



## **Sproughton & Pinewood Ward** **Babergh District** **Annual Report Apr'25 – Mar'26**



### **To the Residents of Sproughton & Pinewood**

I have split my annual report into themes and summarised the events of the year.

It has been a busy year made even busier by the need to deal with Local Government Reorganisation - a subject that most probably find a bit dull but is essential as the form this will take will shape our local service model for years to come. It would be great if people can respond to all the consultations in this area as your voices are the ones that should shape this debate.

#### **1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

This year has seen significant progress in plans to restructure local government across Suffolk. During the year:-

- Various options for future governance (one, two, or three unitary authorities) were considered
- Consultations were undertaken with residents and parish councils
- Work was carried out to shape future arrangements

I have supported the **three-unitary model**, as it provides a balance between service efficiency and maintaining local representation.

#### **Next steps**

Work is now progressing on implementation, including governance structures, responsibilities, and ward boundaries.

#### **2. PLANNING AND HOUSING**

Planning remains a key issue across the district.

- Approximately 1,100 potential development sites have been submitted across Babergh and Mid Suffolk
- Work is ongoing to determine site allocations, protected areas, and infrastructure requirements. Results expected Q1'27 for public comment

There continues to be pressure for development around Ipswich. I have focused on ensuring:-

- Development is **appropriate in scale**
- Necessary **infrastructure (health, education, roads)** is included
- Decisions are informed by **robust evidence**

#### **Key issue**

There remains a disconnect between infrastructure funding and delivery, particularly in healthcare provision & highways.

#### **3. WASTE AND RECYCLING**

Changes to waste collection services will be introduced from **April 2026**. This includes:-

- Introduction of **food waste collections**
- Changes to recycling and residual waste arrangements

Preparation during the year has included:-

- Resident surveys
- Planning for bin provision and support
- Distribution of information to households



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While the system will not necessarily be simpler, it is expected to **increase recycling rates overall**.

**4. CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Progress has been made in reducing emissions and improving sustainability:-

- Carbon emissions are **42% lower than 2019 levels**
- Additional funding has been secured for energy efficiency measures
- Programmes expanded, including:
  - Solar schemes for businesses
  - Warm Homes grants
  - Retrofitting existing homes

Engagement work has also been undertaken with schools & young people and the council remains committed to achieving **net zero by 2030**.

**5. NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY**

Good progress has been made this past year:-

- Creation & adoption of a **Biodiversity Action Plan**
- Initial work on habitat improvement and nature recovery
- Early development of **habitat banking proposals**

Local initiatives include:-

- Progress on **Sproughton Nature Reserve**
- Exploration of additional local nature sites

**Next stage**

Delivery of practical, on-the-ground environmental improvements.

**6. FINANCE AND BUDGET**

The council continues to operate under financial pressure:-

- A **balanced budget** has been achieved which is a legal requirement for councils
- Some difficult decisions have been required (e.g. increasing parking charges)
- Scrutiny processes have been used to review major decisions

**Outlook:**

Financial constraints are expected to continue, requiring ongoing efficiency and prioritisation.

**WARD ISSUES**

**7. SUFFOLK ONE PARKING**

This has been of significant local concern throughout the year.

Progress includes:-

- Collection of resident feedback
- Development of proposals with Highways



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Options under consideration are:-

- Extended double yellow lines
- Time-limited parking restrictions

**Position**

Proposals are progressing but subject to delays and funding constraints.

**8. TRAFFIC IN SPROUGHTON**

Work has been undertaken to identify and address local traffic issues:-

- Consultation carried out (over 60 responses received)
- Preferred measures identified, particularly at key junctions
- Proposals submitted to Highways

**Challenge**

Progress has been slower than expected due to delayed technical assessment and cost evaluation.

**9. SPROUGHTON NATURE RESERVE**

- Legal agreement approved by Ipswich Borough Council, awaiting sealing
- Progress towards formal designation by Natural England

**Next steps**

Completion of approvals and formal designation by Natural England.

**10. GIPPING RIVER PATH**

Planned improvements include:

- Repairs to the sleeper bridge (nearing completion)
- Riverbank stabilisation works

**11. IPSWICH FLOOD BARRIER (ACCESS)**

This remains a complex multi-agency issue.

Progress to date:-

- Partnership working across multiple organisations
- Funding secured for a feasibility study
- Options under consideration, including redesign or removal

**Position:**

A long-term solution is being developed; this will take time.

**Lastly - Thank you to all residents who have engaged with me/Babergh through meetings, consultations, and correspondence over the past year. All input gratefully received 😊 and I look forward to the next year which I am sure will be equally busy.**