

Public Document Pack



COMMITTEE:	JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	MONDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2021 9.30 AM
VENUE:	KING EDMUND CHAMBER, ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH

Members	
<u>Conservative Group</u> Melanie Barrett Mary McLaren Adrian Osborne	<u>Green Group</u> Terence Carter Keith Welham (Co-Chair) Jane Gould
<u>Conservative and Independent Group</u> James Caston Paul Ekpenyong Dave Muller	<u>Independent and Labour Group</u> Kathryn Grandon <u>Liberal Democrat Group</u> Keith Scarff

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AGENDA

PART 1

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

Page(s)

- 1 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES**
- 2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
- 3 **JOS/21/19 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
ON 22 NOVEMBER 2021**

Minutes to follow.
- 4 **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**

5 **QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

To consider questions from and provide answers to members of the public on any matter in relation to which the Committee has powers or duties and of which due notice has been given in accordance with the Committee and Sub-Committee Procedures Rules.

6 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

To consider questions from and provide answers to Councillors on any matter in relation to which the Committee has powers or duties and of which due notice has been given in accordance with the Committee and Sub-Committee Procedure Rules.

7 **FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

To review the Council's Forthcoming Decisions List and identify any items to be brought before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Please note the most up to date version can be found via the Website:

[Forthcoming Decisions List » Babergh Mid Suffolk](#)

8	JOS/21/20 REVIEW OF LOCAL CITIZENS ADVICE	5 - 14
9	JOS/21/22 BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN	15 - 18
	To agree the Work Plan	
10	JOS/21/23 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN	19 - 20
	To agree the Work Plan	

Date and Time of next meeting

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 21 February 2022 at 9:30am

Webcasting/ Live Streaming

The Webcast of the meeting will be available to view on the Councils YouTube page:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf_0D13zmegAf5Qv_aZSg

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact the Committee Officer, Bethany Webb on: 01449724683 or Email: Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Introduction to Public Meetings

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- Cold water is also available outside opposite the room.
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2. Follow the signs directing you to the Fire Exits at each end of the floor.
3. Do not enter the Atrium (Ground Floor area and walkways). If you are in the Atrium at the time of the Alarm, follow the signs to the nearest Fire Exit.
4. Use the stairs, not the lifts.
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Agenda Item 8

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	REPORT NUMBER: XXXX
FROM: Cllr Derek Davis- Babergh Cabinet Member for Communities Cllr Julie Flatman -Mid Suffolk Cabinet Member for Communities	DATE OF MEETING: 20 December 2021
OFFICER: Vicky Moseley Corporate Manager Communities	KEY DECISION REF NO. Item No.

REVIEW OF

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To introduce the presentation of Citizens Advise Mid Suffolk and Sudbury & District, outlining their annual performance. This will support the Committee assess whether or not the funding provided to the CAs is enabling them to achieve the outcomes set out in the revenue grant funding agreement and to establish whether the CAs are able to adequately meet the needs of residents within the districts.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 None.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee note the contents of this report and on hearing the CAs presentation may resolve to agree that sufficient assurance has been received from each CA and / or make recommendations to the Cabinet about further actions the Councils could take to support and work with the CAs.

REASON FOR DECISION

For Overview and Scrutiny Committee to satisfy itself that the Citizens Advice in receipt of revenue funding are delivering the outcomes set out in their Annual Agreements.

