



2002-2003  
*Neighbourhood Renewal*



*Making the area a better place to  
live and work for everyone*

**POLICY AND BUDGET  
FRAMEWORK  
2003/04**

Babergh District Council  
Corks Lane  
Hadleigh  
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[www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk)

# List of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<b>Message from the Chairman of Strategy Committee</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Policy and Budget Framework Process</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What the public is telling us</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Vision, Purpose and Aims</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Service Provision and Partnership</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Service Improvement Plan</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Budget</b>	
➤ Budget Report, including Revenue Budget Summary and Council Taxes for Town/Parish Councils	<b>16</b>
• General Fund Budget:-	
➤ Environmental Services	<b>29</b>
➤ Cultural Services	<b>36</b>
➤ Planning Services	<b>42</b>
➤ Transport Services	<b>49</b>
➤ Housing Services	<b>51</b>
➤ Central Services	<b>56</b>
➤ Capital Programme	<b>64</b>
• Council Housing Budget	<b>70</b>
• Charges for Services	<b>77</b>
• Staffing Levels and Budgets	<b>83</b>
<b>Further Information</b>	<b>86</b>



## **Message from the Chairman of Strategy Committee**

Although a new Council is elected at Babergh every four years, the objectives are always the same – to provide the services residents want and to have a clear view of the future direction which the Council should take for the long term benefit of the area and its residents.

That requires strong community leadership and the recognition that the Council must work in partnership with other organisations, both public and private sector, to make Babergh a better place to live and work. It also means that the Council needs to be in touch with its public and understand their views when making decisions.

This publication aims to show how the views of the public have been identified and taken into account, and how the Council is aiming to develop its role and its services over the coming years. It sets out the Council's Vision, Purpose and Aims and how, with clear targets, it is looking to improve over the next four years.

The Council also produces more detailed corporate management and divisional Service Plans which contain corporate and operational targets, and a Best Value Performance Plan which sets out our current targets and the Council's performance on delivering services. These can all be accessed on the Council's website at [www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk).

I hope that you will find this a useful document, and one which gives you a clear indication of what the Council is trying to achieve on your behalf.

Colin Spence  
Chairman of Strategy Committee

April 2003

## Policy and Budget Framework Process

The Policy and Budget Framework for 2003/04 has been formulated in accordance with the Council's new Constitution and through the use of the new streamlined Committee arrangements which came into effect from April 2002.

The detailed process involved:-

<b>2002</b>	
May	Strategy Committee determine the process to be followed during the year.
June	Political Groups and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) asked their views on service provision and priorities.
July/August	The two Overview and Scrutiny Committees:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review performance.</li> <li>• Consider policy and service issues, including Business Case Assessments for possible service improvement.</li> <li>• Make recommendations on service priorities and other matters to the Strategy Committee.</li> </ul>
August	Members Seminar to discuss the position and issues informally before Strategy in September.
September	Strategy Committee give detailed consideration to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council's Vision, Purpose and Aims.</li> <li>• Policy and service priorities.</li> <li>• An overall Policy and Budget Framework.</li> <li>• Consultation.</li> </ul>
October	"State of the District" debate and consideration of the Policy and Budget Framework at full Council.
November/ December	Public consultation through "Babergh Matters".
<b>2003</b>	
January	Strategy Committee consider outcome of consultation and produce draft Policy and Budget Framework for 2003/04.
	Statutory consultation with Business Ratepayers.
February	Overview and Scrutiny Committees scrutinise Budget proposals.
	Strategy Committee consider Overview and Scrutiny Committees' and Business Ratepayers' views and recommend a Budget to Council.
	Council determine Policy and Budget Framework for 2003/04.

## What the public is telling us

The Council has a strong belief in the importance of consultation and the involvement of the local community. This is reflected in the “Babergh Bond”, which outlines the Council’s intentions and which includes a commitment to:-

- Keep local people well informed about our services and activities.
- Ask local people for their views on our performance and plans for change.
- Consider and reflect the views of local people as far as possible when making decisions.
- Involve local people where appropriate in running the Council.

As a result, the Council has developed its Vision, Purpose and Aims in conjunction with the public over a number of years. They have been asked what they see as most important to improve their quality of life.

