

## **BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM:** Corporate Director and Corporate  
Support Manager

**REPORT NUMBER** **E166**

**TO:** COUNCIL

**DATE OF MEETING** 18 October 2005

### **STATE OF THE DISTRICT DEBATE**

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council holds an annual State of the District Debate as part of its policy and budget-making framework. This report sets out the results of the consultation exercises that have been undertaken to inform the Debate.
- 1.2 Members are asked to discuss the issues raised through the consultation exercises and to decide which should be considered further as part of the 2006/07 Corporate Plan and Budget process. Officers will then work on a detailed revised Corporate Plan in the light of the decisions made and the Service and Financial Planning group will work with officers to deliver a budget that reflects the Corporate Plan changes and the Financial Strategy.
- 1.3 Members are advised that the 2005/07 Corporate Plan, which was considered by Council on 6 September, should be referred to when considering this report.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Members discuss the issues that have been raised through the consultation exercises leading up to the State of the District Debate and decide which should be considered further as part of the 2006/07 Corporate Plan and Budget process.
- 2.2 That feedback on how consultation has influenced the Council's State of the District Debate and decision-making be fed back to those who participated and to the general public through Babergh Matters!
- 2.3 That Babergh Matters! be used to conduct any further consultation required for the 2006/07 Corporate Plan and Budget process.

#### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Financial implications will be considered as part of the ongoing Service and Financial Planning process.

#### **4. KEY INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The Council holds an annual State of the District Debate as part of its policy and budget-making framework.

- 4.2 On 6 September the Council reviewed its corporate priorities and set out in the 2005/07 Corporate Plan what it would do to achieve these. The integrated timetable for the Corporate Plan and Budget for 2006/07 then included provision for consultation on this Plan with the public, partners and voluntary groups prior to the State of the District Debate. The consultation exercise focussed on the Plan to measure its alignment to public expectations, and to determine whether any changes should be made through the 2006/07 Corporate Plan.
- 4.3 The first consultation stage included:
- Three residents' forums at Sudbury, Hadleigh and Stutton. At these forums, participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire.
  - A questionnaire for young people.
  - Meetings with older people at Babergh's sheltered housing schemes, a mother and toddler group and the Tenant's Forum.
  - Reply paid cards for members of the public unable to attend a residents' forum, and an online questionnaire for anyone to complete. The questions posed on these were limited to access to services.
- 4.4 In addition, progress has been made in identifying Black, Minority and Ethnic, disabled and faith groups, but the timing was such that engagement was not possible as part of the consultation arrangements.
- 4.5 Following on from the first consultation stage and an analysis of the questionnaires a State of the District Event was held on 26 September which focussed more closely on the issues raised.
- 4.6 An analysis of the questionnaires is shown at Appendix 1 and comments expressed at the State of the District Event are shown at Appendix 2.

#### Priority 1 - Promote healthy living and reduce health inequalities

- 4.7 One of the key areas raised under this heading was the Hadleigh swimming pool. Whilst subject to a separate meeting at Hadleigh, the subject was also raised at the residents' forums and the questionnaire asked whether residents would be willing to pay more council tax to fund a new pool and secondly, if the Council should raise money for the pool by diverting resources from other areas.
- 4.8 The Hadleigh Pool public meeting gave a 91% response agreeing to pay extra council tax for a pool. For the Hadleigh Residents' Forum this figure fell to 61%, whilst at Sudbury and Stutton the figure was 36% and 21% respectively.
- 4.9 Those indicating that money should be moved from other priorities to pay for a pool were significantly less at the forums than the Pool meeting (61%). At the Hadleigh Residents' Forum the figure was only 34% and at Sudbury and Stutton the figure was 13% and 9% respectively.
- 4.10 Also raised under this priority was a view from a minority that health was not within a district council's remit and the Council should not be involved. The majority did not share this view, but Members may wish to explore ways in which the Council's duties under the Local Government Act 2000, to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the district, could be clarified and communicated.

4.11 There was agreement with the Corporate Plan that:

- People were generally healthy in the area.
- Drug and alcohol problems, and smoking needed to be addressed.
- Housing standards needed to continue to improve and that older people should be helped to stay in their homes longer.

