

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM: Head of Corporate Services**

**REPORT NUMBER H2**

**TO: COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: 15 April 2008**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY SERVICES) COMMITTEE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee must report annually to Council on its work during the last year and make recommendations for future work programmes and if appropriate, amended working methods.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee's Annual Report for 2007/08 be noted.
- 2.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee's Work Plan for 2008/09 be approved.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There have been no financial implications to date other than the costs of officer time and normal allowances for Members that are included in the budget.
- 3.2 Any development of the work of in-depth scrutiny, including items such as the payment of out of pocket expenses for expert and other witnesses, can be accommodated within existing budgets for 2008/09. The position for future years will be addressed through the Service and Financial Planning Process, if that is necessary.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

This report is an update on work completed during 2007/08, together with a draft programme for 2008/09. Risk management considerations for individual topics will be included in reports to the Committee as the year progresses.

## 5. **KEY INFORMATION**

### 5.1 **WORK IN 2007/08**

Appendix 1 outlines the Committee's main areas of work in 2007/08. Two of the Committee's meetings have been held away from the Council Offices. The meeting on 4 September 2007 was held at The Quay Theatre, Sudbury; preceded by a tour of the building. The meeting on 30 January 2008 was held at The Granary, Sudbury; on the morning of the meeting some Committee Members were given a tour of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre, Sudbury. It is disappointing that despite good publicity, the meetings held in Sudbury were not well attended by members of the public. Nevertheless, the Committee sees value in occasionally holding meetings away from the Council Offices, and it is hoped to hold at least one such meeting in 2008/09.

The majority of the items included in the Committee's original work plan have been progressed by the Committee. Members have also dealt with a number of topics which were not in the original work plan but have arisen during the year; for example the Post Office Network Change Programme.

The following is a brief summary of the Committee's main achievements during the year:

- The draft Strategic Plan has been scrutinised.
- A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by the Service and Financial Planning Member Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ensure that draft budgets for 2008/09 reflect the Council priorities and approved policies. A joint meeting of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees was held to consider the Budget Framework and the two committees then scrutinized the draft budget proposals before final approval by the Strategy Committee and Council.
- Capital and revenue budgets, including efficiencies, have been monitored regularly.
- Performance indicators have been monitored throughout the year. The Committee has spent some time discussing the way in which performance management information should be reported in future, and a new format has been agreed. Detailed scrutiny of 2008/09 performance targets is planned for April 2008. User satisfaction and informal complaints handling have been considered.
- The Housing Panel's housing review has been considered and the Committee has received a presentation on affordable housing. Members have discussed a number of issues relating to Children and Young People, including the Council's Youth Strategy, Babergh's Play Strategy and the Council's contribution to the agenda for delivering better outcomes for children and young people.

- The Committee considered its response to the Post Office Network Change Programme which involves closure of post offices in Babergh. Representatives of some of the parishes affected attended the meeting. Members are disappointed that the Council has been unable to influence the final outcome on Post Office closures.
- The Committee has considered reports relating to: a review of Babergh's grant-making process; CCTV; the South Suffolk Leisure Trust; the management of dual use facilities; and The Quay Theatre.
- The Committee has considered the annual report of the Development Committee, and has received reports concerning: enforcement activity; air quality; and clean neighbourhoods and environment.
- Members have considered reports and presentations relating to the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership, the Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership and the Haven Gateway Partnership. The Committee has also agreed the criteria, methodology and timetable of a review of the Council's strategic partnerships.
- The Committee has adopted an Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.

## 5.2 WORK PLAN FOR 2008/09

Appendix 2 sets out a list of items of work that Members and Officers have identified for consideration by the Committee during 2008/09.

## 6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee: Resume of Work in 2007/08

Appendix 2 Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee: Proposed Work Plan for 2008/09

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:

None.

**CONTACT:** Steve Ellwood  
Linda Pattle

**DIRECT LINE:** 01473 825876  
01473 826652

**COUNCIL**

**RESUME OF WORK 2007/08**

1. **STRATEGIC PLAN**

At a joint meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee on 11 December 2007 the Committees scrutinised progress in developing the Council's Strategic Plan for the period 2008 to 2018. Members accepted proposals for a planning and review mechanism, which would involve a long-term high level Strategic Plan, a medium term 3 or 4 year development plan and an annual delivery plan. The issues and outcomes set out in the Strategic Plan were reviewed, and a number of additions were suggested.

2. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

2.1 **Service and Financial Planning and Draft Budget 2007/08**

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee appointed Mr Hurren and Mr Riley to serve as its representatives on the Service and Financial Planning (SFP) Group for 2007/08. Members also appointed Mr Hurren to serve on the Corporate Plan Working Group.

At the joint meeting on 11 December 2007 Members considered a report from the SFP Group setting out proposals for the 2008/09 Budget. They recommended these for approval by the Strategy Committee. They also accepted that a review should be undertaken of future Council Tax levels and all income generating opportunities, as a priority.

At its meeting on 30 January 2008 the Committee scrutinised the draft budget for 2008/09. Members recommended to the Strategy Committee that the draft budget be approved, including a proposal for a Council Tax increase of 3.9%.

2.2 **Budget Monitoring 2007/08**

Budget monitoring was carried out by means of Finance and Performance Quarterly Monitoring Reports considered by the Committee at its meetings on 4 September and 4 December 2007.

2.3 **Risk Management**

At its meeting on 12 June 2007 the Committee considered a report concerning the results of a comprehensive review of the Strategic Risks which had been agreed in May 2005. The 28 risks identified in 2005 had been reduced to nine broad themes, and the Committee recommended these for approval by the Strategy Committee.

On 29 August 2007 some of the Committee Members attended a Risk Management Seminar together with Members of the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee and of the Strategy Committee.

### 3. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

#### 3.1 Final Performance Indicators 2006/07

At its meeting on 12 June 2007 the Committee considered the 2006/07 end of year figures for the nationally set Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and the Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) set by Babergh. Members noted that the Government had announced its intention to make changes to the Performance Management framework with effect from April 2008.

#### 3.2 Performance Monitoring

The year 2006/07 saw an improvement to the quarterly monitoring reports where performance against BVPI targets was integrated with updates on risk and financial management, with clear linkages to Strategic Plan objectives. In 2007/08 Officers have continued to submit these joint reports, which were considered by the Committee at its meetings on 4 September, and 4 December 2007 and 25 March 2008.

At its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report setting out options for the presentation of performance information to further assist Members in their Overview and Scrutiny roles. It was agreed that the Committee should receive a report on a “basket” of key indicators, together with any other significant exceptions. In addition, Members agreed that once a year the Committee should receive a report on all PIs, and that this should be linked to the annual target-setting exercise.

A proposed “basket” of PIs was put to the Committee at its meeting on 16 October 2007 and was agreed, subject to a few amendments.

The monitoring reports have prompted the Committee to:

- Express concerns about the Council’s planning performance, especially on “other” and “minor” applications. The Chief Planning Control Officer has been asked to attend the Committee’s next meeting to discuss actions in place or planned to improve turn-around times for all types of planning applications.
- Question the length of time taken to re-let empty Council dwellings.
- Request a report on the approach used to deal with litter emanating from retail and fast food outlets.
- Request information about how the Council will achieve the Decent Homes Standard by the statutory date of 31 March 2010.

At its meeting on 30 January 2008 the Committee received a report concerning potential changes needed to aspects of the Council’s Performance Management arrangements as a result of the new National Performance Management Framework, and approved a project plan to deal with the changes.

At its meeting on 25 March 2008 the Committee considered a report updating Members on the transition to the new performance management framework. Together with the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee, it has established a working group to consider in detail the proposed performance targets for 2008/09 and to make recommendations direct to the Strategy Committee at its meeting on 1 May 2008.

### 3.3 User Satisfaction

At the meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report summarising the results of four Best Value User Satisfaction Surveys. Officers were asked to draw up a report on informal complaints handling. An interim report was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 4 December 2007. It set out the results of research into current best practice in four high performing district councils. Officers were asked to explore the issues identified through further research.

## 4. **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### 4.1 Housing

At its meeting on 12 June 2007 the Committee received a PowerPoint presentation on the delivery of affordable housing in Babergh.

