

**Report to Cotton Parish Council
January 2019**

Budget Proposals

Mid Suffolk has set out its draft budget for 2019/2020.

Among the interesting proposals is a move to borrow a further £25,000,000.00 to invest in commercial property via an arms-length company, this will bring the borrowing to over £50,000,000.00 that equates to over £650.00 of debt for every resident.

This year saw yet another underspend on our budget, this year it is circa £1600,000.00, this money is proposed to go into a reserve, to mitigate against any unforeseen circumstances arising from our investments. This budget also suggests a 2% council tax rise. It does beg the question, if a 2% council tax rise raises circa £120,000 for MSDC, why is this needed if 133 times that amount was unspent last year?

Tree for Life

You may remember in last year's budget, the administration allowed one of my policy ideas to be acted upon; this policy was the "tree for life" policy, where any resident of Mid Suffolk could apply for a free fruit tree for any child born, or adopted. This year 170 parents successfully applied, this means that more than one in five of all children born had applied.

Homelessness Prevention Fund

Mid Suffolk have allocated funds for a Homelessness prevention policy, were residents can apply for a loan to avoid becoming or to prevent becoming homeless, these loans are payable over up to 5 years, but typically three. The maximum available to any one resident is £3000.00. The repayment rate for a £1000.00 loan is around £6.41 per week.

New Local Plan delayed (again)

Mid Suffolk announced this week that the New local plan is going to be delayed yet again, the portfolio holder is suggesting this is to make sure everything is buttoned down etc, but our communities responded to the plan almost 18months ago, and we were promised this would be sorted by now. This mover is especially difficult for these communities that relied on this emerging plan to give them at least some certainty, on what the future development of their villages would actually look like.

Andrew Stringer
Mid Suffolk District Councillor – Mendlesham Ward