

MSDC COUNCIL – 22 FEBRUARY 2024

ITEM 4 – LEADER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Shortlisted for UK Council of the Year

I am delighted to announce that Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils have been named as a finalist for UK Council of the Year at the prestigious iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2024.

This is a fantastic recognition for the hard work, innovation and dedication of officers and the progress the organisation has made over the last few years. We can all take pride in this nomination. Although we face many challenges in local government, our officers go the extra mile to deliver for residents and communities.

The awards ceremony is on 6 March in London, and I am sure we all have our fingers crossed.

I would also like to congratulate our Building Control team, who have won a national industry award for their work on Black Pheasant Barn in Sudbury.

2. Getting the phones answered

I am also happy to report an improvement in one important area of our customer service. Getting the council’s phones answered without long delays was an issue that regularly came up on the doorsteps during last year’s election campaign. Our target is to answer phone calls to the council in 1min 45 seconds, and the average wait has been coming down over recent months. So far in February phones have been answered on average in 1 min 9 seconds, an above target performance. I would like to thank Sara Wilcock, Sam Lake and the team for their efforts in achieving this.

3. Deadline for locality awards

I am sure all councillors are aware, but I would like to remind you that we have until 22 March to spend any remaining locality award budgets. These are not carried over so do make sure your funds have been allocated.

Our website contains guidance as to how locality funding can be spent, including the full eligibility criteria and a breakdown of eligible projects. Also, the grants team stand ready to assist and advise members so that the funding gets out there to support community projects and initiatives.

At the end of the financial year, our communications team will be doing a broad celebration of all the ways in which you all have helped communities using the awards.

3. Retrofit solutions conference

Finally, I would like to raise awareness of a free event focused on making Suffolk’s older homes more energy efficient, which takes place at The Hold in Ipswich on 6 March.

The Retrofit Solutions Conference is open to homeowners, landlords and building professionals. It will feature case studies and expert advice on providing innovative retrofit solutions to help increase energy efficiency in properties of all types. You can sign up on the Green Suffolk website.