

**District Councillor's Report:**  
**Gislingham Ward**  
**Mellis, Gislingham, Thornham, `Wortham & Burgate, Wickham**  
**Skeith Parish Councils**  
**January 2025**

Council meeting	There was no scheduled council meeting in December. The next meeting will be held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2025.
Budget updates	Proposals for the General Fund budget were approved in this month's second cabinet meeting, and discussed later on in the Overview & Scrutiny committee on the 19 <sup>th</sup> December. This shows the council's finances to be surplus, unusual for District councils, in part due to expanded housing developments and income generated from Gateway 14, with these surplus funds being used to proceed with the Mid Suffolk Plan. Key figures include an increase of £1.689m in net revenue service expenditure, a £2.660m increase in gross expenditure, no increase in council tax from 2024/25, and a capital budget of £29.986m in 2025/26.
CIL Expenditure updates	New updates regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy programme were discussed in the first cabinet meeting of this month. This includes approval of half a million pounds of investment into the Stowmarket Health Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF), and £188k of funding for Thurston Community College.
Devolution White Paper	<p>The White Paper regarding devolution was published 16<sup>th</sup> December, which despite not mentioning Suffolk directly, strongly suggests at a change to the two-tier local government structure. This could potentially suggest a large Unitary Authority covering all of Suffolk, abolishing the district councils altogether. The paper also includes the creation of a "Strategic Authority", which is likely to include a Mayor for both Suffolk &amp; Norfolk.</p> <p>Suffolk CC Administration following an extraordinary meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January has written to the Govt asking to join the "fast track" devolution programme and also requesting to cancel the County Council elections in May.</p> <p>A reply from the government is expected by the end of January</p>
National Planning Policy Framework	<p>Changes have been made to the National Planning Policy Framework to assist with the government's housebuilding plans. This includes mandatory housebuilding targets for councils, with a priority on brownfield sites. The new plans have sparked both praise and backlash, with concerns over the role of individual councils. Mid Suffolk's portfolio holder for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure Cllr Andrew Stringer has commented on the new proposals.</p> <p><a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk">Statement in response to Government's National Planning Policy Framework announcement - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>

**Rowland Warboys MSDC Cllr. Gislingham Ward**  
[rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk) Tel: 07484186121