The views of the public on their quality of life, their aspirations and Council services have been obtained through the “Suffolk Speaks” consultation carried out by MORI on behalf of Suffolk County Council, four of the Suffolk districts, and other Suffolk public sector bodies. The following views have been expressed on their quality of life by the Babergh residents on the “Suffolk Speaks” Panel:-

Issue	%
<b>1999 Survey - Quality of Life</b>	
▪ Satisfied with area as a place to live	94
▪ Most important to improve quality of life:	
- Protecting shops and village facilities	42
- Facilities and opportunities for young people	40
- Developing local public transport	38
- Making the area a safer place to live	26
- Increasing employment opportunities	23
- Protecting and improving local environment	18
- Providing high quality, affordable housing	18
- Developing facilities and opportunities for older people	13
- Providing high quality leisure	10
- Developing and improving town centres	8
- Promoting healthy living for all	8
- Developing strategies to reduce poverty/inequalities	3
<b>2001 Survey – Quality of Life</b>	
▪ Satisfied with area as a place to live	88
▪ Most important to improve quality of life:	
- Reducing crime rates and re-offending	34
- Helping older people live independently	28
- Improving health for everyone	26
- Reducing road congestion and increasing use of public transport	25
- Increasing recycling	25
- Brownfield development	23
- Improving Council efficiency and cost effectiveness	15

Issue	%
- Providing better housing for people on low incomes	16
- Helping disadvantaged find job	12
<b>2002 Survey – Quality of Life</b>	
▪ Satisfied with area as place to live	91

What they have considered to be most important to improve the quality of life in the district has been reflected in the Council's aims. Those aims have been endorsed by further consultation with the public generally through "Babergh Focus" (now "Babergh Matters").

Following the Council's first ever "State of the District" debate in October 2002, the general public were again consulted through "Babergh Matters" on the Council's Purpose, Aims, Achievements and Service Improvements, as well as on the level of Council Tax. 2,300 (6%) households replied and told the Council that:-

Question	Very/fairly well %	Not very well or at all %
<b>Babergh's Purpose</b>		
To what extent is Babergh contributing to "making the area a better place to live and work for everyone"?	81	14
<b>Babergh's Aims</b>		
How well do you think that Babergh is achieving their five aims of:-		
• Establishing a safe, secure and healthy community	72	22
• Providing a thriving, caring and inclusive community	66	24
• Protecting and improving the environment	75	21
• Providing all services efficiently and effectively	74	21
• Listening to and involving local people	66	25
<b>Improving the Quality of Life</b>		
How well do you think Babergh is tackling these issues:-		
• Protecting shops and village facilities	52	35
• Providing facilities and opportunities for young people	39	38
• Developing local public transport	52	37
• Making the area a safer place to live	55	36
• Helping older people live independently	55	19
• Increasing recycling	88	10

**The overall satisfaction rate with the way in which the Council runs its services was 71%, with 11% being either fairly or very dissatisfied.** As regards the service improvements which the Council was considering for 2003/04, the public's response was that:-

Question	Very/fairly important %	Not very or at all important %
<b>Service Improvements</b>		
How important are each of these priorities for service improvement:-		
• Waste minimisation and recycling	97	2
• Improved access to public transport	92	6
• Conservation of our heritage	90	8
• Partnership working and public involvement	79	13
• CCTV cameras, Hadleigh and Sudbury	74	14
• Pin Mill, Shotley Peninsula	49	25
• Poplar Road, Great Cornard	44	22
• Electronic delivery of services	42	45

The public were also asked their views on charging for Council services and on the potential levels of Council Tax increases for the coming year. 54% considered that Babergh's services should be funded generally from Council Tax, rather than from charges on the actual users of a service, and 30% disagreed. **As regards the balance between service provision and Council Tax increases in 2003/04 for Babergh's services:-**

Level of support	Service	Resulting Council Tax Increase
21%	Maintain services, meet commitments and improve some services	At least 14%
55%	Maintain services and meet commitments	At least 10%
24%	Reduce services	At most 10%

These views are recognised as being very important for the Council's Policy and Budget Framework and future direction. The Council's Vision, Purpose and Aims have been very heavily influenced by them.

## **Our Vision, Purpose and Aims**

Following extensive consultation and detailed consideration of what the Council wants to achieve, we have decided on the following Vision, Purpose and Aims to guide the Council's future direction.

### **VISION**

**“To provide community leadership that recognises everybody matters, and which encourages and supports strong and inclusive communities. While respecting and protecting our heritage and environment, we will willingly embrace change where that benefits our residents and the district.”**

### **PURPOSE**

**Making the area a better place to live and work for everyone.**

### **AIMS**

***We will work with others to:-***

#### **1. Establish a safe, secure and healthy community**

- 1.1 Reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.2 Improve estate and other areas.
- 1.3 Promote a healthy environment and lifestyle.
- 1.4 Implement local health improvement programmes with partners.
- 1.5 Improve housing standards and availability.