4. **KEY INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The Citizens Advice service offers free, confidential advice online, over the phone and in person, and those that rely on the service can be assured that the support provided is independent and impartial.
- 4.2 The Covid -19 Pandemic brought with it multiple new problems, challenges and uncertainty and despite the need to adapt and change the way in which the service is provided, the CAs with their staff and volunteers, have developed solutions to ensure that everyone who needs the service continues to be able to receive the help and advice they need.
- 4.3 Recognising the importance and value of the work delivered by CAs, B&MSDC provides a Revenue Grant to the CAs that support the districts residents. A Revenue Grant is one of the three Core Agency Support Grants B&MSDC provides to community groups and organisations and are typically awarded on an annual basis to organisations.
- 4.4 Core Agency Support Grants are the only source of funding that the District Councils provide that can be used to cover an organisation's operational costs and the majority of Revenue Grant recipients use their funding to cover core costs such as staff salaries, rent and venue hire, staff/volunteer training and development as well as general administration costs.
- 4.5 A rolling three-year funding agreement is in place with Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk and Sudbury & District CA. However, both organisations are required to submit a specific application form and provide additional documentation, on an annual basis, to extend said funding agreement for another year.
- 4.6 The rolling three year funding agreement is a reflection of the Councils ongoing commitment to support both CAs to support the Districts most vulnerable assisting with advice on benefits, debt and a range of other often interconnected and complex issues. It is also in recognition that CAs can struggle to attract sufficient long-term, 'core' funding for ongoing operations.
- 4.7 The size of the grant awarded determines how the grant is paid to the each of the CAs. For example, grants of up to and including £10,000, the applicant will receive one payment within the first quarter of the financial year. Applicants in receipt of a grant of between £10,000 and £30,000 will receive two six-monthly payments and applicants who receive a grant of more than £30,000 will receive quarterly payments upon submission of a quarterly update report.

4.8 2021/22 Revenue Grants

Babergh

Sudbury & District Citizens Advice Bureau - £53,500.00

Ipswich & District Citizens Advice Bureau - £7,673.00

Mid Suffolk

Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk - £95,500.00 (£86,700.00 plus an additional £8,800.00)

Citizens Advice West Suffolk - £5,460.00

- 4.9 The Councils continue to provide a lower level of funding to the CAs in West Suffolk and Ipswich & District in recognition that some Babergh / Mid Suffolk residents access those services. One-year agreements continue to be in place for these CAs.
- 4.10 In previous years MSDC has also supported Thetford and Diss CA, however Thetford and Diss CA decided not to apply for a Revenue Grant for 2021/22. During the pandemic/lockdowns it closed its outreach service based at the Eye Medical Centre. The CA reported that it wasn't getting the normal amount of traffic from the Suffolk villages that surround Diss.
- 4.11 In response to Diss & District CAs decision, CA Mid Suffolk extended their offer and has developed a service in Eye Library. The funding that would have been allocated to Thetford and Diss CA was redirected to CA Mid Suffolk to support their extended service.

5. **PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 All revenue grant applications are assessed by the Communities Officer responsible for grants and funding and approved by the Corporate Manager. The Communities officer agrees outcomes for the grant and sets review meetings with the applicant.
- 5.2 Regular communication with each CA is maintained throughout the year with, in person and/or virtual meetings, to review progress made against the agreed grant funding outcomes and to discuss any issues or barriers that are or may affect the organisation in achieving those outcomes. At the end of the financial year CAs provide a monitoring report, which details how the revenue grant funding was used and what was achieved over the funding period.
- 5.3 An outline of achievements and challenges will be addressed in the CAs Powerpoint presentation however typical discussions at quarterly meetings will cover progress on a range of activities some listed below.
- 5.4 Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk activity has included:
- Telephone and email services maintained with a reported increase in telephone contacts and a reduction in e-mail contacts, when compared to the same period last year.
 - Work to improve the ventilation systems in the CA's offices has been completed and some face-to-face appointments have been offered to clients whose issues cannot be resolved by phone or e-mail.
 - From September 2021 the CA started delivering two new energy related projects – the Energy Advice Programme and the Big Energy Saving Network Project.
 - During quarter one a digital outreach service was launched at Wattisham and Needham Market Community Centre and a further service being run from Eye library. Digital exclusion remains an important issue for CA clients and Mid Suffolk CA has been allocated funding by Mid Suffolk District Council to improve provision across the district.

- The CA is working with B&MSDCs Customer Services team to develop training that gives frontline workers up-to-date information about making referrals to the CA.

