

## Draft MSDC Corporate Plan 2023-2031

### “Leaving a positive legacy for our children and grandchildren”

Through the results of the local elections in May 2023, you have placed us collectively into a position of leadership and responsibility, for you individually, and for our communities collectively, across the whole of Mid Suffolk.

We know however that you all voted differently, for many different reasons and many of you may not have voted at all in those elections – possibly feeling disillusioned by politics and politicians, and feeling disenfranchised and ever more distant from so called ‘institutions’ such as a council. Many of you may simply see us as the Council rather than your Council; and may possibly be unclear of what the difference even is between your Town or Parish Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council.

We want to change all of this!

We believe in providing open and honest leadership. But we also believe in the importance of shared leadership and citizenship. For us it wouldn't be right for us simply to deliver services to you because you pay your council tax (albeit that is true). For us, it is the role of Mid Suffolk Council to help shape and nurture our towns and villages to **thrive** both now and in the future. But we can only do that with your help.

We do not have a magic wand. We know we have a key role to play, and that role will change depending upon the circumstances:

- it will always be to provide high quality services that are easy to access when you need them and which you can rely on, such as benefits advice and support, housing and homelessness support, leisure and wellbeing activities, air quality, food safety, planning and building control regulation,
- but as importantly it will be to convene people to discuss the challenges and opportunities in different communities, to enable and empower residents to design and implement the local solutions to local issues based upon your knowledge and experience of place,
- and sometimes it will be for us to simply get out of the way!

But we cannot succeed on our own. Thriving communities are made up of many different core components, many of which involve ensuring there is local access to the services people need to be able to function effectively – from truly affordable homes, to clean air, to schools, to GPs and dentists, to green spaces. In addition, of course, when people need to go elsewhere for whatever reason, they need to be able to travel across our rural places easily and affordably. We believe these are the conditions needed to enable all of you to live fulfilling lives, and this is what we will help every community to achieve.

The other magic ingredient though, that is essential to bringing a richness and uniqueness to each community is you. Thriving communities are built upon the active citizenship of the people who live there. In everything we do we will therefore be working to empower you; to enable you to be active in the place where you live and have a passion for; and fundamentally to work with you rather than do things to you.

We do not believe that we know best, in fact our local knowledge is sometimes limited and local people often know more. That is why we are consulting you on everything we have written here. We want to know what you think. And for us that will be just the start of our engagement with you, listening to you, working in partnership with you. We want to create a council that isn't seen as being politically led but is community led, shaped in your image. To do so we need your passion, your knowledge, your experience, your imagination and your energy; and in return we promise to work with you as a loyal and passionate advocate and enabler of what you want to achieve.

We believe that ultimately the test of whether a community is able, or is well placed, to thrive is how it copes with adversity – how resilient it is to the challenges people and communities inevitably face - how a community copes in those circumstances and how quickly people can recover. As your Council it is partly our role to be there in those critical moments, to support you through that adversity and to be there for the most vulnerable in society. We did this during the pandemic, but we are also humble enough to know that what really made the difference, and what got our towns and villages through those periods of adversity was community spirit and the community bonds between neighbours, friends and strangers looking out for and supporting each other. That can't be bottled or artificially created, nor should it be taken for granted. We therefore see it as our role to help nurture community resilience and to help it become more robust and grow. This is essential to ensure our communities are still able to thrive, through these new times of adversity, such as the cost of living and the energy crisis, and also through the future challenges of the climate crisis.

It is rapidly becoming clear that mankind's impact on the climate is the greatest challenge of our times – perhaps the biggest test that mankind has faced, and therefore we believe that responding to this should be at the heart of all we do as a Council and as community leaders.

We believe that we can only thrive as communities in Mid Suffolk (and as human beings) and create a positive legacy for our children and grandchildren by living within the resources available to us. A relentless pursuit of growth and self interest has produced great rewards for some, but has also created more misery, reduced wellbeing for many and greater depths of inequality. These were exposed during the pandemic, have become more entrenched, and are worsening through the current cost of living crisis. The solution to creating genuine thriving communities and hope can not therefore be more of the same, but to think and act differently – valuing and respecting local resources more, creating a more holistic society in Mid Suffolk, creating more community wealth - where more of the money is both earned and spent locally (not on food or goods imported from abroad), creating greater wage growth, a more sustainable society and a high quality of life for everyone. To achieve this we intend to put environmental and social responsibilities at the heart of all we do. We believe we can best achieve this by focusing on those two themes, and also delivering high quality council services orientated around those themes.

