

Council – 26th April 2018

Leaders Report

1. The “Merger”

You will by now be aware that for a number of reasons, not least the County Council’s new-found willingness to consider unitary government, the potential merger with Babergh District Council has now been put on pause. Once the outcome of the local government review being undertaken by the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) (see below) has been completed, we will reconsider the position.

2. Unitary Government

You will also by now know that the County Council have engaged consultants (Respublica) to look into the way that unitary government might work in Suffolk. This review is to also consider how an enhanced two-tier system might work. However, the SPSL have agreed not to participate in this proposal and indeed have further agreed to carry out their own review (the County Council has been invited to join in with this review). Once details have been finalised, I shall advise you accordingly.

3. Ex National Westminster Bank, Stowmarket

I’m pleased to confirm that MSDC have completed the purchase of the redundant bank. Some market testing on its future use is currently being undertaken, although a commitment has been made to the John Peel Centre to provide them with access to the High Street. A consultation event is being arranged with the Stowmarket Society to gather views from the local community as to their suggestions.

4. Needham Market Headquarters site.

Two consultation events have now been held in Needham Market to gather views from local residents as to the draft proposals for the headquarters site. They were well attended, and officers are currently correlating the outcomes. 274 attendees (6% of population) and 157 written comments. A report will come to full Council in due course.

5. Further education for 16+

Cllr Brewster and I have had an approach from West Suffolk College about the possibility of providing facilities for 16+ further education including skills training in the Stowmarket area. I have therefore arranged for a discussion with the Cabinet Member responsible for this at the County Council to see if we can progress the ideas any further. I’ll keep you informed of progress.

Cllr. Nick Gowrley
Leader - MSDC