5.5 Sudbury & District activity has included:

- Restart of some face-to-face appointments but has found that the telephone help service has been massively successful and some of the issues presented by clients have been resolved without the need to see the client face-to-face.
- The CA's Debt Advisor post has been given additional funding, so the post is now secure for the next three years.
- Recruitment and training of new staff and volunteers is a key priority. At the 1st December 13 new volunteers have been recruited since the beginning of the financial year.
- The CA is looking to restart outreach services in Hadleigh on the 20th January 2022 and advisors will be providing this service on the first Thursday of each month. The CA is also offering services from the Phoenix Centre in Sudbury on a monthly basis.
- The CA reports an increase in the number of 25 - 35year olds seeking advice and guidance on a range of issues. The CA has also been supporting existing clients, 50% of whom have a long-term medical condition.
- The CA are expecting to see an increase in the number of clients and issues but are confident they have the systems and equipment in place to be able to handle a large number of cases and are now able to meet face-to-face with complex cases.

6. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 The work of the CAs is strongly linked to the Communities strategic priorities within the recently adopted Corporate Plan (2019-27) and the delivery of the Communities Strategy which underpins it.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Revenue/Capital/ Expenditure/Income Item	Total	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Mid Suffolk CA		95,500.00	£86,700.00 (with potential addition of £8,800.00)	£86,700.00 (with potential addition of £8,800.00)
Sudbury & District CA		£53,500.00	£53,500.00	£53,500.00
West Suffolk CA		£5,460.00	-	-

Ipswich & District		£7,673.00	-	-
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The above table reflects the 3 year agreements in place of Mid Suffolk & Sudbury & Districts CAs. Depending on outcomes of discussions with Thetford and Diss DA during December 2021, CA Mid Suffolk may be awarded with an additional £8,810.00 for their extended work in Eye.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has power to award funding under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, which allows the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do, in particular if it is carried out for the benefit of the Council, its areas or persons, resident or present in the area.
- 8.2 Legal advice will be taken in respect of the final wording of the agreement to ensure that necessary legal safeguards are in place and that payments will depend on satisfactory performance against stated outputs and submission of required documents.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Table 2

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Council requirements not fully satisfied over the three-year period	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Contract to specify performance required and documentary evidence, annual.
Other funders reduce or withdraw funding	Probable (3)	Serious (3)	Ongoing dialogue with CA and other funders to increase resilience and mitigate risk.
Impact of Covid not yet fully known	Probable (3)	Serious (3)	Ongoing dialogue with CA and other funders to increase resilience and mitigate risk.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 On-going dialogue continues with all CAs as part of the Grants Performance Framework.

11. **EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

11.1 The content of this report is such that there are no equality issues arising from this report although the review itself may consider any equality impacts.

12. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 NONE

13. **APPENDICES**

13.1 NONE

14. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

NONE



Review Scoping Document Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Review Topic (name of review)	Local Citizens Advice (LCA)
Purpose of the review/objective (quantify the outcomes the review will seek to achieve)	<p>The purpose of this review is to enable the Council to assess whether or not the funding provided to the LCAs is enabling the LCAs to achieve the outcomes set out in the revenue grant funding agreement and to establish whether the CAs are able to adequately meet the needs of residents within the districts.</p> <p>The review will support the wider key strategic outcomes of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Corporate Plan, the Wellbeing Strategy and the Communities Strategy.</p> <p>The Committee may resolve to agree that sufficient assurance has been received from the LCA and / or make recommendations to the Cabinet about further actions the Councils could take to support and work with the LCA.</p>
Areas of Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of Covid-19 from the start of the Pandemic on the way the LCA engaged with enquiries. - The transition in operations as the pandemic progressed. - The current way that clients can engage with LCA services. - Trend changes from the beginning of the Pandemic in how people engage. - Changes in the issues that the LCAs are dealing with (maybe a then & now look at the types of enquiries and age demographics) - Staffing changes that have arisen, including position on volunteers ie: volunteers at the beginning & now. - Financial implications for both LCA - Any new proposed new posts within LCA - The working relationship with both Authorities from LCA point of view. - Update on the funding position for both Authorities ie: three-year funding rolling contracts/service level agreements etc.

