

District Cllr Report Battsford and Ringshall Ward

Barking, Battsford, Great Bricett, Offton, Ringshall, Willisham

October 2021

MSDC Council Meeting

Council meeting was on 23rd September with a very full agenda due to the cancellation of the July meeting. Items included: a 'No Casino' resolution, senior staff pay review, CIFCO business plan, changes to Neighbourhood Plan procedures, wellbeing strategy, wildlife friendly streetlighting motion and a motion on proposed voter ID. The meeting adjourned after 4.5 hours meaning the last two items were not heard.

The senior staff pay review was withdrawn after Babergh District Council voted against it two days earlier. The proposal was to significantly increase senior staff pay but not increase pay across all levels.

The Wellbeing Strategy is very welcome and received unanimous approval

'No Casino' resolution

Councillors defeated the Administration motion which was advising against having a "No Casino" policy. Nonetheless, the majority voted in favour of the 'No Casino' resolution to give certainty to both residents and developers that we do not welcome casinos in Mid Suffolk.

Neighbourhood Planning

Proposals to streamline the Neighbourhood Plan process were approved. Candidate Neighbour Plans now automatically proceed to referendum after examination – subject to the implementation of any required modifications agreed by the parish and district councils – rather than having to seek approval at Cabinet. Neighbourhood Plans provide communities with the opportunity to develop a shared vision for their area – ensuring that everyone can have their say on where future growth, to meet Government housing targets, takes place. The plans can also include guidance on what new homes should look like, which open spaces the community would like to preserve and where they would like new shops or businesses to be located.

CIFCO

The business plan for CIFCO, the Council's property investment arm, was discussed. The commercial property portfolio is from an investment of £100 million by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils in which each council had £5 million equity. This equity is now at zero although expected to improve over the next 10 years. There is currently a book value of £83 million on this portfolio. The business plan was approved by a margin of six votes.

Joint Local Plan examination

The public hearing for the draft Joint Local Plan has re-started and all sessions are online via Microsoft Teams. For details on how to take part, go to www.midsuffolk.gov.uk and search for Joint Local Plan. Once complete, a report from the Planning Inspectors will then be provided to the Council for Mid Suffolk to act on.

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