



PUTTING BABERGH IN PERSPECTIVE

HIGHLIGHTS OF BABERGH'S YEAR 2011/2012

Introduction

The aim of this Briefing Note is to provide an 'at-a-glance' guide for residents, Councillors, staff and other interested parties as to the main achievements of the Council over the last year. As such it does not seek to be a comprehensive account but rather one which illustrates the progress made by Babergh through use of a number of key measures.

The achievements listed below have been presented under one of the District's five strategic priorities in order to demonstrate how each one is contributing to the wider objectives for the Council. In addition, supporting financial information has also been included.

At-a-glance – the headline achievements

In 2011/2012 Babergh has:

- Commenced integration with Mid Suffolk District Council. Babergh and Mid Suffolk have challenging integration and transformation plans that have been moving forward swiftly since the appointment of a new, joint Chief Executive Charlie Adan in May 2011 and the senior management team later in the same year.
- Charlie Adan has been appointed to oversee a radical transformation in the way in which we do things and how we deliver them. Both councils have continued to plan and deliver ways of bringing the two workforces together as a way of achieving savings and improving support for frontline services in an era of reducing resources.
- Commenced the Shared Revenues' Partnership with Mid Suffolk and Ipswich, maintaining service delivery, increasing efficiency and providing value for money within our Revenues and Benefits service.
- Achieved Efficiency Savings - Over the past six years, Babergh consistently exceeded the efficiency targets set by the government and has done so by identifying savings and efficiencies that have not adversely impacted on services for our residents. Maintained Council Tax and tax base as one of the lowest in the country.
- Progressed affordable housing on two Babergh owned sites and three rural exception sites.
- Worked in partnership with Suffolk Police in Sudbury to implement a night time economy management plan to ensure there is no increase in criminal damage and serious public order offences (including violence).
- Commenced work on the new community and sports facility in Hadleigh.
- Held a joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Business Evening attracting around 90 attendees, actively engaging with and supporting the local business community.

Financial Information

- Council Tax (1). The 2012/13 increase in the Babergh part of the Council Tax bill will be a below inflation rise of 3.5% - or about 9p more per week.
- Council Tax (2). Babergh has maintained its position of having the second lowest Council Tax of any district in Suffolk (£143.86 for a Band D property) and remained in the lowest 20% nationally for Borough/District Councils.
- It is projected that Babergh will have collected circa 99% of Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and housing rent by 31 March 2012.
- Investment. Babergh has budgeted to spend £7.6m on capital projects – including nearly £3.5 m on Council housing improvements in 2011/12.

Quality Homes Local People Can Afford

Affordable Housing Programme

- 66 affordable homes have been completed (as at Quarter 3) since the start of the financial year 2011/12. This is estimated to exceed 100 by the end of March.
- Work on Babergh-owned housing sites progressed at Edwardstone, Stanstead, Hintlesham, Copdock and Washbrook.
- Work on Rural Exception sites progressed at Acton, Stutton, Shotley, Glemsford, Great Waldingfield, Cockfield and Lavenham.
- Phase 1 of the Poplar Road regeneration scheme to provide 21 homes and six new shops will be completed by the end of the financial year 2012.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs

- A planning application for one caravan pitch is imminent. The pitch provision has been identified based on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).

Decent Homes' Standard

- As part of the on-going improvement programme to ensure all council homes continue to meet the national Decent Homes' Standard, the modernisation of 39 bathrooms and 90 kitchens has been completed. It is expected that 130 kitchens will have been modernised by the end of the financial year.

Choice Based Lettings / Homelessness

- In order to improve the understanding of who qualifies for help and what options are available to them, a new homelessness 'move on' protocol within the Choice Based Lettings allocation policy has been developed.
- A satisfaction survey of applicants who have applied for housing through Choice Based Lettings scheme was completed in October 2011.
- One hundred households were prevented from becoming homeless by providing effective advice and support.
- A strategy for tackling under-occupation of council housing has been developed and is now being implemented.

