswich and Felixstowe, this has support from some of Suffolk's MPs. These proposals were discussed at March's council meeting.
CIL Project funding	As part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, over £180k has been put into 5 projects across Mid Suffolk, to allow for greater community events and activities to be held, and for improved infrastructure across the district. Details of the funding were approved at March's cabinet meeting.
Boost for warm, safe homes	The government has allocated £2.9m of funding jointly to Mid Suffolk and Babergh councils as part of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund. This will be used to upgrade our council houses to help bring down energy bills for residents and to make homes warmer. For private homes and landlords, we have the Cosy Homes scheme which installs free insulation to qualifying households. Both these schemes will help to reduce resident's energy bills, whilst also improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions.
Housing numbers	The Joint Local Plan (JLP) for Babergh and Mid Suffolk is being reviewed, to make sure it stays compliant with the government's increased new targets for housebuilding. The timeline for this work is as follows: • Scoping and participation stage, including minimum four-month notification of plan commencement – March 2026 to July 2026. • Plan visioning and strategy development including first public consultation – August 2026 to March 2027. • Evidence gathering and draft the Plan – April 2027 to December 2027. • Second public consultation, proposing changes and submission of the Plan – January 2028 to June 2028. • Examination of Plan including additional three months for Main Modifications– July 2028 to March 2029. • Adoption – April 2029. A general meeting for Mid Suffolk Parishes was held on March 21st 2025 in response to the Government's revised housing targets. The aim was to make Parishes aware of the likely potential impact and to enable them to start to prepare for what is planned. Mid Suffolk's housing target has increased from

	535 per annum to 734 (an increase of 37%). If you include a 5% buffer this amounts to a requirement of 15,414 new homes for the period from 2024 to 2044, although 5,475 of these are in the current identified supply. The provisional figures for Bacton ward are as follows (these are based on a rough apportionment of the total target based on population and are indicative only. <table><tr><th>Parish</th><th>Indicative requirement over 20years</th><th>Identified residual dwellings on commenced sites</th><th>Permitted dwellings not yet started</th><th>Indicative requirement minus permitted dwellings</th></tr><tr><td>Bacton</td><td>190</td><td>266</td><td>52</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Cotton</td><td>80</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>76</td></tr><tr><td>Finningham</td><td>70</td><td>17</td><td>-</td><td>53</td></tr><tr><td>Westhorpe</td><td>30</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>Wyverstone</td><td>50</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>50</td></tr></table>	Parish	Indicative requirement over 20years	Identified residual dwellings on commenced sites	Permitted dwellings not yet started	Indicative requirement minus permitted dwellings	Bacton	190	266	52	0	Cotton	80	3	1	76	Finningham	70	17	-	53	Westhorpe	30	-	-	30	Wyverstone	50	3	5	50
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New fund for sports facilities in rural areas	MSDC has set up a fund for Sports provision outside of Stowmarket. This is set at £750K for April 2025 to March 2026, with £750k proposed for April 2026 to March 2027. The criteria are being developed for the funding and will support design, feasibility & planning costs to develop sports infrastructure in rural areas of Mid Suffolk, outside of Stowmarket, by exploring upgrading or extending existing sites, as well as opportunities for new sports provision or facilities.																														

Cllr Andy Mellen

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