

Monthly Report Dec '24 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

GENERAL UPDATES

The district wide monthly update can be found here - [Download Babergh's town and parish briefing notes](#)

Real Christmas Tree Disposal: For those who need to dispose of their Christmas tree please see https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/christmas-waste-collections?p_l_back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.babergh.gov.uk%2F for options. Babergh will be collecting Christmas Trees from Sproughton Village Green on Wed 15Jan25. There is no single site collection from Pinewood. However, Christmas trees may be left next to garden waste bins for collection (no higher than 7ft)

Devolution: Devolution is set to be a hot topic for the upcoming year. The government has set a very tight timescale for this - there is a clear desire to implement this new local government structure within this term of parliament. This, coupled with the major changes to planning promise to make this new year very busy - there is some concern over whether there are enough resources to do all this. For those who have time to read the white paper see [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#). I've created a summary in Appendix A (with the help of ChatGPT) to save you reading the 99 pages of the paper. Essentially the government want to devolve powers down the food chain by creating unitary authorities which would embody the powers & responsibilities of district & county councils in one entity along with new powers to manage health, police, transport amongst others. A mayor would be elected who would direct this unitary authority. There are going to be different types of unitary authorities. At the moment SCC are keen to be in the lead on this and would like to be on the priority list however the underlying district councils are not keen. SCC are having an extraordinary meeting on 09Jan25 to debate cancelling this year's county council elections (to 2026) so they can focus on devolution. I'm not in favour of that but I suspect it will go through as the Cons have a large majority. Public consultation on this will be coming with regard to the shape & form of devolution. Its important that we engage with this.

Planning: Babergh are going to employ a project manager to run the JLP programme. Scheduled to start in January. This should increase the focus on speedier delivery of the JLP. The new NPPF is potentially leaving us vulnerable to speculative development. The requirement to build more homes in the district is going to bring back sites that were previously rejected or put on hold so we need to consider how we respond to that. Sproughton has a Neighbourhood Plan which carries maximum as it is still new. Pinewood does not have a plan - however Pinewood has very little space for building.

Budget: The cabinet approved the 2025-26 budget in December and this will go to full council soon. Emphasis is on full cost recovery to help alleviate the shortfall that Babergh will experience otherwise over the next few years.

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PORTFOLIO

Greenhouse Gas Report: I presented the Greenhouse Gas Report to the December cabinet meeting and thankfully they approved it without issue. The area that concerns me most is getting funding for social & sheltered housing to be retrofitted to EPC 'C' if we only get enough money to retrofit 50 houses a year it's going to take a while to get through the housing stock

Climate Change Briefing: I mentioned the Green Skills for School Summit in my last report. As it went so well we have agreed to hold another next year. In the interim the Climate Change Team will be following up with the schools to help them agree on what the schools and pupils can do themselves to reduce energy use and be more sustainable. I am now a member of the Environment Portfolio Holders Group which is run by SCC - it gives us access to county-wide climate change funding witness the money we are getting from the 'LEVI Scheme' which is the on-street local electric vehicle infrastructure project - Babergh has submitted a request for a number of new on-street EV chargers.

THE WARD ITSELF

Parking at Suffolk One: The BSIP bid was successful which is great news - you may have seen the article about it in the Ipswich Star ([Suffolk One bid for new bus stops in Ipswich approved | Ipswich Star](#)) No date set for the S1 meeting with residents yet.

Traffic A14 Diversion via Sproughton: A village meeting was held on Wed 11Dec24 to talk through experiences to date. Cllr Barber explained that a Highways document covering alternate diversion routes has been found and that this will be discussed with Highways in January. Parishioners were reminded of the need to report issues and to support parish council's efforts in resolving this.

Taylor Wimpey Phase 2 Design Codes: The design codes document has now been published. Sproughton PC will be reading this through carefully. A planning application for the first phase of this development is expected in the Spring.

If you ever have an issue to raise with me please use the contact details below. I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Davies

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Appendix A - Devolution White Paper Summary

The **English Devolution White Paper: Power and Partnership for Growth**, published by the UK Government, sets out a vision for devolving greater powers and responsibilities to local regions across England, aiming to foster economic growth, improve public services, and empower communities.

1. Context and Objectives

The White Paper addresses the need for a more balanced and inclusive approach to governance in England, where regions and localities are given the tools and powers they need to drive their own growth and development. It aims to:

- Address regional disparities in economic performance and public service delivery.
- Improve local decision-making and accountability.
- Strengthen local economies by enabling more tailored, responsive policy solutions.

2. Key Principles

The White Paper is built on several guiding principles:

- **Local Leadership:** Empowering local leaders with decision-making power.
- **Collaboration:** Promoting cooperative partnerships between central government and local authorities.
- **Tailored Devolution:** Recognizing that devolution should be flexible, tailored to local needs and circumstances.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring that decisions made at a local level are transparent and accountable to local communities.

3. A New Approach to Devolution

- **Devolution Deals:** Local areas will be offered bespoke 'devolution deals' that grant them powers over transport, housing, education, and other services. These deals will be negotiated between local leaders and central government.
- **Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs):** The government is committed to expanding the number of MCAs (where a directly elected mayor works with local councils). This model has been shown to deliver more effective local governance.
- **Integration of Services:** Local authorities will have greater freedom to integrate services across different sectors (e.g., health and housing), which will be better aligned to meet local needs.

4. Unlocking Economic Potential

- The White Paper highlights the need for local areas to harness their unique assets and characteristics, including local businesses, resources, and human capital, to drive innovation and growth.
- Local governments will have more autonomy to make decisions on infrastructure, transport, and education that suit the specific needs of their region.
- By devolving economic powers, the aim is to create vibrant, resilient economies that can attract investment, create jobs, and support local prosperity.

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5. Regional Ambition

The government sets out an ambition to see more regions in England gain access to devolved powers. It encourages regions to work collaboratively to unlock their full potential, with an emphasis on delivering growth, improving services, and addressing inequality.

6. Accountability and Local Control

The White Paper underlines the importance of accountability, with devolved areas being responsible for managing their budgets and resources effectively. To achieve this, stronger governance frameworks will be put in place, ensuring that local leaders are held to account for the outcomes of their decisions.

7. Next Steps

The government invites local areas to propose their own devolution deals and outlines the process through which they can access further powers. It also emphasizes ongoing dialogue and consultation between central government and local communities to shape the future of English devolution.

In conclusion, the English Devolution White Paper aims to reshape the relationship between central government and local areas by empowering local leaders, encouraging collaboration, and fostering regional growth. It offers a flexible framework for devolution that can be adapted to local needs, with an emphasis on driving economic development, improving services, and ensuring greater accountability to local people.