**4.12 Areas for further consideration could include:**

- The future of Hadleigh Swimming Pool and its funding.
- Clarifying and communicating the Council's 'health' role, including better promotion and marketing of the services Babergh currently offers, e.g. Care and Repair..

Priority 2 - Increase the supply of housing that local people can afford to rent or buy

4.13 88% of those attending the forums agreed that local young people could not afford housing in their area. A lower figure of 70% of young people agreed that this was the case, but an additional 10% said they didn't know. 82% of those attending the forums agreed that more low cost rented housing was needed in their area. 59% of the young people agreed that this was the case.

4.14 It is anticipated that the young people percentage will rise as they approach the acquisition of their first property.

4.15 There was no clear answer to the question of whether new housing developments would help improve the local economy.

4.16 There was overwhelming agreement with the priority and the actions contained within the Corporate Plan. If anything, the public would like even more to be done, to stop homes from becoming second homes and provide more affordable housing.

4.17 There was agreement with the Corporate Plan that:

- The target of 700 affordable homes over five years is a good start, but more are needed.
- Housing should be provided where it is needed.
- People should be encouraged to put more homes on the market for sale or rent by reducing council tax discounts on second and vacant homes

**4.18 Areas for further consideration could include:**

- Increasing the number of affordable homes provided beyond the current 700 target.

Priority 3 - Maintain a safe, clean and sustainable environment

4.19 Crime was not seen as a serious problem at any of the forum meetings. Only 3% at the Stutton Forum thought it was a serious problem. This is significantly less than at the other two forums where figures were 21% for Hadleigh and 15% for Sudbury. This was also reflected in the views on anti social behaviour where only 6% at the Stutton Forum considered it to be a serious problem compared to 37% at Sudbury and 31% at Hadleigh.

- 4.20 The forums supported the need to address anti-social behaviour so that crime does not escalate. They also felt that increased visibility of police officers would help and, if no police officers were available then a uniformed presence (street warden/community support officer) might help. Young people's perception was that police officers are more of a deterrent than wardens. It was also felt that the behaviour of young people is sometimes misinterpreted.
- 4.21 Over 50% of those attending the forums felt that graffiti was not a problem in their area, and less than 10% felt it was a serious problem. Young people saw graffiti as more of a problem, but not significantly so.
- 4.22 But vandalism was felt to be more of a problem with 33% of those attending the Hadleigh Forum and 28% at the Sudbury Forum feeling that vandalism is a serious problem. At the Hadleigh Forum only 16% thought vandalism was not a problem - significantly less than at the other two forums.
- 4.23 A smaller percentage of young people (63%) saw vandalism as a problem.
- 4.24 All the forums and the young people considered litter and rubbish to be a problem. In Stutton the figure was 91%. At the forums fly-tipping was raised as an issue on a number of occasions and some felt that the Council's policy was not strong enough in dealing with offenders.
- 4.25 There was agreement with the Corporate Plan that:
- There needs to be a reduction in the amount of waste generated.
  - Recycling was essential and the collection method is sound.
  - Whilst some had concerns about the fortnightly collection of black bins in the summer, others did not and supported the fortnightly collection method..
  - Antisocial behaviour and crime are important issues to be dealt with, and need to be tackled in partnership and in a number of ways.
  - The Estate Warden and Community Warden schemes should be reviewed to see whether they should be expanded further across the district.

**4.26 Areas for further consideration could include:**

- Increasing the number of recycling sites.
- In particular for older and disabled people, looking at distances that need to be travelled to the civic amenity sites, and ease of access for people to put things into receptacles when they get to the sites. In addition it was requested that all sites should accept small items of hazardous waste (e.g. paint tins), otherwise individuals were travelling long distances to dispose of these. These points should be raised with Suffolk County Council who is responsible for these sites.
- Reviewing the fly-tipping policy. However the Corporate Plan does include a number of initiatives being put in place to tackle fly-tipping.
- Looking at the way the Council maintains the 'street scene'. It has been shown that there is a close link between how clean an area is and public satisfaction with the Council.
- Looking into the possibility of turning waste into energy.
- Supporting the call for more police 'on the beat' and for an overall more visible presence.
- Road safety, which is not mentioned in the Corporate Plan, but came through the forums as a factor in gauging how safe people felt.

