

**District Councillor Report: Debenham Ward – Jan 2025**  
**Serving Ashfield-cum-Thorpe, Aspell, Bedingfield, Debenham, Kenton & Winston**  
**Cllr Teresa Davis** [teresa.davis@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:teresa.davis@midsuffolk.gov.uk) Tel: 07928 512588

<p><b>Community Information:</b></p>	<p><b>The National Planning Policy Framework</b> – and how it effects <b>Housing</b> in Mid Suffolk. Changes have been made to the National Planning Policy Framework to assist with the government’s housebuilding plans which you may have seen in the news. This includes mandatory housebuilding targets for councils. Mid Suffolk’s portfolio holder for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr Andrew Stringer, is concerned and requested the Planning team look at the implications of the changes. You may have seen in the local press that Mid Suffolk &amp; Babergh have decided to review their Joint Local Plan in order to ensure there is no ‘free for all’ from developers and so the existing plan remains important within a planning decision process.</p> <p><b>Local Government Restructure, Reform and Devolution</b></p> <p>You may have seen on the television or in the national news that the Government wants to make local councils easier to understand. A White Paper has been published outlining the proposals. Having attended an LGA conference in early January and listened to a breakdown of this White Paper by the Assistant Director of Policy at the LGA it seems we need to expect to see new regional authorities for a population of around 1.5 million people – called Strategic Authorities (also with a Mayor), with a further lower authority (usually called a unitary council of around 500,000 people) replacing the County and District and Borough Councils. Where the press have emphasised getting rid of a two tier authority mix, this seems to just remain at two tiers but lessen the effect at a local level and carry oversight powers at a higher regional level.</p> <p>So how does that effect you in practice?</p> <p>From the recent Extraordinary Suffolk County Council meeting that took place on 9<sup>th</sup> January they agreed to ask the Government to postpone the County Council Elections scheduled for May of this year and ask to be in the ‘Fast Track Pack’. So did Norfolk County Council. This potentially suggests to me that past proposals made are being again brought to the surface to form a large Mayoral Strategic Authority covering all of Suffolk and Norfolk and forming maybe two or three Unitary councils within this new SA (Strategic Authority).</p> <p>Meanwhile within already formed Unitary Councils the impact of this is being felt. It seems Parish and Town Councils and Parish Meetings will be taking on some of the past District, Borough and County Council work to make up for the lack of funding to do those things in the new Unitary Authorities. This increase of work for our lowest rung of local government was reinforced by a speaker from NALC at the conference who quoted Jim McMahan, our MP for Devolution, that Parish and Town Councils will play an increasing important role in Devolution.</p> <p>This whole process is set to take around 2/3yrs to complete. I am hoping that consultation with our Electorate will take place but there is no guarantee. In the meantime we sit and wait to see the effect and cost this will have on our services in Suffolk. I would be interested to hear from you on how they feel about this.</p>
<p><b>Drop In/Cabinet and Council Dates:</b></p>	<p><u>Mid Suffolk in January</u></p> <p>My drop in surgeries will be on 13<sup>th</sup> January at Debenham Leisure Centre and Debenham Shed on 20<sup>th</sup> January. The next full council meeting will be on 23<sup>rd</sup> January.</p> <p>My contact details are as above, please use them if you need me.</p> <p>Here’s to an interesting and successful 2025.</p>

