

## **MSDC COUNCIL – 20 MARCH 2024**

### **ITEM 5 – LEADER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **iESE Public Sector Transformation awards**

I am delighted to say Mid Suffolk District Council, along with our Babergh colleagues, was named UK Council of the Year at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards.

It is great recognition for everyone involved in the organisation, not just this administration but all those involved over the last decade or so. Congratulations to our staff, to all councillors across the political spectrum, and to all the partner organisations we work with.

#### **Bramford to Twinstead**

Councillors will be aware of National Grid’s long-running plans for more electricity pylons between Bramford and Twinstead. The Planning Inspectorate has just completed examination of the proposals, and is now preparing a report for the Secretary of State to make a final decision.

Mid Suffolk District Council recognises the need to upgrade the grid to help meet net zero targets, but we have objected to the plans, which have significant shortcomings. Not enough has been done to mitigate impact on the countryside and local communities.

We also are very concerned about the cumulative impacts of this and other large-scale energy infrastructure proposals such as the new Norwich to Tilbury pylon line, as well as other emerging projects. We will continue to raise the concerns of our communities.

#### **Changing Places**

I am pleased to report work has started on creating fully accessible toilet facilities at Stradbroke Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre.

The Food Museum in Stowmarket will also be home to Changing Places facilities as part of an ongoing development. These facilities go a long way to ensure our district is as accessible and inclusive as possible.

#### **Musical Memories project**

Over the last few months, through our partnership with Orchestras Live, we have been able to bring musicians from the Britten Sinfonia into our communities. They have held a series of workshops where they have performed for, and also created music together with, older residents and those with long-term conditions. On Monday I was able to attend the final event in this project which was two concerts in Stowmarket, bringing all the participants together. I have to say it was a truly remarkable experience to have world-class musicians playing for, and singing with residents and their support workers. Thank you to the officers who made this project so special.

#### **Working with partners**

The administration continues to meet with key stakeholders to discuss our plans, to listen, and to look for ways we can work together for the benefit of our residents. Yesterday Councillor Eburne and myself met with local representatives of the National Farmers’ Union. Councillor Weller has been working with neighbouring councils on a funding bid for a large-scale environment project. Next week we are meeting with representatives of Stowmarket Town Council. We look forward to these partnerships bringing benefits to all involved.