

## District councillor's report, November 2013

### 1. Accommodation

Contrary to a report which appeared last month in the EADT, Mid Suffolk and Babergh currently have no intention of leaving their respective headquarters for the county's old headquarters, Endeavour House in Ipswich. In fact, we have simply agreed to commission an independent review to determine whether either of our main office buildings could be shared with other agencies, or if the sites could be developed or sold.

In May 2012, both councils resolved that in the medium term (3 – 5 years) both HQs would be retained, which would provide flexibility and avoid taking on replacement or alternative accommodation until clarity on the shape of the new integrated structure and the number of staff required, was known. It would also ensure a retained identity for both councils.

The review should provide the opportunity to ensure that ICT is used to enable staff and Members to work more effectively, whether that is from the office, on site or in the wider workplace. The review must also address public access needs.

The current office buildings cost the councils around £1.1million a year to run. Following the integration of services during the past two years and subsequent reduction in staff, large areas of the offices have been left empty and unused. Moreover, the larger than expected cut in government grants has forced us to take a serious look at our accommodation needs.

### 2. Finance

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been successful in securing £166,900 from the Government's Transformation Challenge Award. This money will be invested further in ways of working that are more outcome-focussed and which contribute to the wide-ranging investigations currently under way within each of the Transformation Enquiry Groups.

### 3. Progress Power, Eye Airfield

Public consultation on the proposal to develop a gas-fired power station on the Eye Airfield Industrial Estate is underway and closes on 7<sup>th</sup> November. A number of exhibitions are being held in and around Eye. I attended one myself which was well explained and illustrated. As previously reported the final decision will be made by the Secretary of State. Mid Suffolk and SCC will be key consultees along with local parish councils and other local and national organisations. It is expected that a decision by the Secretary of State will be made in June 2015.

#### 4. IT

Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils will operate a joint ICT service from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014, which will be managed and operated by SCC. SCC will manage the following service elements in the joint service:

- Physical network
- Active directory/exchange solution
- Desktop applications
- Telephony Infrastructure
- Desktop estate
- Application delivery
- Helpdesk and support

Applications that SCC do not operate will be managed and supported by BDC & MSDC using their own hardware which will be hosted in SCC's data centres. Detailed planning meetings are being initiated to work out the best approach to integrate BDC & MSDC ICT systems with SCC's systems.

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