



## **Mid Suffolk District Council**

### **Report for The Stonhams Ward – June 2017**

#### **Have your say on new council ward boundaries**

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England is asking local people for their help to draw up a new pattern of council wards for Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council.

The consultation is the first stage of an electoral review which will re-draw ward boundaries across both districts.

The Commission has also announced that it is minded to recommend that each council should have fewer councillors in future. For Mid Suffolk, that means 34 councillors should be elected to the council in future: a reduction of six. And for Babergh, 31 councillors should be elected to represent the area in future: a reduction of twelve from the current arrangements.

The Commission now needs information from local people and groups to help it to produce a new pattern of wards to accommodate councillors across both districts.

In drawing up new boundaries, the Commission aims to deliver electoral equality for voters in district council elections so that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters. The review also aims to ensure that the new council wards reflect, as far as possible, the interests and identities of communities across the districts.

Professor Colin Mellors, Chair of the Commission, said: “We are asking local people and organisations to help us draw up new wards for Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils. As we develop the recommendations for each council, we will take into account local community identities as well as ensuring electoral equality for voters.

“If you have a view about which communities or neighbourhoods should be part of the same council ward, then we want to hear from you. And if you think a road, river or railway makes for a strong boundary between communities in your part of your district, then this consultation is for you. Alternatively, if you’re simply interested in the way your council is run, just log on to our website to explore our interactive maps and have your say.

“Your views will make a difference.

“We will carefully consider all evidence that is provided during this phase of the review whoever it is from and whether it applies to the whole of your district or just a small part of it.



“Residents will then have a further chance to have their say after we publish our draft recommendations for both councils in October 2017.”

Local people have until 14 August 2017 to submit their views. Further information on the review and interactive maps of the existing wards can be found on the [Local Government Boundary Commissions website](#).

### **OVO Energy Tour of Britain Returns to Suffolk!**

The OVO Energy Tour of Britain is coming back to Suffolk this September, travelling through Mid Suffolk on 8 September: find the route, and all the details on the [Tour of Britain website](#).

### **New Computer System For Planning**

From 5pm 11<sup>th</sup> May the start of the new planning software installation will begin. We must migrate our existing data across to the new system and we will need to ‘freeze’ our existing software. This work will interrupt normal business activity, such as consultations and publicity.

This will only take three weeks along with testing and for the new system to be set up for launch on the 1<sup>st</sup> June.

You can use the online planning system during this time, but at different times during this process we must suspend some services and this will create some disruption. Extensions to consultation periods are being made to cover any difficulties and we have made other arrangements.

History searches and copy document services will be suspended for this time. Duty pre application service will need to be reduced as our access to records will be limited. Our free call back service is also affected and call backs are suspended from 5<sup>th</sup> May until the 19<sup>th</sup> May to ensure officers can work on applications and reduce the amount of disruption.

We hope this temporary disruption will not cause too many problems and we shall be doing our very best to meet your requirements during this time. If you have any problems at all, please contact us on Tel 0300 1234000. For response enquiries and responses to applications if online services are not available please email [planning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

We look forward to a new system that will improve the service in the future and hope you will all start to see these online very soon.