#### Priority 4 - Give easy, convenient access to quality services

- 4.27 An average of 67% of people at the forums felt they could contact the Council when and as it suited them. 16% of those that attended the Stutton Forum strongly agreed that they could contact the Council when and as it suited them compared to lower figures at Hadleigh (9%) and Sudbury (6%). Only 30% of the young people agreed that they could contact the Council when it suited them. Whilst this statistic must not be dismissed, it is unlikely that many young people will have had the need to contact the Council.
- 4.28 At the forums, 86% said they were likely to contact the Council by telephone, 28% by email or through the website, 22% by letter and 27% would come to the offices. It was stressed at the forums that the public did not wish to necessarily contact the Council through a computer, but would prefer to speak to or see someone in person.
- 4.29 With regard to young people, 60% would still contact the Council by phone, but 54% would wish to contact by email or through the website, 27% by letter and only 15% felt they would visit the offices.
- 4.30 The responses would seem to confirm the importance of the electronic access work being carried out, particularly for young people. They also highlight the need to ensure that the current high standards of dealing with enquiries received by telephone, and dealing with people visiting the offices are maintained and even enhanced. There is a need to ensure that the public has a number of efficient and effective ways of contacting the Council.
- 4.31 31% of people indicated that they would like to be able to contact the Council at weekends, but the majority still said they would prefer contacting the Council during current working hours. About 30% of people said they would like to contact the Council earlier in the morning between 8:00 and 9:00 am, or in the evening after 5:00 pm..
- 4.32 The public wanted to know whether the Council would support and train people, particularly older people in using computer technologies. It was also pointed out that whilst the Council had powerful electronic means at its disposal many users did not. Broadband is not available throughout the district, so access to some functions such as e-payments and e-forms could be slow and cumbersome for the user. The Council was asked to work with BT and others to improve Broadband availability.
- 4.33 There was agreement with the Corporate Plan that:
- People want services to improve and to be able to access them in a number of ways that suit them. A pragmatic approach should be taken to providing electronic services and altering the days and times that the public is able to contact the Council.
  - Current services and access are good, and people felt they were dealt with by people that are able to assist them.
  - The Council should continue to provide services that offer value for money and should explore partnership and joint working where there would be clear benefits to service provision.
- 4.34 Areas for further consideration could include:**
- Providing training and support for people wishing to access the Council's services electronically.

#### Priority 5 - Raise individual and community ambitions and encourage active citizenship.

- 4.35 In general the same percentage of people felt they could influence decisions affecting their area as those that felt they couldn't. But only 32% to 46% of people strongly agreed or agreed that they could influence decisions. However, 71% of the Tenants' Forum felt they could influence decisions, which would seem to indicate that people who are involved in forums and consultative bodies do feel empowered and can affect how things are run.
- 4.36 On average, 72% of those attending the forums agreed that in their neighbourhood people from different backgrounds got on well together. This percentage fell slightly (60%) when the same question was asked of young people.
- 4.37 People attending the Hadleigh Forum had the greatest sense of being able to volunteer (89%). The Sudbury and Stutton forums reported an average of 67%. However, only 29% of young people agreed that they have opportunities to volunteer. At the State of the District Event there was a call for the Council to show greater ambition in raising community volunteering, and the figures would suggest a need to increase the opportunities, or raise the awareness of opportunities, for young people. It was also felt that the Council could take a lead in promoting volunteering by having a volunteering scheme for its employees.
- 4.38 The opportunities to volunteer would seem to influence how well people feel their local community pulls together to improve things. People attending the Hadleigh Forum felt most positive with 62% agreeing that people did pull together to improve things. The figures for the Sudbury and Stutton forums were 49% and 58% respectively. At 32%, young people were more sceptical about how well people pulled together.
- 4.39 At the State of the District Event there was a discussion about the need for this priority, and whether issues highlighted under the priority were happening anyway and the Council did not need to get involved. However, the Council's community leadership role was explained and most seemed to accept that the priority was necessary.
- 4.40 Opinion was divided on whether the Council should provide some financial support to establish a university in Suffolk. The young people were much keener than those who attended the forums. The forums commented that not enough was known about the university issue, the advantages and disadvantages, financial implications, what it would provide for the Babergh area and the type of courses that would be offered. Comments were also made about the need to attract high value jobs to the area if university leavers were to be encouraged to stay in Suffolk.
- 4.41 There was agreement with the Corporate Plan that:
- The Council should continue to involve young people in the decision making process.
  - Local tenants', residents' and focus groups should be promoted and used more.
  - New businesses should be encouraged to come to this area, and existing companies should be encouraged to expand.
- 4.42 Areas for further consideration could include:**
- Taking a more ambitious view to volunteering and a greater community leadership role in supporting volunteering. This could involve the Council working more closely at grass roots level with the voluntary sector.
  - Much greater clarification of the university issue.

