

Report from Elizabeth Gibson-Harries

In four years Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils, although still sovereign bodies, have made great strides to integrate staff and services to save money and preserve services. We have in place a Joint Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2019 to allow more flexible working in Economy, Housing, the Environment and Strong Healthy Communities.

MSDC has won a bid for £ 1 million for new council houses. There is an increasing need for social housing as so many dwellings have been sold off and because of the high cost of starter homes in Suffolk. We must build more homes of every kind. We have an increasing population in the Mid Suffolk area due to rise to 116,700 in 2035. Although we are mainly an affluent community there are pockets of poverty in both urban and rural areas and we must work harder to create jobs and suitable housing. We need to work with partners to identify suitable developments. Mid Suffolk has exceeded its building quota for 2014-15 building over 400 new homes around the District. We provide sheltered housing for over 400 people in 24 schemes and the Housing Department is now working with Health and Welfare to create safe and healthy environments.

The new CIL agreement will run alongside the 106 scheme for planning applications to allow better funding for info structure.

As a District we have increased the Green Bin re-cycling scheme from 38%-42% and rising .

We have match funded grants to assist local small businesses to get started and have allocated 2 teams of Officers and Staff to assist communities to help themselves by identifying grant money and they will also help with the application forms.

While money is still tight , the Council is pressing ahead with new ideas for creating a good working with Suffolk County Council and BT to bring forward the date for better Broadband in this area,.

The Parish Councils mean a lot to us as we can meet you regularly to take forward, any problems and discuss future developments. While we all know that we have to grow to survive, the parishes will tell us where there is a need for development and how they would like to be involved in the process.