



ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Priority

Our priority is to encourage and facilitate the active involvement of citizens in local democracy.

Concerns

- Electoral turnout at Council elections is low.
- Most citizens only get involved if an issue could affect them adversely.
- Young people can feel disenfranchised and not listened to.
- Two-way communication between the Council and its citizens, and particularly hard to reach groups, can be improved.

What is being done

- Elections held in accordance with legal requirements, and outcome of new initiatives in pilot areas being assessed.
- Community Achievement Awards for active citizens.
- Citizens able to attend and speak at Committee on planning applications.
- Representatives of the young, the elderly and the voluntary sector spoke at full Council on the “State of the District”.
- Youth Conference involving young people from 8 local secondary schools.
- Councillors visit some schools to talk to young people.
- Great Cornard Teen Zone designed by local young people.
- “*Babergh Matters!*” sent twice a year to 36,000 households.
- Consultation and feedback from citizens on a wide variety of service issues.
- Funding for “Our Communities Speak” project for consultation with black and ethnic minorities.

- Annual meetings with Parish and Town Councils.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Coming Year

- Develop the Community Energy Project as a pilot Area Forum in Great Cornard/Sudbury to obtain local views and involvement.
- Encourage Parish Councils to develop Parish Plans.
- Adopt a Youth Strategy and involve young people in decision-making.
- Create website for young people.
- Extend “Our Communities Speak” project to rural areas.
- Encourage formation of more local Tenants’ Groups for Council house tenants.
- Produce an integrated Consultation Strategy.



Youth Conference,
Babergh Council
Chamber

BDC

Over the following 3 years

- Decide whether new initiatives to increase electoral turnout are to be tried in May 2007 elections.

Within the 10 year period

- Take the views of both the Area Forum and Parish Plans into account when planning and delivering services.
- Consider the expansion of Area Forums.
- Further develop Customer Focus Groups.
- Develop communication, consultation and involvement through electronic means.
- Greater involvement of citizens in decision making, such as in the “State of the District” debate.