Energy Efficiency of Local Housing Stock

- Over one hundred energy efficient heating systems will have been installed by the end of the financial year, in refurbished council properties.
- A total of sixty-eight heating measures have been undertaken through the Warm Front scheme.

A Greener and Cleaner Babergh

Carbon Emissions Reduction

- Eight Green Audits have been provided to small businesses in Babergh.
- Four open days / community events promoting and supporting communities to take action to mitigate and adapt to climate change have been held.
- Power down units have been fitted to the 75% of the Council's computers to ensure energy is used efficiently.
- Smarter Driver courses run by the Energy Saving Trust have been provided to Council staff with high business mileage.
- Three seminars for builders and agents have been held to support the construction industry to comply with revised building regulations for the reduction of carbon emissions and management of water supply.

Waste and Recycling

- The garden waste collection scheme expanded to 26% of all properties in the district.
- There was an overall satisfaction rate on waste and recycling services of 82.6%.
- The council achieved a combined waste recycling and composting rate of 42%, meeting our local target (based on Q3 data).

Street scene and abandoned vehicles

- Achieved an 82% customer satisfaction level for street cleanliness as measured by the SERCO survey (October 2011 survey).
- Removed all but one abandoned vehicle within 24hrs. This outstanding vehicle was removed within 48hrs of notice expiry.

Green Tourism

- Tourism literature to encourage visitors to adopt green habits (e.g. increased use of public transport) has been developed in partnership with Mid Suffolk District Council, East of England Tourism and local businesses.

A Safer and Healthier Babergh

- **Night Time Economy** –good progress has been made towards developing and implementing a night time economy management plan in Sudbury – working in partnership with the Police to ensure there is no increase in the number of criminal damage and serious public order offences (including violence).

- **S106 Funding Availability** – information made available to parishes on the website regarding funding for open spaces or recreational areas on the website. Quarterly updates are also sent to members and parish councils.
- **South and Heart of Suffolk Walking Festival 2011** – this event was a success with an increase in the number of participants. Also, blue badge guided walks went well. Both the festival and the walks programme are to be extended for 2012.
- **New Community and Sports Facility in Hadleigh** – work has commenced on this project with an estimated completion around September 2012. **Protecting the Public** through the highly successful ‘Scores on the Doors scheme’. worked with local food establishments in the area to ensure that 93% are compliant with food hygiene law.

A Strong and Sustainable Babergh Economy

- **Business Evening** – a joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk business evening event was held on 26 October 2011. There were around 90 attendees with 18 companies exhibiting alongside exhibitions on procurement, core strategy and broadband.
- **Grant Funding** – through Babergh East LSP, nine businesses grants were approved and funding was fully allocated.
- **Pin Mill Regeneration** – phase 2 of the project has been completed.
- **Apprenticeships** – Babergh currently provides five apprenticeship placements, and supports the West Suffolk and Babergh East LSP Apprenticeship Scheme which provides part-subsidised formal apprenticeship places for 16 to 24 year olds in the Babergh district.
- **Youth Conference** – 100 young people were involved with the 2011 Youth Conference.
- **Active Play Facility at Kingfisher Leisure Centre** – facility opened on 10 February 2012.

Vibrant Places and Communities

- **Be Active** – The Be Active Scheme and school holiday activity programmes continue helping to reduce the impact of rural isolation and engage with young people. 10 participants achieved an accredited qualification as a result of their participation in the Be Active and Sports Development Programmes.
- **Shared Revenues’ Partnership** – a shared benefits service with Mid Suffolk and Ipswich commenced from 1 April 2011, maintaining service delivery, increasing efficiency and providing value for money.
- **Sudbury CAB** – Babergh has continued to provide core funding for Sudbury CAB and also funding to provide an accelerated referral system for Babergh residents. A small contribution has also been made to the Ipswich CAB, and the Kiosk facility service at Hadleigh continues to be provided.
- **Enabling people to live in their own home for longer.** 33 private sector homes have been adapted to meet the needs of older people or disabled people (based on year end estimate).