<p>Rationale</p> <p>Key issues and reason for the review. Include how it relates to the Joint Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee have previously decided to undertake an annual review of the LCA (Local Citizens Advice).</p> <p>Officers from the Grants Team will be meeting with Simon Clifton (Chief Officer – Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk) and Colleen Sweeney (Chief Officer – Sudbury and District Citizens Advice), prior to the meeting, due to be held on the 20th December 2021.</p>
<p>Success measures:</p>	
<p>What are the likely benefits to the Council and its community?</p>	<p>The benefits of undertaking this review are to ensure that the Councils' funding to the CA is having a positive impact in delivering its key strategic outcomes and the lives and wellbeing of our communities are being improved by the work of the CA.</p>
<p>What value is O&S adding to the process?</p>	<p>Officers from the Grants Team meet with CA Chief Officers on a regular basis and update reports are submitted on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The annual review by the Overview & Scrutiny adds further rigour and independent oversight to the assessment process, ensuring that Revenue Grant funding is enabling the CA's to contribute to the wider objectives of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Corporate Plan, the Wellbeing Strategy and the Communities Strategy.</p>
<p>Are there any barriers/dangers/ risks</p>	<p>None identified.</p> <p>Grants Officers meet with CA's representatives on a quarterly basis. Meetings with CA Chief Officers have been arranged prior to the O&S meeting in December, to ensure all relevant information is included within the presentations they will give at that meeting. Both Chief Officers have accepted invitations to attend the O&S meeting in December and give presentations.</p>
<p>Background information</p>	<p>The O&S Committee previously resolved to review the Local Citizens Advice on an annual basis.</p> <p>Full details of the previous committee can be found on the link below: https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=542&MID=3117.</p>
<p>Methodology/ Approach (what types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence and why)</p>	<p>BMSDC Officers will provide a report, which will be followed by presentations from Chief Officers of Mid Suffolk CA and Sudbury and District CA.</p>

Resource requirements	No specific resource requirements
Specify Witnesses/ Experts/ Stakeholders	Lead Officers from Mid Suffolk CA and Sudbury and District CA
Specify Evidence Sources for documents	LCA annual accounts and performance reporting
Specify Site Visits (where and when)	None Required.
Risk and Implications (Legal/Finance/Audit)	
Lead Members	Cllr Welham Cllr McLaren Cllr Scarff
Officer Support	Nadeem Murtuja – Assistant Director for Communities and Wellbeing Vicky Moseley – Corporate Manager for Communities Roy Emmerson – Communities Officer – Grants and Funding Practitioner Committee Services

Date of Meeting	Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 December 2021	

Task and Finish Group	Not required	
State date		
Finish date		
Frequency of meetings		

Agenda Item 9

BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2021/22:

TOPIC	PURPOSE	LEAD OFFICER	CABINET MEMBER	PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE
20 DECEMBER 2021 – JOINT				Chair: Cllr Keith Welham
Review of Local Citizens Advice	To review the Funding Arrangements for LCA in the two Districts based on the scoping on 22 November 2021	Assistant Director – Communities and Wellbeing	Cabinet Member for Communities	
17 JANUARY 2022				
Draft General Fund (GF) 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook	Scrutiny of the GF Budget for 2022/2023	Assistant Director – Corporate Resources Corporate Manager – Finance	The Leaders Cabinet Members for Finance	BDC 18 January 2021
Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Four - year Outlook	Scrutiny of the HRA Budget and Business Plan	Assistant Director – Corporate Resources Corporate Manager – Finance	The Leaders Cabinet Members for Finance	BDC 18 January 2021
21 FEBRUARY 2022 – JOINT				Chair: Cllr Mary McLaren
Representatives on Outside Bodies	A review of the Representatives on Outside Bodies and an update on the work undertaken	Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office Senior Governance Officer		23 November 2020 JOS/20/3
The Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Scrutiny of the infrastructure Delivery plan before being presented to Cabinet.	Assistant Director for Planning and Building Control Professional Lead for Key Sites and Infrastructure		
21 MARCH 2022 – JOINT				Chair: Cllr Keith Welham
Crime and Disorder Panel meeting	The Committee conduct a scrutiny review of the SWSCP to fulfil the Councils Statutory requirements	Assistant Director – Communities and Wellbeing Community Safety Professional Lead - Communities	BDC Cabinet Member for Communities MSDC Cabinet Member for Communities	22 March 2021 JOS/20/17

25 APRIL 2022				
23 MAY 2022 - JOINT				
Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21	Review of the work conducted throughout 2020/21 – Lessons learnt, improvements and achievements	Corporate Manager – Democratic Services Senior Governance Support Officer		

Topics identified for review but not currently timetabled:

Underspend of Grants for bringing empty homes back into to use

A report to be brought to Committee for the effect of the underspending off grants for bringing empty homes back into use –**NOTE:** Whilst in emergency response mode SLT deemed this was not a high priority.

