

Monthly Report - Nov'23 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

Annual SALC Conference

I attended the Suffolk Association of Local Councils conference on 29Nov23. This was a good conference covering planning regulation, traffic & flooding issues with representations from SCC, use of AI in local councils (ChatGPT was demonstrated) amongst other topics. Some of the presentations will be made available online & parishes should be receiving instructions on how to do this soon.

Babergh Budget 24-25

The budget setting season is underway. The Finance team are working on it and have made various assumptions about future events such as inflation & interest rates in order to construct the budget. The budget is also dependent on government proposals for the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024-25, which is expected mid-December.

Babergh Priorities & Plan

The consultation on Babergh's priorities is now complete. The results have been processed and presented to the cabinet. Further work needs to be done to turn the priorities into a plan - this will be presented in the New Year.

Building Services Transformation

The director of housing presented a plan to cabinet recently that defined how the repairs arrears would be fixed and new systems implemented to enable gathering of information, linking up of information and better processes around daily operation & reporting. The cabinet agreed to funding of £943k from housing reserves account be used to complete the repairs backlog.

Carbon Literacy Course

I attended a two-part course on climate change - this course was given to all Babergh & Mid-Suffolk councillors. The final part of this course is for councillors to commit to what specific changes they will make in their lives to move towards Net Zero.

CHiP - Community Hub Ipswich (47 St Nicholas Street)

I was lucky enough to be asked to speak at an evening event for young people at CHiP. Community Hub Ipswich (CHiP) was formed by a group of Ipswich residents that came together as a result of the closing of the La Tour Cycle Café. CHiP was set up to work with local community groups, run workshops & events, enable their volunteers to move towards employment & provide a space for small traders to sell their wares. They have even held open mics and gigs that have supported local artists and welcomed musicians from outside Ipswich too. I spent an interesting evening talking about how councils work, why I became a councillor before we moved onto politics in general and how to fix it! The young people I encountered were interested & articulate - I tried to get them

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to think about standing for Ipswich BC & Babergh DC when they were a bit older - we'll see what happens.....

Joint Local Plan Part 1 approved on 21Nov23

The JLP Part 1 has now been approved and the policies that are now agreed can be viewed on the Babergh website [draft-babergh-and-mid-suffolk-joint-local-plan-part-1-nov-2023](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/draft-babergh-and-mid-suffolk-joint-local-plan-part-1-nov-2023) These are now being used to decide planning applications.

Part 2 is now being worked on and the JLP Working Group meetings are being scheduled. I have asked Robert Hobbs for a more detailed plan than the below which shows it being completed Autumn 2026. The plan will be done by end 2025 and 2026 is mostly final changes.

LDS Timetable 2023-2026

Document	2023		2024				2025				2026			
	Autumn Sep-Nov	Winter Dec-Feb	Spring Mar-May	Summer Jun-Aug	Autumn Sep-Nov	Winter Dec-Feb	Spring Mar-May	Summer Jun-Aug	Autumn Sep-Nov	Winter Dec-Feb	Spring Mar-May	Summer Jun-Aug	Autumn Sep-Nov	Winter Dec
Joint Local Plan Part 1	■	■												
Joint Local Plan Part 2	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Housing SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Biodiversity and Trees SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Wellbeing and Health SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Intensive Livestock and Poultry SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Air Quality SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Design – Part A: Sustainable Construction SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Design – Part B: Local Design Codes SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Natural and Historic Environment SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Guidance to Marketing for Employment and Community Uses SPD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Authority Monitoring Report	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedules	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					

■	Document preparation
■	Councillor approval
■	Public consultation
■	Submission to Secretary of State
■	Hearing sessions
■	Inspector's / Examiner's Report
■	Publish modifications
■	Document adoption

Local Listed Building Consent Order

The aim of a LLBCO is to streamline the process for installing energy-efficient measures in listed buildings, or related improvement works, subject to specific conditions outlined in the Order. This would be unique in East Anglia and aims to support the move towards net zero by Babergh. It is recognised that it is hard to get any changes through at the moment so the consultation now underway seeks to garner people's view on this. Hopefully a revised process will be more streamlined, less frustrating and take less time!!

Planning

There are two contentious planning applications due in December . The first is for the development of four homes and a storage unit behind the Red Lion pub. This has been refused before but is now recommended for approval by the planning officer. The second is for the building of 38 holiday lodges at Brett Vale Golf Club in Raydon. This is opposed by the parish council and the planning officer has recommended refusal.

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A supplementary planning document for Biodiversity Net Gain is being worked on which should describe how this is to be measured before any development begins and how it will be measured post development.

Solar farms seem to be a contentious topic - there are several more applications in the pipeline although no details are public yet. A solar development in Badley near Stowmarket (Mid-Suffolk) measuring same as nearly 70 football pitches was refused this week and it is likely that the developer will appeal. It will be interesting to see if Babergh choose to defend this decision on this occasion.

National Grid have issued their Dec'23 community newsletter for people impacted by the Norwich to Tilbury pylons scheme - this should be going to all parish councils. Let me know if you aren't getting it.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Visit

A number of Babergh councillors spent half a day with the SWT learning about the re-wilding/reforestation of Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale which are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest and fall within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It was interesting to see the difference in level of trees, shrubs & grasses depending on how long they had been left to rewild. The SWT are looking to provide assistance to developers with a scheme that will offer 'Biodiversity Net Gain Units' to mitigate the impact of new housing development sites. Work is at an early stage. More information should be available in 2024 - new BNG regulations are coming into force Q1'24.

Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust is working closely with local authorities in the UK to increase tree coverage and enhance biodiversity in the region. They are looking to encourage local groups, communities and landowners to plant new hedges and trees. See <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk> for more details.

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