

District councillors report to 14 March 2016

Mid Suffolk has set its budget for 2016/17 – residents in Band D properties will face a rise in their council tax of just under 6p per week (2.97 a year) equating to 1.9% increase. It was regrettable to make this increase but as I have said many times the Council is facing significant decrease in core funding from Central Government.

Mid Suffolk is using £500k of Government support from the New Homes Bonus and Business Rates Grant to support the budget. There is a decrease of 1% on council house rents (.84p) a week but an increase of 1% on sheltered housing rents (.7p) a week (different rent structure). Garage rents have been increased by 10% (.76p) a week but there is no change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for eligible residents.

The New Homes Bonus is a new funding stream where Councils may receive about £1,000 paid annually for 6 years for each new home built. Another source of income is the CIL developer payments that seek to raise about £10,000 per new home towards providing the community infrastructure necessary to support a sustainable lifestyle.

Housing is a priority for many reasons but MSDC does not have a 5 year land supply (and nor does about 80% of Councils) but work is ongoing to determine where more houses could be located and your Parish Plan will feed into that process. The number of completed houses has dropped significantly so to catch up on expected numbers extra homes will have to be built to keep up with demand and targets. However the five year land supply which some developers are using with abandon are 'not at any price' and must meet the objectives of the NPPF in being sustainable. I am aware of developers looking at land within Debenham.

The Angel Planning Application came before committee and I know people are aware the committee voted unanimously against the development the committee look to and listen carefully to the District Councillor and I can assure you I spoke strongly against the application. The applicants have the opportunity to appeal against the decision and the Inspector can decide how any appeal is to be heard.

I have of course been attending the usual Planning and Licensing and Full Council meetings along with seemingly endless updates on the Devolution Plans which now seem to include Cambridge and Peterborough.

I have also chaired a difficult licensing hearing where an applicant had his licence to drive a taxi revoked and whilst I take no pleasure in doing that I am confident it is in the best interests of the public who rely on these people.

Kathie Guthrie

District councillor

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