

# MSDC COUNCIL – 26 OCTOBER 2023

## ITEM 5 – LEADER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 1. Storm Babet

Last weekend’s floods were the worst Mid Suffolk has experienced for many years. It has been a deeply distressing time for many of our residents and businesses, who have seen property damaged and lives disrupted. A huge clean-up is now well under way, and I know we will all continue to do all we can to support residents, businesses and communities during this recovery period.

Additional council staff have been deployed in the worst affected areas to assist with the clean-up and to help find temporary accommodation for affected residents, in areas like Debenham, Stowmarket, and Needham Market. Drying out properties and getting repairs done will take time, but we are committed to supporting residents and helping communities to recover. We welcome the government’s announcement of recovery funding, and we will work with the County Council and other agencies to secure this and make sure it reaches those in need.

I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who was there for our communities at the weekend:

- To our emergency services
- To our council staff who responded to the flooding.
- To councillors who were out in your communities over the weekend, doing outstanding work, identifying issues and taking action.
- To our town and parish councils, and the local volunteers who helped their neighbours, family and friends.
- To the farmers who helped ferry children through floodwater and rescue motorists.
- To the Debenham leisure centre staff who provided an overnight rest centre for those forced from their homes.
- To the teachers and school staff who ensured the safety of children.

There will be many more I’ve missed. Thank you all.

It was a difficult weekend, there is still a lot of work to do, but we should recognise this fantastic show of community spirit.

### 2. Corporate Plan Refresh

I would like to remind everyone that there is still time for people to have their say on the council’s future direction and priorities. We have outlined the administration’s draft priorities, but want feedback from the community – are these priorities right, what else could we do, what have we missed?

The survey is live until the 15<sup>th</sup> November, and details can be found on our website. I hope members will encourage people to take part. Posters and postcards have also been created which you can share in your communities.

### **3. Free net zero advice**

We're pleased to have partnered with Groundwork East to deliver free, impartial, expert advice to help businesses and organisations save energy, reduce their emissions and establish tailored decarbonisation plans.

This new Net Zero Business Advice Service will provide free support to help businesses, the voluntary sector and other organisations understand their greenhouse gas emissions, set a plan to reduce these and access grant funding to implement carbon reduction actions.

More information about Net Zero Business Advice can be found on our website.

### **4. Safer Suffolk Renters**

This new initiative aims to improve life for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector. We are joining forces with Suffolk's other district and borough councils to deliver this ground-breaking project.

'Safe Suffolk Renters' is designed to create a better understanding of the pressures and problems in the sector, and to improve standards - particularly in the worst private rented homes in the area. To achieve this, the project team will consult widely with tenants, landlords and stakeholders in the county.

A conference taking place at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich on 3<sup>rd</sup> November is free for any landlord to attend. Details are also available on our website. Similar conferences for tenants and stakeholders will follow.

### **5. Cosy Homes insulation project**

Lastly, members will recall the amendment to the last budget, agreed unanimously, to set aside £2 million for insulation and other home energy saving measures. Officers have been working hard to design the scheme, and I am pleased to say that we will be launching this initiative, called "Cosy Homes" next month. My colleague Councillor Winch has been working with officers and will provide full details ahead of the launch.