At its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report on the 2007 Housing Review carried out by the Housing Panel. No major policy changes were considered necessary but the Committee made a number of recommendations to the Strategy Committee and Council.

At its meeting on 16 October 2007 the Committee agreed that the Council's process for re-letting vacant council housing should be reviewed and re-engineered to increase performance and rental income.

### 4.2 Children and Young People

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee considered a report setting out a summary of actions achieved in 2006/07 in relation to the Youth Strategy. It also approved an Action Plan for 2007/08. Officers gave a presentation highlighting achievements and plans. Three young people attended the meeting to answer questions about the BeActive(Leisure Inclusion) project, the Theatre Critics project and the Community Achievement Awards.

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee received information about the formulation of a Play Policy for Babergh. This was approved by the Strategy Committee at its meeting on 16 August 2007.

Also at its meeting on 24 July the Committee considered a report updating Members on the Council's contribution to the agenda for delivering better outcomes for children and young people.

#### 4.3 Post Office Network Change Programme

At the Committee's meeting on 16 October 2007 there was a presentation by the Network Development Manager of Post Office Ltd, outlining the background to the decision to close four post offices in the District, and to operate one as an Outreach Service. Four representatives of the affected towns and parishes were present at the meeting as observers and, during an adjournment, they were given the opportunity to ask questions. The Committee's views were reported to the Strategy Committee, who agreed a response to Post Office Ltd.

#### 4.4 Review of Grants

Members were invited to a consultation event on 23 July 2007, and at its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report on a review of Babergh's grant making process. Members recommended that the existing process be streamlined, and that a new grants policy be developed.

#### 4.5 CCTV

At its meeting on 16 October 2007 the Committee considered a report detailing the results of a feasibility study into alternative arrangements for the monitoring and recording of CCTV footage in Babergh. One of the options was recommended to the Strategy Committee for adoption.

#### 4.6 South Suffolk Leisure (SSL)

At its meeting on 24 July the Committee received a report introducing the SSL annual report for the year 2006/07. The SSL Chief Executive made a PowerPoint presentation, and she and the Chairman of the SSL Board answered Members' questions. Members expressed an interest in visiting the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and the Hadleigh Swimming Pool. A tour of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre took place on 30 January 2008, prior to an informal meeting with the SSL Board to discuss an Audit Commission report on partnership working.

#### 4.7 Dual Use Facilities

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee considered a report concerning management options for dual use facilities, and the Quay Theatre, Sudbury. It was resolved that the current management arrangements should be continued for the time being.

#### 4.8 The Quay Theatre

The Committee held its meeting on 4 September 2007 at The Quay Theatre, and the meeting was preceded by a tour of the building. During the meeting Members considered the Annual Report on the Theatre.

## 5. **NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

### 5.1 Planning and Development

At its meeting on 24 July 2007 the Committee considered the Annual Report of the Development Committee for 2006/07. It was agreed that the system for monitoring and tracking all payments due to the Council under Section 106 Planning Obligations should be enhanced by the expansion of a table relating to planning contributions set out in an appendix to the report to include columns referring to monies paid and the parishes in which the monies had been spent.

### 5.2 Enforcement Activity

At its meeting on 16 October 2007 the Committee considered a report providing an overview of enforcement activity undertaken within the Natural and Built Environment Division. Members called for a further report covering a number of specific items.

At the same meeting Members agreed that a review of the Council's regulatory and enforcement responsibilities should be undertaken and within that, the processes used to secure an effective outcome.

### 5.3 Air Quality Annual Progress Report

In accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act 1995 the Council is required to undertake three-yearly "Updating and Screening Assessments" of air quality across the District and to report annually on progress in implementing air quality management. This annual report was received at the Committee's meeting on 24 July 2007. Members expressed concern about elevated concentrations of pollution in Cross Street and at Ballingdon Bridge, Sudbury, and requested an update on further analysis being undertaken.

### 5.4 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment

At its meeting on 4 September 2007 the Committee considered a report setting out a draft strategy to provide a framework to guide the Council's approach to an efficient and effective enforcement of environmental crimes. Members recommended that the draft strategy be adopted, subject to any necessary minor amendments arising from consultation with stakeholders.

