



Mid Suffolk District Council

Report for The Stonhams Ward – October 2017

Stowmarket Offices Opened Today, 17th October

A new service has opened in Stowmarket, offering easy access to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' residents.

The new location, at 54 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket IP14 1AD, will allow residents to access Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils' services directly, without requiring appointments booked in advance.

Residents will be able to visit the office any time between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 4.30pm on Fridays, bank holidays excepted.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk's staff will be based at 54 Ipswich Street, which has previously been home only to Suffolk County Council staff, and will help residents access council services directly. Residents will also be able to meet specific council officers at there by appointment, ensuring all council services can be accessed easily within the districts.

The Councils' Public Access Strategy, adopted in September last year, is designed to ensure residents can access council services in the most convenient way for them. The Councils have therefore improved introduced a a new website, and single phone number for all customer enquiries – 0300 1234 000. However the Councils recognise that some residents will still need to access services face to face, and the new service in Stowmarket ensures they are able to do so.

This ensures that residents in the district will continue to be able to access all council services in a 'walk in' centre in the districts when the councils' meetings move to Endeavour House later this year.

Cllr Suzie Morley, Mid Suffolk District Council's Lead Member for Customer Service, said: "As our council goes through changes to make it more efficient and provide better value for council taxpayers' money, we need to ensure our residents can continue to access our services and get the support they need.

"We have put a lot of work into our new website and into our simple, single phone number, but this new venue guarantees that our services will remain as accessible as ever even for those who aren't able to get online."

Cabinets Vote to Investigate Future Relationship

On Friday 13 October 2017, simultaneous Meetings of both Babergh's and Mid Suffolk's Cabinets voted on the options for exploring Babergh and Mid Suffolk's future relationship. The Cabinets resolved:

- That Cabinet provisionally endorses the approach of formally dissolving the two district councils; and creating of a new, larger, District Council;



- That the Councils utilise Transformation Funding to jointly conduct stakeholder, public and staff engagement during Autumn 2017.
- Subject to the outcome of that public engagement a draft (DCLG compliant) business case for the dissolution of BMSDCs and creation of a new single district council for the area could be considered by each Council.

Work will now commence on designing and delivering a full engagement process, covering the public, staff and all stakeholders.

Mid Suffolk Locality Funding Still Available

Community groups, charities and organisations in Mid Suffolk are being urged to apply for funding as a Locality Awards programme launches for 2017. The deadline to apply has been extended until 16th February, 2018.

Have your say on new Joint Local Plan

Babergh and Mid Suffolk are consulting on their draft Joint Local Plan: this document will shape development in the districts - and in all of our communities - for the next two decades. To find out more, including how to comment, visit our [Joint Local Plan page](#).

Free Funding and Volunteering Fair for Communities

Babergh and Mid Suffolk are hosting a free Funding and Volunteering Fair this October for community groups looking to attract more funding and volunteers across the districts.

The Fair, to be held at Henley Community Centre between 10am and 3.15pm on Wednesday 25 October, is open to all community groups, from sports clubs to village hall committees and offers attendees the chance to tap a wealth of knowledge and experience in fundraising and attracting volunteers.

Those wishing to attend can book a place by calling 01449 724 654, or by [email](#).

Representatives from Crowdfunder, Volunteer Suffolk and the Suffolk Community Foundation will be in attendance while specialists from Community Action Suffolk and Suffolk Prohelp will run workshops on “A Practical Guide to the Funding Portal” and “Professional Help with your Projects” respectively.

The Fair also includes an address from Guest Speaker Su Johnston, from Crowdfunder UK, who has successfully run many Crowdfunded projects and will provide real experience and insight into how to engage and raise funding to make a real difference in your community. Crowdfunder UK is a nationwide organisation that allows community groups to raise funds for their projects online from a wide audience of supporters.



Tickets are free and lunch will be included. The deadline to book tickets is Monday 23 October 2017.

Cllr Diana Kearsley, Mid Suffolk's Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, said: "With so many grassroots organisations popping up in our district, Fundraising and Volunteering have never been more important. I encourage everyone who can to attend the Fair on the 25th and to learn how they can raise the funds and recruit the people to turn their ideas for their communities into reality."