#### **2. Promote a thriving, caring and inclusive community**

- 2.1 Develop and support the local economy, including jobs for the disadvantaged.
- 2.2 Ensure benefits and other support are received by those who are entitled to it.
- 2.3 Support the sustainability of local communities and regenerate areas of deprivation.
- 2.4 Support shops and other facilities in villages and towns.
- 2.5 Work with others to develop local transport.
- 2.6 Provide leadership and encouragement for a caring and inclusive community.
- 2.7 Improve availability and access to services for all.
- 2.8 Help older people live as independently as possible.
- 2.9 Work in partnership with others to achieve economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

### **3. Protect and improve the environment**

- 3.1 Support sustainability through waste minimisation, recycling and other measures.
- 3.2 Keep the district clean.
- 3.3 Minimise the effect of pollution.
- 3.4 Conserve and enhance the special character of the towns, villages and countryside.
- 3.5 Encourage development on previously developed land and conversion of existing buildings.

### **4. Provide all services efficiently and effectively**

- 4.1 Set challenging targets and continuously improve performance.
- 4.2 Strive to achieve the standards reached by the top 25% of all authorities.
- 4.3 Adopt best practice.
- 4.4 Operate in ways which best help the public.
- 4.5 Keep pace with national developments and initiatives.
- 4.6 Achieve the electronic service delivery target of 100% for all services by 2005.
- 4.7 Meet the targets in the Public Service Agreement with the Government.
- 4.8 Ensure charging and collection policies are fair and consistent.

### **5. Listen to and involve local people**

- 5.1 Inform, consult and involve the public, including young people and hard to access groups.
- 5.2 Take account of their views.
- 5.3 Improve consultation, communication and accountability.
- 5.4 Encourage the public, and particularly the young, to participate in local democracy.

## **Service Provision and Partnership**

The Council provides a combination of statutory services, such as refuse collection, and discretionary services such as leisure. The extent and standard to which a service, even a statutory service, is provided is decided by the Council in the light of its aim and priorities.

Those priorities are influenced both by what the Council identifies in its own right and by what it agrees are important in partnership with other public sector bodies. So the Council's priorities are, for example, influenced by:-

- The Suffolk Strategic Partnership, which includes Suffolk County Council, the seven District Councils, Health, Police, the Suffolk Association of Local Councils and Government agencies. This partnership has produced a Community Strategy for Suffolk and there are 43 partnership targets, some of which involve service improvement by this Council.
- The Local Strategic Partnerships for Western Suffolk and Babergh East. Both of these partnerships have identified what they perceive as emerging priorities and are developing community strategies.
- The Suffolk Public Service Agreement with the Government under which the Suffolk local authorities, Police and Health have agreed to further improve 13 important service areas in return for additional Government funding at the end of the three year period if they succeed.

Many of these partnership targets, such as significant improvements in recycling, reflect the Council's aims and what the public consider to be important.

## Service Improvement Plan

The State of the District and earlier consultation can be seen to provide a strong basis for the Council's aims, service priorities and targets for service improvement in the next few years. The service priority areas where additional funds have been made available for 2003/04 are included in the Budget report.

In addition, the Council uses a variety of review arrangements to decide what its future service improvements and targets should be. These include:-

- Best Value Reviews of specific service areas – the Best Value Performance Plan contains more details of these.
- The views of the Government and the Audit Commission – by acting on agreed plans resulting from reports or assessments made by them and monitoring the resulting action plans to ensure that the agreed improvements are implemented.
- By continually reviewing what we do and how we do it, using partnerships with other public sector bodies, the voluntary sector and the private sector where appropriate.

Based on all of these things, the Council has set out a number of key priorities for developing and improving services in 2003/04 and beyond, linked to the Council's overall aims, and these are set out in the plan below. **This plan focuses on some key areas**, but there are other things that the Council is looking to achieve in relation to all of its aims. More details are set out in our published Service Plans, which can be found on our website at [www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk) Babergh Basics, How We Work, Divisional Service Plans.

Council Aim	Service Improvement Target 2003/04	Targets for the following three years
<b>Establish a safe, secure and healthy community.</b>	Replace and improve CCTV cameras in Hadleigh and Sudbury.	Work with partners to produce a new Crime and Disorder Strategy for 2005/06 onwards.
	Continue work on the major estate improvement scheme on Council housing estates in Great Cornard and Sudbury.	Start work on other estate improvement programmes.
	Develop a new 5 year housing strategy and consult fully on proposals in it.	Ensure that 89% of Council housing meets the Decent Homes Standard by end of 2006/07.