## 6. **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

### 6.1 Reports from representatives on outside bodies

At its meeting on 4 December 2007 the Committee received reports and presentations from the Council's representatives on the Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership, the Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership and the Haven Gateway Partnership. Members noted that the Babergh East LSP had recommended that the authority should extend the remit of the LSP to cover the whole of the District, but had subsequently accepted an offer to feed into a review of strategic partnerships.

## 6.2 Review of Strategic Partnerships

At its meeting on 4 December 2007, the Committee agreed the criteria, methodology and timetable of a review of the Council's strategic partnerships.

At its meeting on 25 March 2008 the Committee considered a report on the outcome of this review, and made recommendations relating to the Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership, the Babergh Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership, the Haven Gateway Partnership and the Suffolk Development Agency. These recommendations will be considered by the Strategy Committee at its meeting on 1 May 2008.

## 7. **LOCAL DEMOCRACY/EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING**

### 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Handbook

At its meeting on 4 December 2007 the Committee received an Overview and Scrutiny Handbook, which had been developed as part of an Action Plan arising from a review of the Overview and Scrutiny role undertaken in 2006, Members agreed to adopt the Handbook as a guide for councillors and officers on how to carry out Overview and Scrutiny.



**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 1 JULY 2008**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Annual Report of Development Committee	To consider report	Decision	Nick Ward
Community Development Partnerships	To consider annual reports of the South Suffolk Leisure Trust, Active South Suffolk and the Quay Theatre	Decision	Chris Foti
Proposed development of Kingfisher Leisure Centre	To consider detailed plans and business case	Recommendation to Strategy	Paul Little
Finance and Performance Management	To consider the final position for 2007/08 and targets for the period up to 2010/11	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees
Performance Management	To approve new basket of key PIs for the 08/09 quarterly reporting cycle	Decision	Janice Rees
Asset Management and Built Environment Partnership	To consider a report from the Joint Board on Waste and Recycling Services	Decision	Malcolm Firth/ Ryan Jones

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 19 AUGUST 2008**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Babergh's Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, HRA Business Plan and Housing Stock Options Appraisal Review	To consider the Housing Panel's review.	Recommendation to Strategy	Chris Foti

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 7 OCTOBER 2008**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Finance and Performance Management – Quarterly Report	To consider update on 2008/09 budget and performance	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 25 NOVEMBER 2008**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Reports from representatives on outside bodies	To receive six-monthly reports	Decision	Various Members
Report on street trading hour restrictions on Sudbury Market Hill during daytime	To consider whether changes should be made to current restrictions	To be determined	Malcolm Firth

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 9 DECEMBER 2008**  
**JOINT MEETING WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**  
**(STEWARDSHIP) COMMITTEE (IF REQUIRED)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Report of the Service and Financial Planning Group	To consider the Group's recommendations	To be determined	Barry Hunter

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2009**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Budget Scrutiny	To scrutinise draft budgets for 2009/10	Recommendation to Strategy	Barry Hunter
Finance and Performance Management – Quarterly Report	To consider update on 2008/089 budget and performance	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Annual Report on Babergh Grants Scheme	To consider a summary of projects supported, outputs and how they meet Corporate objectives	Decision	Neil Henry

**DATE OF COMMITTEE – 31 MARCH 2009**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Decision or Recommendation to Strategy/Council</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Finance and Performance Management – quarterly report	To consider update on 2008/09 budget and performance	Decision	Barry Hunter/ Janice Rees
Annual Report	To consider draft Annual Report for 2007/08	Recommendation to Council	Andrew Hunkin
Babergh's New Tenant Participation Compact	To consider the revised arrangements	Decision	David Clarke

**OTHER TOPICS IDENTIFIED FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Proposed Committee Date</b>
Audit of Babergh's sustainability	Andrew Hunkin	To be determined.
Monitoring the Emergency Planning Action Plan	Andrew Hunkin	To be determined
Progress report on free travel scheme for senior citizens	Bob Southgate	To be determined
Annual review of Local Authority Business Grant Incentive Scheme	Neil Henry	To be determined

**CONTACT:** Linda Pattle

**DIRECT LINE:** 01473 826652