

Babergh District Councillor's Report

August 2022

Blueprint for the future of social housing approved

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have approved a new Housing Revenue Account Business Plan – the blueprint for the future of social housing in our districts. It will ensure that our tenants have good quality and sustainable homes, in safe neighbourhoods. [More information](#)

Nominations now OPEN for the Innovations Awards

Our Innovation Awards showcase the talent, forward-thinking and innovation in business across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This can be anything from using new ways to communicate with customers, delivering new services, launching new products, or integrating new, cutting-edge technology. There are nine free-to-enter categories covering a range of sectors. [More information](#)

Energy Rebate scheme to be extended

Residents in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who have been unable to access financial support through the Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme may now be able to do so through a discretionary fund. [More information](#)

Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan submission

Launched in April 2022 to replace EU Structural Funds as part of the wider Levelling Up agenda, the aim of the funding is to support district and borough councils build upon their own strengths and address local needs while creating “pride in place”.

In consultation with key stakeholders and partners, including councillors, town centre vision boards, health & wellbeing partners including the Integrated Care System (ICS), VCSE partners, cultural groups, local chambers and business groups, town & parish councils, and MPs, we have developed an investment plan addressing how the three SPF priority themes: community & place, supporting local business, and people & skills, can help Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils achieve their vision to build great communities with bright and healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home.

Several projects have been identified from the Communities and Wellbeing Strategies and the recently adopted Economic Recovery Plan and these have been grouped into six broad project themes:

- community engagement and development
- town centre and cultural programmes
- events and festivals
- recruitment support
- business support including net zero activities
- skills and employability support

The two Investment Plans were submitted to Government on 32st July. A full delivery plan and detailed projects will be worked up over the next few months so that we will be ready to deliver on year 1 projects as soon as our investment plans are approved in the autumn.

Attracting visitors to our districts

In April, we ran the first of two campaigns in partnership with Visit Suffolk to attract visitors to explore everything Babergh and Mid Suffolk has to offer.

As part of the activity to promote our tourism, leisure, and cultural businesses as well as showcase what's happening across the two districts, we ran a competition to win a weekend stay in each district. The competitions attracted over 7,000 entries with more than 3,000 subscribers to our new monthly newsletter.

We will be keeping our audience up to date with activities and events, places to visit, and any topical tourism information. If you would like to keep up to date with our tourism activity, [please sign up to the newsletter](#).

Wildflowers to spring up across Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Our councils are trialling wildflower verges across our districts, as part of efforts to tackle biodiversity and climate change. [More information](#)

£450,000 more funding for community causes now available

Community groups across Babergh and Mid Suffolk can now bid for a share of £450,000 to improve their neighbourhoods, thanks to the two new Community Development Grants. [More information](#)

Supporting our districts through recent extreme temperatures

Steps were put in place last month to support residents across Babergh and Mid during extreme weather conditions, with the first ever heat-related red weather warning issued for the county. [More information](#)

Councils take action to help restore empty homes into family homes

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils' new Empty Homes Policy is set to reduce the number of long-term empty properties in the districts. There are currently over 1000 empty properties across the districts which, once restored, will help ease the growing demand for homes for residents. [More information](#)

Councils lead the way towards sustainable travel vision

Babergh and Mid Suffolk are taking the next step towards a sustainable travel solution, aiming to increase active travel and help tackle climate change. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan contains an extensive list of projects that were identified in an extensive consultation last summer, but it is a living document and will be continually updated as our residents' needs change. [More information](#)

Summer holiday activities to support families over the school break

An array of activities are being staged during the summer holidays to provide entertainment and support to families across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

From adventure days to swimming, cooking classes to woodwork there is something to keep everyone occupied and active over the summer holidays thanks to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and partners. [More information](#)

Babergh District Council receives the keys to new social housing in Newton and Groton

Babergh District Council took delivery of more new social housing this month, this time in Newton and Groton. [More information](#)

Planning Appeals

Babergh is having a lot of success defending planning appeals because, although there is a delay to the adoption of the new Joint Local Plan, inspectors confirm that our current plan is valid and defensible. In 2021/22, we had 35 appeals decided – about average – and only two of them were allowed, making us the fourth best council in the country at defending appeals.

Meetings

Cabinet, Council and Planning Committee meetings can be watched, either live or catch-up, on our [YouTube Channel](#).

For agendas and minutes, please visit the [Democratic Services homepage](#).

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