Crime and Disorder Panel meeting

Required to take place at least once a year, provisionally agreed to take place in March 2022

Improving Access to the Private Rented Sector - Chairs to discuss the timing for bringing this to Committee

Scrutiny of the delivery of services for Transport for both Town and rural areas.

Scrutiny of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Census reports to be scrutinised in 2022

Scrutiny process with SCC for Anti-Social Behaviour - To be considered for between December 2021 and February 2022.

Other topics identified:

- Suggestion: Scrutiny of ABS projects and policies – Suggested at the meeting on the 22 March 2021
- Review of Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and the support they provide to Parishes across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.
- Information Bulletin updating Members on the Electronic Complaints system.
- Scrutiny of the Cabinets' Communication and Sharing of Information
- Stella Maris Review
- Land Adoptions Policy

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Agenda Item 10

MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2021/22:

TOPIC	PURPOSE	LEAD OFFICER	CABINET MEMBER	PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE
20 DECEMBER 2021 – JOINT			Chair: Cllr Keith Welham	
Review of Local Citizens Advice	To review the Funding Arrangements for LCA in the two Districts based on the scoping on 22 November 2021	Assistant Director – Communities and Wellbeing	Cabinet Member for Communities	
13 JANUARY 2022				
Draft General Fund (GF) 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook	Scrutiny of the GF Budget for 2022/2023	Assistant Director – Corporate Resources Corporate Manager – Finance	The Leaders Cabinet Members for Finance	BDC 14 January 2021
Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Four - year Outlook	Scrutiny of the HRA Budget and Business Plan	Assistant Director – Corporate Resources Corporate Manager – Finance	The Leaders Cabinet Members for Finance	BDC 14 January 2021
21 FEBRUARY 2022 – JOINT			Chair: Cllr Mary McLaren	
Representatives on Outside Bodies	A review of the Representatives on Outside Bodies and an update on the work undertaken	Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office Senior Governance Officer		23 November 2020 JOS/20/3
The Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Scrutiny of the infrastructure Delivery plan before being presented to Cabinet.	Assistant Director for Planning and Building Control Professional Lead for Key Sites and Infrastructure		
17 MARCH 2022 – JOINT			Chair: Cllr Keith Welham	
Crime and Disorder Panel meeting	The Committee conduct a scrutiny review of the SWSCP to fulfil the Councils Statutory requirements	Assistant Director – Communities and Wellbeing Community Safety Professional Lead - Communities	BDC Cabinet Member for Communities MSDC Cabinet Member for Communities	22 March 2021 JOS/20/17

21 APRIL 2022				
19 MAY 2022				
Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21	Review of the work conducted throughout 2020/21 – Lessons learnt, improvements and achievements	Corporate Manager – Democratic Services Senior Governance Support Officer		

Topics identified for review but not currently timetabled:

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A report to be brought to Committee for the effect of the underspending off grants for bringing empty homes back into use – **NOTE:** Whilst in emergency response mode SLT deemed this was not a high priority.

Crime and Disorder Panel meeting

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Improving Access to the Private Rented Sector - Chairs to discuss the timing for bringing this to Committee

Scrutiny of the delivery of services for Transport for both Town and rural areas.

Scrutiny of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Census reports to be scrutinised in 2022

Scrutiny process with SCC for Anti-Social Behaviour - To be considered for between December 2021 and February 2022.

Other topics identified:

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- Information Bulletin updating Members on the Electronic Complaints system.
- Scrutiny of the Cabinets' Communication and Sharing of Information
- Land Adoptions Policy