Following consultation with all of you, our tenants, other partners, stakeholders, businesses and our own staff we will develop specific metrics to help us and you determine whether we are THRIVING. We also intend to use a combination of five overarching success measures:

- [The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Thriving Places Index](#)
- Liveability
- Reduction in Carbon Emissions
- Delivery of the Joint Local Plan

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – a holistic approach to ‘community well-being & wealth building’:**

What’s important	How might we achieve this
<p>Availability of truly affordable homes</p>	<p>Increase number of homes available at social and affordable rent in the District.</p> <p>Improve environmental standard of housing.</p> <p>Review affordability of housing and meet community housing needs.</p> <p>Deliver own exemplar housing and housing for social rent.</p> <p>Promote Community Land Trusts to deliver housing for our communities.</p> <p>Ensure affordable housing is provided by developers.</p> <p>Work with private landlords to improve affordability of rentals and improved environmental performance.</p> <p>Implement a private renters charter for Mid Suffolk to identify good landlords (voluntary code in lieu of the delayed Renters Charter legislation).</p> <p>Incentivise landlords to make housing available to rent.</p>
<p>Improved physical and mental well being</p>	<p>Sport for all – encouragement and support of grass roots sport.</p> <p>Facilitate local groups to build sport and physical activities offering especially in rural locations.</p> <p>Working in partnership with the voluntary sector to support the health and wellbeing of our residents.</p> <p>“Feel Good Suffolk” public health programme.</p> <p>Working in partnership with employers and existing employment schemes to support ‘life-long skills’, progression in and out of employment and work life balance.</p>

<p>Respecting, harness and promoting local culture</p>	<p>Protect heritage buildings and bring to life for citizens.</p> <p>Use local history as cultural capital to attract visitors and residents alike.</p> <p>Promote local culture as a tool to increase sense of belonging and pride in district and to enhance local economy.</p> <p>Encourage existing economy to advertise and embed its sustainability to all, a 'field to fork' heritage.</p>
<p>Active citizenship</p>	<p>Champion our communities that are thriving, sharing and showcasing what is working well in our communities.</p> <p>Provide multiple, more effective, means of communication from and with the Council.</p> <p>Provide more physical and digitally accessible Council meetings &amp; decision making.</p> <p>Embed participatory budget setting to ensure communities not just understand but help shape how, where and how much the Council spends.</p> <p>Expanding our mindset to 'democracy' in everything the Council does (including enable greater participation in the formal aspects of Council decision making) and in particular working alongside the voluntary sector to enable people to be more active citizens in their local communities particularly young people and those disengaged.</p>
<p>Access to green spaces</p>	<p>Review green spaces across district and act to ensure everyone has access within walking distance.</p> <p>Potentially purchase different types of space (woodland, meadows etc) to provide where green space is not currently available. Or work in partnership (e.g.; Suffolk Wildlife Trust) to make space available.</p> <p>Ensure all demographics can use.</p> <p>Ensure local trees of community value are protected.</p> <p>Enable greater protection of trees.</p> <p>Ensure swift action to prevent environmental damage in communities.</p>

<p>Community engagement, consultation and liaison</p>	<p>Develop and embed our Council locality officer approach and enhance our visibility/accessibility of all staff within communities.</p> <p>Supporting and encouraging communities to develop neighbourhood plans and using those plans to help determine planning applications in line with the aspirations of those communities.</p> <p>Enhancing our physical customer access points.</p> <p>Citizen assembly approach to 'wicked' issues.</p>
<p>Heritage protection</p>	<p>Develop supplementary planning guidance on sustainable construction and heritage assets and review the operation of the heritage building services.</p> <p>To ensure citizens are informed and empowered by taking pride in their surrounding heritage and for those with heritage building or land to become supported in their duty of care for the next generation.</p>
<p>Enhanced walking/cycling opportunities</p>	<p>Re-assess Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to ensure this reflects whole district.</p> <p>Work with communities to identify where opportunities exist.</p> <p>Work with landowners and other parties to create new cycle/foot paths where necessary increasing momentum and action.</p> <p>Ensure access to schools.</p>
<p>Support for small rural businesses</p>	<p>New business start-up support programme.</p> <p>Work with the Federation of Small Builders (FSB) specifically on rural small businesses to showcase support.</p> <p>Collate data to ensure a holistic knowledge of existing business strengths and weaknesses especially in relation to sustainability – to support development as appropriate.</p>
<p>Better rural transport</p>	<p>Work with communities to improve sustainable transport options in conjunction with community needs:-</p> <p>To aid regular, reliable, consistent footfall within our district and connections to other districts.</p>

