District Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

November 2026

Local government reorganisation	On 29 October, the Government confirmed that the first phase of its review of local government reorganisation had concluded. A fresh decision for Suffolk is expected by March 2027, with shadow elections expected in May 2028 and new unitary authorities operational by May 2029. District and borough council elections will take place in May 2027 on existing boundaries. Plans for devolution, including a Suffolk and Norfolk mayoral election in 2028, continue.
SHELAA publication	In October, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils published the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) to support the new Joint Local Plan. It assesses potential housing and economic development sites submitted through the 2024 and 2025–2026 call-for-sites exercises and supersedes the September 2025 SHLAA. The assessment is evidence only: it does not allocate sites, confer planning status or propose sites for development, and is not itself a consultation. Site selection will involve further assessment and Local Plan consultation. The published material includes Mid Suffolk residential site assessments and answers to frequently asked questions.
Sport and leisure in Stowmarket	In October, Mid Suffolk and Everyone Active announced a free community sports day for 27 October at Stowmarket High School's recently completed 3G pitch and 200-metre running track. The programme included football sessions with Stowmarket Town and Stowupland Falcons, and running activities with Stowmarket Striders. This provided an opportunity for residents to try the new facilities.
Community grants	The Living Well in Winter grant reopened on 14 October, offering up to £2,000 to local voluntary and community organisations for welcoming spaces and affordable activities during the colder months. Applications must be submitted before 22 November. Eligible projects include lunch clubs, community cafés, after-school clubs and low-cost sports sessions. The Community Growing Fund launched on 19 October, offering grants of £5,001–£30,000 to eligible organisations to purchase land and develop or expand community gardens, orchards and other food-growing spaces. Applications are considered on a first come, first served basis. The council also announced a Suffolk Food Summit at the Food Museum on 16 November.
Town and village businesses	A new Town and Village Centre Business Improvement Fund was announced on 6 October. Grants of £500–£10,000 per property support improvements such as shopfronts, signage, accessibility and energy efficiency. Eligible locations include Elmswell, Woolpit and Thurston, alongside other district centres. The scheme normally covers up to 60% of eligible costs, with 40% match funding required; applicants must fund works upfront, with payment made after completion, and should check the guidance before committing expenditure.
Energy advice and household support	On 27 October, Mid Suffolk launched REACH (Retrofit Energy Advice for Communities and Households). An electric advice van will attend community roadshows and outreach events, with officers providing impartial, one-to-one guidance on home energy efficiency and available grants and support.

	Residents can check the council's REACH webpage for locations and access arrangements. Figures published on 28 October showed that targeted support had helped the lowest-income households across Babergh and Mid Suffolk access almost £300,000 in previously unclaimed benefits during the preceding year. The councils are working with Citizens Advice to help residents access financial support and advice.
Council housing inspection	On 14 October, the Regulator of Social Housing published its first consumer grading for Mid Suffolk District Council following an inspection. The council received a C2 grade, meaning that some weaknesses were identified and improvement is needed, specifically in relation to the Safety and Quality Standard. The inspection considered all four consumer standards. This is a regulatory assessment of the council's landlord services.

Cllr Harry Richardson
E: harry.richardson@midsuffolk.gov.uk
T: 01359 265089