

**Mid Suffolk and Babergh submit Joint Local Plan for examination.**

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have submitted their Joint Local Plan for independent examination by the Secretary of State. The final version of the plan was debated by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils last year before councillors moved to submit the plan for examination by the Secretary of State, after a six-week period inviting representations on the legal compliance and soundness of the plan. These representations have now been published and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration during the examination. Hearing sessions for the examination are expected to resume again in September following a change of date – enabling them to be fully inclusive, whilst also ensuring public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that the Stage 1 sessions, originally scheduled for June and July, will now take place over a concentrated period from September, with Stage 2 hearing sessions in mid-Autumn as originally planned.

**Mid Suffolk communities receive close to £1 million in grants.**

Mid Suffolk District Council awarded community grants totalling £996,855 in the 2020/21 financial year – supporting the district's Covid response and enabling improvements to local community venues and sports and leisure facilities. During the year, council officers have worked with clubs and organisations in the district to identify need and ensure that vital grant funding has made a real difference to Mid Suffolk's communities. The council has also acknowledged the key role of community groups, along with town and parish councils, in easing the challenges faced by residents during coronavirus, and a new dedicated Covid-19 Emerging Needs Grant opened last May to help the district through the peak of the pandemic. More than 60 organisations benefitted from funding, including good neighbour schemes, foodbanks and community outreach projects.

**An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk.**

Regular bulletins continue to be produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins via the Suffolk County Council website. An update on the vaccine rollout can be found on the SNEE NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Service website.

**Next steps for councils' biodiversity and climate change plans agreed.**

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have given the go ahead for £97k for projects aimed at boosting biodiversity and tackling climate change across their districts.

**MSDC/Babergh Tree, Hedgerow and Wildflower planting scheme application deadline extended.**

This scheme offers free trees and hedgerow plants to all parishes regardless of whether the planting is on council, parish, church, or private land. It is preferred that applications are submitted by Parish councils so that Parish local knowledge ensures that the right trees are planted in the right place. The major change to the scheme is that it is now a rolling programme of tree and hedge planting with no deadline for application submission, or dates by which trees or hedgerow plants need to be in the ground. It is not expected that all trees will be planted this year and there will be funding for subsequent years to come. There is also an associated scheme for wildflower planting.

To find out more please contact [biodiversity@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:biodiversity@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

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