	<p>To combat isolation and loneliness within and around wards.</p> <p>To support higher education connections to and from wards.</p> <p>To ensure local job security for those who do not/cannot drive.</p> <p>To ensure access to supporting infrastructure, e.g.: GPs, NHS services, leisure etc.</p>
Improved connectivity	Ensure cycle routes connect with bus hubs and train stations (such as with cycle storage options). Safe pedestrian connections.
Addressing inequalities (including health, poverty, educational and employment)	<p>Develop our understanding of where communities aren't thriving and focus on addressing.</p> <p>Link with other agencies and act as facilitator to engage them.</p> <p>Use all available methods to monitor impacts.</p>
Pride in your place	<p>Work with communities and voluntary groups to ensure residents are proud of where they live and have the means/support to facilitate improving this.</p> <p>To improve sites to prevent anti-social behaviour and promote more citizen involvement.</p> <p>To create opportunity to interact and promote community use.</p>

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY – Enabling low carbon living

What's important	How might we achieve this
Insulated and energy efficient homes	<p>Deliver own houses to the highest sustainable construction standards.</p> <p>Develop and deliver a plan for improved insulation for homeowners, and those who rent privately including small private landlords.</p> <p>Implement a plan to improve our Council owned houses to ensure they all meet a minimum standard of energy performance (EPC).</p>

	<p>Ensure support available for most vulnerable to meet cost of living issues.</p> <p>Enable energy efficient methods to be applied to listed buildings.</p> <p>Review where oil heating is used across district and work with residents for support and alternatives.</p>
Engaged private landlords and home-owners	<p>Ensure there is support towards zero carbon living – link up support available elsewhere.</p>
Achieving net zero carbon emissions as a Council and across the whole district	<p>Progressing the Council’s Carbon Reduction Management Plan to reach Net Zero by 2030.</p> <p>Work with our communities to increase awareness of grants available for works to become more sustainable, insulated and reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>Show leadership across district through variety of means – seminars, opinion pieces, engagement with public and private sector.</p> <p>Illustrate and highlight where cutting carbon emissions can help with cost of living – co-benefits of environment-friendly lifestyles.</p>
Community energy production	<p>Investigate options via Community Land Trusts (engagement with community), proposed developments (work with forward-thinking developer)</p> <p>Review parishes and other groups wanting to progress this and offer support.</p>
Zero waste	<p>Increasing recycling rates.</p> <p>Reduced waste.</p> <p>Support for repair initiatives such as repair cafes, bike workshops.</p> <p>Promote 5Rs (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle).</p> <p>Digester/food waste pilot.</p>
Improved biodiversity	<p>Developing a Biodiversity Strategy, an action plan around our Tree Canopy Survey and working in conjunction with Suffolk County Council to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Look to see</p>

	<p>where gaps are and how to enhance. Convene a tree summit for landowners combined with a call for sites for tree planting.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the agricultural industry and farmers to deliver biodiversity improvements.</p> <p>Promote guidance to developers to influence developments to be more sustainable and deliver greater environmental gain.</p>
<p>Clean, secure energy and water supply and management</p>	<p>Energy and water strategy.</p> <p>Water use – commercial and private.</p> <p>Encourage developers to install rainwater-harvesting and grey water systems for loo-flushing, garden watering etc. to reduce household consumption of piped water.</p>
<p>Local food production</p>	<p>Develop resilience to shocks in food chain supply through local food production, including developing a comprehensive strategy for local food production, supporting new small-scale growers and producers across the district.</p> <p>Encouraging the setting up of new farmers' markets, farm shops and community-supported agriculture (CSA) initiatives across the district.</p> <p>Support for and access to allotments.</p>
<p>Greener, skilled economy</p>	<p>Develop Innovation &amp; Skills Centre to demonstrate sustainable construction methodologies.</p> <p>Innovation and Skills Centre as centre of excellence for green skills.</p> <p>Work through the Federation of Small Businesses and Chambers to facilitate further across district.</p> <p>Support recruitment of greener businesses to Gateway 14.</p> <p>Collate a database of employment and green skills across the district.</p> <p>Promote creation of green skilled apprenticeships and liaison with universities.</p>



<p>Sustainability in the built environment</p>	<p>Develop supplementary planning guidance on improving energy efficiency and zero-carbon technologies, including for works to listed buildings.</p> <p>Set up or procure a home-energy advice service for residents: providing information on the most effective measures for home insulation / energy saving / green retrofit and directing people towards the best technologies and suppliers.</p> <p>Supporting the adaption of listed buildings.</p> <p>Ensure sustainability in our property portfolio.</p>
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