

District councillor's report, December 2011

1. Waste and recycling

The recycling rate for Mid Suffolk, as at the end of October, was 45.7%, and continues to rise. The garden waste service now has over 7,300 subscribers, with over 100 new subscribers each month. Subscribers to the trade waste service continues to increase, albeit slowly, despite the recession. It will have collected over 400 tons of refuse this year, of which 70 is recyclable.

The collection calendar plus Christmas and New Year arrangements is currently being printed and will be delivered to all households in the district via the collection crews over the next 2-3 weeks.

Waste enforcement continues to achieve successes, with incidents of fly-tipping down by 25 in the last month, and more offenders being brought to court. The enforcement officer's zero tolerance policy is paying dividends.

The street cleaning team is moving into winter mode, tackling ditches, hedges and leaves on footpaths and hard standing areas, all of which are going for mulching. The front-mounted mower has been adapted with a snow plough to assist with clearance in the event of really hard weather.

2. Localism Bill

This recently received Royal Assent, so many of the Government's initiatives including Neighbourhood Plans and the Community Right to Build may be in place by October 2012. In addition, the Act enables the Government to abolish the Regional Spatial Strategies.

3. Museum of East Anglian Life

Work on the £2.8m lottery funded development is almost complete. Works have included the restoration of Abbots Hall, the Dairy Cottages on Crow Street, the relocation of the counting house from Bury Livestock Market, and is on target for completion by March 2012.

4. Audit opinion and financial statements

Despite the significant additional burden arising from the introduction of into Local Government accounting, the Audit Commission has commended Mid Suffolk for submitting its accounts on time, despite the complexities involved with the new requirement to prepare them in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). In the words of the Commission's District Auditor "this was an excellent achievement given the in 2010/11 and I was able to issue an unqualified opinion and certificate on 30 September 2011." He went on to say that he issued an unqualified value for money conclusion stating that the Council had proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

5. 2012/13 budget

In response to the “Budget Challenge” we received 42 responses from key stakeholders and organizations: 26 from town and parish councils, 16 from the voluntary and public sector, as well as 59 individual responses. Key messages have been summarized and are being applied in the budgetary process. Feedback has been provided through a range of mechanisms including the Parish Council Liaison meeting on October 13.

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