

District Councillor's Report for Creeting St Peter Parish Council meeting 15 January 2018

Planning

The application for business units and 3 food outlets on land north of Mill Lane – approval was sought and granted for the access arrangements for the site. All other matters will be determined at the next stage.

In Stowupland – on 3 January planning committee deferred any decision on the Porch Application for 18 homes opposite Holy Trinity Church due to lack of consultation and developer's failure to demonstrate that the development did not pose too high a risk to road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists. It is understood that the details for the Bloor site Phase 2 have been submitted but they are not yet available for comment.

Cash Reserves – Members have been made aware of a massive underspend by MSDC in the six months from April to September 2017. During that period, the underspend was around £1,000,000 which, when added to previous years underspends, gives a total of around £10,000,000. Much of this results from staff vacancies which have not been filled, resulting in work not carried out and a continued reduction in the quality of some services.

Budget Issues – MSDC Cabinet has agreed a budget for 2018/19, based on a council tax increase of 0.5% which equates to an increase of 81p per annum for a Band D property. Details will be considered further at the February Cabinet meeting.

Council House rents – MSDC has to implement the mandatory decrease of 1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of £0.83 a week, as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act be implemented.

Merger with Babergh – Following the October BDC and MSDC cabinet meetings which approved consultation on a merger, a group of Babergh Councillors called-in the decision; this was debated by the BDC Scrutiny Committee and the decision was referred back and BDC cabinet gave the green light to the consultation. However, this sparked a motion of no confidence in the Council Leader and a demand for a referendum for Babergh residents. Their leader resigned just before the meeting so the motion was not put. The new Leader, having spoken strongly against a referendum, has been forced to agree. The MSDC Leader has said that MSDC will proceed without a referendum. This is totally unfair on the residents of MSDC. Meanwhile the telephone poll has continued in Mid Suffolk but not in Babergh. I have been contacted by some residents who had taken part in the telephone poll and they expressed the concern that the questions are loaded and there is no opportunity for the resident to give an alternative view. Expect the pressure to build for a public vote for MSDC residents also.

Boundary Review – Nothing more has been heard so we wait to hear the outcome of the Commission's deliberations.

Keith Welham