

**Council tax freeze plus £2m for energy saving measures.** Mid Suffolk District Council has confirmed a council tax freeze for residents and ring-fenced £2m for household energy-saving measures for those most in need, despite rising costs and increased demands on services.

**Plans for Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14 unveiled.** Local businesses, students and workers could all benefit from modern, collaborative working and learning spaces at Gateway 14, following the approval of an initial business case by Mid Suffolk District Council's Cabinet. The early design and operational concepts seek to create a unique space - blurring the boundaries between education and the world of work. It includes a range of workspaces, meeting/ training rooms and collaboration spaces within an approximately 30,000 sq ft high quality and sustainable facility with innovation cluster plots on the site meeting a minimum BREAAAM standard of Excellent.

**New £12m depot would 'future-proof' services for residents.** Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils are exploring plans to consolidate three aging operational sites into a shared £12m depot – future-proofing services for residents and improving conditions for their staff.

**New service aims to turn more than 1,000 empty houses into homes.** With over a thousand homes across Mid Suffolk and Babergh districts currently classified as empty, 'Houses4Homes' encourages owners of vacant residential properties to come forward for advice and support in turning their property into a home for another family.

**First look at culture, heritage and visitor economy strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.** The first steps towards a dedicated cultural, heritage and visitor economy strategy could be taken should proposals be approved by Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils' cabinets in March.

**VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise) Resilience Fund: Councils launch third sector funding 'lifeline'.** Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils are delivering vital support to incredible organisations already helping those in communities most exposed to the cost-of-living crisis.

**Target to end rough sleeping in Suffolk.** Suffolk's public sector leaders, including those from Mid Suffolk and Babergh, are targeting an end to rough sleeping across the county by 2027.

**Suffolk councils secure £2.2m to improve tenants' quality of life.** Suffolk's district and borough councils have secured £2.2m of Government funding to improve the standard of private rented homes in the county – tackling poor housing conditions and improving tenants' wellbeing.

**Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils' Land Charges team shortlisted for new national award.** Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils are in the running for a national award, for making a critical step in the house buying process as easy as possible for residents.

**Supporting the elections this May.** As you will know, the local and parish elections are due to be held on Thursday 4th May. You can see a full election timetable on Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils' websites.

**Voter registration.** We will be supporting the Electoral Commission's 'Got 5?' campaign running through March and April to raise awareness of upcoming elections and drive voter registration. The Commission will be advertising across a combination of channels including TV, radio, posters, social media, website banners, cinema advertising, and Google search. We will also be sharing the messages through the council's social media channels and invite our towns and parishes to do the same.

Continued:

**Voter ID.** The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station, which will be implemented in the upcoming local and Parish elections in May. We will continue to support the Electoral Commission's national awareness campaign through all available council channels and ask that you also help where possible. You can find Electoral Commission resources, including posters and social media, here: [Voter ID resources | Electoral Commission](#). Anyone unable to provide photo ID can obtain a Voter Authority Certificate, which is valid for 10 years, by applying to their local council. Applications have to be received by 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Further details are available on Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils' websites.

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Representing Needham Market, Badley, Baylham, Creting St Mary, Creting St Peter, and Darmsden.