

Andrew Mellen - District Councillor Report for Bacton Ward – April 2022

(Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe & Wyverstone Parishes)

Governance Review	<p>At the last Council meeting, the new Code of Conduct, as suggested by NALC was adopted. This will come into force from the next Annual Council meeting.</p> <p>It was also agreed to undertake a Community Governance Review. Councils should have such reviews every 10-15 years and can consider creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes. Formal communication will be sent to all Parish and Town Councils explaining the process.</p>
Pay Policy Statement	<p>New pay scales for the Senior Management Team were agreed at full council, as well as agreement that the Chief Executive will conduct a pay review for all staff over the next 12 months.</p>
Remote and hybrid meetings	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council agreed to support the petition to Government to allow Councils the flexibility to hold remote and hybrid meetings when appropriate. Currently all voting members of a Council have to be present to make any decisions, but officers and others are allowed to make representations remotely. The technology and license are now ready for this to take place and it is hoped that this will be trialled in the next couple of weeks.</p>
Neighbourhood Plans	<p>Cllr Stringer proposed a motion at Full Council for MSDC to actively encourage communities, especially all the core villages, to create and update neighbourhood plans. The Council will allocate resources in order for this to happen. The vote for this motion was 15 for; 13 against and 1 abstention. All of the Conservative administration group (bar one abstention) voted against this motion, but it was carried.</p>
Net Carbon Zero Toolkit	<p>Cllr Eburne proposed a motion for the Council to adopt the Net Carbon Zero Toolkit as technical guidance for developers and homeowners to help reduce the carbon footprint in new and existing dwellings. This toolkit had been produced by the LGA together with Forest of Dean, West Oxfordshire and Cotswold District Councils. This proposal was unanimously approved.</p>
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	<p>BMSDC's first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was discussed at last week's Cabinet meeting. The plan sets out the councils' approach to improving and developing the local cycling and walking network across the district over the next 10 years, to support residents in shifting towards more sustainable transport. After an online public consultation almost 200 potential infrastructure improvement schemes across the two districts have been identified and prioritised according to a variety of factors such as effectiveness, policy, economic factors and deliverability. This prioritisation will be key to obtaining local, regional and national funding towards improving sustainable travel facilities and routes in the districts.</p>
Corporate Peer Challenge & Planning peer review	<p>The initial findings of last month's Corporate Peer Challenge have been published and we are awaiting the full report. The initial findings include that BMSDC is a well-run organisation with huge ambition which does not always match capacity and resources. There is more work to do to embed climate concerns and wellbeing into all activities.</p> <p>We also had our planning service reviewed by a team from other Councils – they have come up with a series of recommendations to improve and streamline the process which will be implemented over the next few months.</p>

Cllr Andrew Mellen

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