



“BIG RESULTS FROM A SMALL COUNCIL”

THE YEAR IN BABERGH **KEY FACTS FOR 2002/03**

Introduction

As with previous briefings, the aim of this overview is to provide a ‘ready reckoner’ of the past financial year for Councillors, staff and the public alike.

Councillors will hopefully find it of use as a record of their Council’s efforts throughout the last 12 months.

Staff may find it useful as a digest of what they have contributed to achieving in that time period.

The public may be able to use it as a ‘snapshot’ providing them with information in an easily digestible form as to how their Council is working on their behalf.

For the first time this year, we have organised the information under the headings of Babergh’s five corporate objectives. The aim of this is to provide the reader with a clearer understanding as to the extent of Babergh’s progress in achieving these objectives.

Please note that this overview is available both in a hardcopy format and on Babergh’s website at www.babergh.gov.uk.

Babergh’s Vision, Purpose and Objectives

On 15th October, Babergh’s Councillors agreed that the Council’s Vision is 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, Babergh will willingly embrace change that benefits our residents and the district”.

Babergh also has a stated purpose of “making the area a better place to live and work for everyone”.

It has five objectives in carrying out its duties, namely to:

1. Establish a safe, secure and healthy community

2. Promote a thriving, caring and inclusive community
3. Protect and improve the environment
4. Provide all services efficiently and effectively
5. Listen to and involve local people

So how well has Babergh delivered against these objectives in 2002/03 and how does it propose to do so next year?

Establish a safe, secure and healthy community

In 2002/03 Babergh has:

- Contributed over **£100,000** in grants to improve local sports and leisure facilities such as village halls and social clubs
- Catered for **600,000 users** of its Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Swimming Pool facilities
- Provided leisure facilities for an estimated **150,000 users** at the Dual Sports Centres, including those in Sudbury, Hadleigh, Great Cornard and East Bergholt
- Organised **42 sports courses** for **450 young people** in towns and villages throughout the district, including those in basketball, swimming and cricket
- Maintained and upgraded the **24 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)** cameras in Sudbury and Hadleigh town centres
- Made over **700 inspections** of commercial premises for food hygiene and health and safety purposes

In 2003/04 Babergh will:

- Invest **£30,000** in a feasibility study into the regeneration of Poplar Road, Great Cornard
- **Launch a publicity campaign**, in partnership with the Police and the Fire Service, to increase awareness and prevention of arson and criminal damage in Hadleigh and criminal damage in Sudbury town centre
- Spend **£130,000** to improve the existing CCTV cameras in Hadleigh and Sudbury

Promote a thriving, caring and inclusive community

In 2002/03 Babergh has:

- Started work on the district's third Very Sheltered Housing scheme at Stutton, which will provide **38 flats and community facilities** for local frail elderly residents
- Built an **8 dwelling supported housing** scheme for vulnerable young parents in Great Cornard
- Continued to work in partnership with Parish Councils to develop **15 village housing schemes** for local residents on low to moderate incomes, including potential developments at Chelmondiston, Brantham, Bildeston and Bures
- Issued **5500 half price bus passes**

- Through the Community Energy Project (CEP) secured **£450,000 in funding** for projects in Sudbury and Great Cornard
- Contributed over **£15,000** via its Rural Infrastructure Grant to the building of village bus shelters and other local transport projects
- Part-funded the **LAMBS community bus service** for Lavenham and the surrounding villages and through the **Community Energy Project (CEP)** help fund two new buses for the Sudbury and Great Cornard areas
- Extended rate relief to **255** premises bringing the total receiving such relief in the district to **£241,288**

In 2003/04 Babergh will:

- From 1/4/03 **extend eligibility of bus passes** to men aged 60 and above
- From mid-April offer **travel vouchers to the value of £35** per year to eligible residents who are too physically restricted from using, or do not have regular access to, public transport
- Spend **£50,000 improving Pin Mill** on the Shotley Peninsula to the benefit of residents, tourists and local businesses

Protect and improve the environment

In 2002/03 Babergh has:

- Dealt with over **800** reports of abandoned cars, resulting in approximately **350** being removed
- Introduced a new Pink Bag Scheme which has raised the district's recycling rate from **10% to 20%**
- Made nearly **200 food and water samples** to assess microbiological quality
- Invested in an air quality monitoring station along the A12 in addition to the **15 'diffusion tube'** units across the district
- Increased the number of councils participating in the Parish Tree Warden Scheme to **52 out of a total of 76**
- Helped to identify **11 listed buildings** for the Buildings at Risk Register plus another **19** considered to be at risk, whilst helping to successfully restored a number of such houses including 1, Market Place, Bildeston

In 2003/04 Babergh will:

- Invest **£640,000** in launching a Twin Bin Scheme (where one bin is used for recyclable materials and the other for residual waste) to further improve recycling rates
- Ensure extra resources for the conservation of the district's nearly **4000 listed buildings**

Provide all services efficiently and effectively

In 2002/03 Babergh has:

- Processed over **4700 claims** for Housing and Council Tax Benefit involving the payment of **£12m**
- Collected **£33.1m (98.2%)** in Council Tax by 31st March from the district's **36,697 domestic properties**
- Collected **£13.5m (98.6%)** in business rates by 31st from the **2679 businesses** in the district
- Collected **£10.4m (98.5%)** in rents by 31st March from the **3900 homes** owned by the Council
- Successfully **prosecuted 24 residents** for Housing Benefit or Council Tax fraud, with another **6 receiving cautions**
- Processed **2181** planning applications for the calendar year 2002, compared to **2027** in the calendar year 2001

In 2003/04 Babergh will:

- Spend **£350,000** in improving electronic access to our services
- Continue to undergo Best Value Reviews into its key services

Listen to and involve local people

In 2002/03 Babergh has:

- Received over **3000 replies** to its 'State of the District' and 2003/04 Budget questionnaire
- Maintained the opportunity for the **public to speak** at Development Committee meetings
- Introduced a **public question time** at full Council meetings
- Consulted with a **large sample (c. 3000) of residents** as to their preferred long-term recycling scheme
- Recognised the efforts of local volunteers through its 2003 Community Achievement Awards where **24 residents received an Award**
- Networked with local businesses through its **annual Business Evening**
- Kept Town and Parish Councils updated with weekly briefings, quarterly **Babergh Bulletins** and specific publications such as **The Pink 'Un**
- Established and supported a **Youth Forum** on the Anglia Estate, Great Cornard
- Through the (CEP), worked with voluntary groups to establish better joint working and fundraising

In 2003/04 Babergh will:

- Continue to consult with residents about key issues that affect them
- Hold elections to elect 43 Councillors on 1st May

Council Tax for 2003/04

A combination of the service improvements detailed above, provisions for inflation and increases in National Insurance and pension contribution costs has led to the **Babergh element** of next year's Council Tax increasing by **9.75%**.

This amounts to an increase of less than 20 pence per week for a Band D property.

However, because only about a tenth of the Council Tax is for Babergh's services and because the County Council and the Police have increases well above this, the total increase in Council Tax is **18.4%**. This is shown below, using a Band D property as an example:

AUTHORITY	2002/03 £	2003/04 £	ACTUAL INCREASE £	Increase %
Suffolk County Council	751.41	890.28	149.13	18.5
Suffolk Police Authority	82.08	109.35	27.27	33.2
Babergh District Council	102.16	112.12	9.96	9.75
Parish/Town Councils (average)	41.80	45.91	4.11	9.8
Total	977.45	1157.66	189.21	18.4

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