



## **PUTTING BABERGH IN PERSPECTIVE**

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF BABERGH'S YEAR 2013/14**

***Our Vision is "To create an environment where individuals, families, communities and businesses can thrive and flourish."***

#### **Introduction**

In just over two years Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have successfully created joint delivery teams that serve both Councils. At the heart of our approach has been a shared strategic view at both the political and managerial level. This has allowed us to confidently and openly engage with staff, Councillors and other partners, in co-shaping what the Councils look like without losing the necessary focus on the specific individual authority needs, changes to the Government's funding and localism agendas.

Through this engagement we have set, for each council, an overall vision, focused priorities around the Economy and Environment, Housing and our Communities, and expected outcomes to be delivered against. The aim of this briefing note is to provide an 'at-a-glance' guide for residents, Councillors, staff and other interested parties on the main achievements underpinning Babergh's strategic priorities, during the last year. As such, it does not seek to be a comprehensive account but rather one which illustrates the progress made.

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#### **Economy and Environment**

*Our priority is to "Shape, influence and provide the leadership to enable growth whilst protecting and enhancing our environment."*

**Economic Development and Tourism** – The Council has taken over the project management of major growth schemes such as Brantham and Chilton Woods Sudbury. This has had a significant impact on enabling these major projects to move from concept to application. Projects have been supported with significant economic and employment outputs such as Scotts Site Bramford, Prolog Sudbury and HMS Ganges Shotley.

Town Centre Partnerships have been supported in Stowmarket, Sudbury and Hadleigh gaining £20,000 of direct funding for them from Central Government. Resource was provided (financial and time) to the Sudbury Town Team's first Food and Drink Festival 2013. The festival generated c3200 footfall with around sixty local exhibitors. (part funded through Portas Government funding).

We have also been working with Suffolk County Council and District partners on a bid for LEADER funding for Central Suffolk, up to £2m with branding of support for wool towns.

The new heart of Suffolk website has been launched showcasing what the two districts tourism offer is for visitors. The new site is on an up to date platform, is more interactive and enables our Tourist Information Centre team to readily input data live time. This will ensure the districts tourism offer is as accessible as possible to visitors.

We produced with Suffolk local authority partners the Suffolk Growth Strategy and Delivery Plan and a successful bid for Ipswich City deal, which both form integral parts of the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) bid to government for £400m, over the next six years.

**Community Led Planning, Heritage and Design** – The Localism Act has seen parishes taking the opportunity to shape their environment. There are six stages in the process for finalising a Neighbourhood Plan; Babergh has one at stage 1 in East Bergholt and one at stage 2 in Lavenham. Babergh and Mid Suffolk parishes were well represented at a recent Suffolk-wide Neighbourhood planning event held in Lavenham and there is growing interest in the community.

**Development Management** – For the period from April to September 2013, compared with the equivalent period in 2012, Babergh District Council significantly improved the time it took to process planning applications. It processed 68.18% of major planning applications within thirteen weeks in 2013 compared to 33.33% the previous year, and significantly bettered the national target of 60%. Of the other (non-major) planning applications, 83.66% were processed within eight weeks between April and September 2013 compared with 61.08% during the same period the previous year, meeting the national target of 80%.

It has been a busy year as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been brought into full effect and this can be seen in appeal and other decisions. The Babergh Core Strategy has been adopted by the Council (25<sup>th</sup> February 2014) and this document presents opportunities to secure growth in key villages under CS11; already there are approximately ten pre application enquiries and one submitted planning application totalling approximately 500 dwellings. The Babergh Core Strategy also includes a new policy which seeks to secure affordable housing contributions for every net gain of one dwelling.

A number of Major applications have been considered during the year including: Tesco Hadleigh,