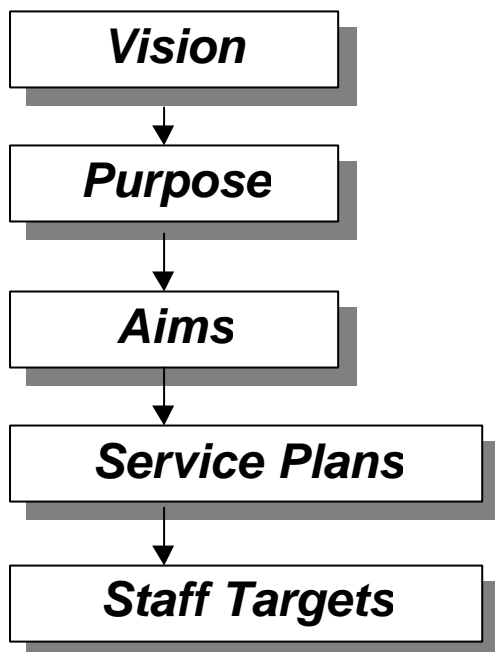
Council Aim	Service Improvement Target 2003/04	Targets for the following three years
		Undertake a feasibility study for a new swimming pool in Hadleigh with a view to agreeing proposals for such a facility in 2005/06.
<b>Promote a thriving, caring, inclusive community.</b>	Achieve level 1 of the Equality Standard in conjunction with the county-wide Diversity Group.	Further develop equality standards.
		Ensure all Council buildings are fully accessible for disabled people by October 2004.
	Produce community strategies for the two Local Strategic Partnerships in the east and the west of the district.	
	Improve facilities and opportunities for young people.	
	Develop homelessness and older persons housing strategies.	
	Provide concessionary travel schemes for the disabled and people living in rural areas.	
	Expand rate relief for shops and other facilities in villages.	
	Improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of Great Cornard and Sudbury through the Community Energy Project.	
<b>Protect and improve the environment.</b>	Encourage higher levels of recycling through the pink bag scheme and introduce kerb-side recycling scheme with additional bin for recyclable material.	Implement further waste minimisation and recycling initiatives to achieve a recycling rate of 26% by 2005/06.

Council Aim	Service Improvement Target 2003/04	Targets for the following three years
	Undertake project to clear wrecks at Pin Mill.	
	Improve Planning Enforcement action.	
	Provide more support for conservation work in the district.	
	3 year Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) for Sudbury in partnership with English Heritage.	
	Secure the adoption of the Local Plan by the end of 2005 following public consultation.	
<b>Provide all services efficiently and effectively.</b>	Make cultural and organisational changes to deliver fully modernised public services and prepare a 3 year organisational development plan.	
	Implement service improvements following Best Value reviews of Housing, Environmental and other services.	
	Develop strong and clear political leadership from the new Council.	
	Continue to work towards the Government's electronic service delivery target of 100% for all services by 2005, achieving 70% by the end of the year.	Achieve 100% electronic service delivery by 2005.
	Create a 4 year Corporate Plan.	Meet Public Service Agreement targets.
	Achieve Investors in People accreditation for the Council and its staff.	Ensure policies, plans and practice support and maintain IIP status.
	Implement the improvement action plan following an independent "Peer Review".	
	Prepare for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) inspection in June 2004.	Deliver further service improvements following the assessment.

Council Aim	Service Improvement Target 2003/04	Targets for the following three years
	Develop the performance and service improvement culture throughout the Council.	Achieve the performance and standards reached by the top 25% of councils in relation to the Government's Best Value Performance Indicators.
	Improve income collection rates and reduce arrear levels.	
	Compile improvement plan to meet Housing Benefit national performance standards by 2006/07.	Meet the standards.
<b>Listen to and involve local people.</b>	Increase public awareness and involvement in the annual "State of the District" Debate to inform the Council's aims and future service priorities.	
	Consider and implement, if appropriate, the use of area forums.	Develop that role.
	Involve young people in local democracy by establishing partnerships with schools.	Develop that role.
	Improve the quality and effectiveness of external communication and consultation.	

The Council will review the above plan and targets on an ongoing basis and keep the public informed on progress in relation to them. This plan will be formally reviewed and updated on an annual basis during the life of the Council to be elected in May 2003.

These improvements are achieved through the Corporate Management and Divisional Service Plans which feed into the Personal Staff Targets for individual members of staff and through the following "cascade" process:-



Performance is monitored throughout the year by both officers and Councillors. Appropriate action is taken to address weaknesses and grasp opportunities for improvements.

## **Further Information**

Further information on any of these matters can be obtained from:-

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