## Council Tax Levels

4.43 The questionnaire asked which approach to future council tax levels would be most favourable: 44% favoured a council tax increase slightly above the rate of inflation that would allow services to be maintained and improved. 43% would favour a council tax increase at the rate of inflation, even if that meant some reduction in services. Only 12% wished to see no increase in council tax levels. This would seem to indicate support for the Council's current financial strategy.

## Overall satisfaction with the Council

4.44 The questionnaire also asked how satisfied people were with the services provided by the Council. 78% indicated that they were very or fairly satisfied with the services provided, and only 7% said they were fairly or very dissatisfied. This is encouraging, especially as the question was answered on a number of occasions at the end of a fairly intensive forum meeting – where people had been encouraged to 'have their say'. However, only 10% said they were very satisfied and it should be the Council's intention to increase that number.

4.45 The general public and young people have responded well to the opportunity for consultation and engagement through the residents'; forums and the State of the District Event. It will be important to feed back how that involvement has influenced the Council in this Debate.

4.46 It will also be important to widen the consultation and engagement to all residents through the autumn edition of Babergh Matters! The outcome of that consultation will be reported to the Strategy Committee on 12 January 2006.

## 5. APPENDICES

- (a) Appendix 1 - State of the District Questionnaire
- (b) Appendix 2 – The State of the District Event

## 6. BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:

2005/07 Corporate Plan

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## Appendix 1

### State of the District Questionnaire

Base = Number of people answering the question

#### Promote healthy living and reduce health inequalities

<b>Would you be willing to pay extra Council Tax (estimated at £5.20 per year per Band D property) for 60 years to pay for a new Hadleigh Pool?</b>			
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Hadleigh	41	61%	39%
Sudbury	66	36%	64%
Stutton	33	21%	79%
Hadleigh Pool meeting	107	91%	9%

<b>Do you think that Babergh should raise the money for a new Hadleigh Pool by reducing the amount of money available for its other service priorities?</b>			
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Hadleigh	41	34%	66%
Sudbury	67	13%	87%
Stutton	32	9%	91%
Hadleigh Pool meeting	107	61%	39%

#### Increase the supply of housing that local people can afford to rent or buy

<b>Local young people cannot afford housing in this area</b>							
<b>Forums</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	44	61%	27%		7%		5%
Sudbury	67	57%	30%	9%	3%		1%
Stutton	34	62%	26%	12%			
Young people	230	30%	40%	16%	4%	1%	10%

<b>More low cost rented housing is needed in our town/village</b>							
<b>Forums</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	40	47%	27%	17%	3%	3%	3%
Sudbury	67	49%	34%	10%	7%		
Stutton	32	28%	60%	9%	3%		
Young people	232	23%	36%	26%	7%	3%	5%

N.B due to rounding not all totals will equal 100

<b>New housing developments help improve the local economy</b>							
<b>Forums</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	40	20%	23%	30%	23%		4%
Sudbury	68	10%	32%	28%	13%	12%	5%
Stutton	30	10%	27%	40%	13%	7%	3%
Young people	231	6%	26%	30%	18%	10%	10%

### **Maintain a safe, clean and sustainable environment**

<b>How big a problem in your area do you consider crime to be?</b>					
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Serious Problem</b>	<b>Slight Problem</b>	<b>Not a problem</b>	
Hadleigh	39	21%	59%	20%	
Sudbury	61	15%	57%	28%	
Stutton	32	3%	81%	16%	
Young People	229	15%	40%	45%	

<b>How big a problem in your area do you consider antisocial behaviour to be?</b>					
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Serious Problem</b>	<b>Slight Problem</b>	<b>Not a problem</b>	
Hadleigh	42	31%	48%	21%	
Sudbury	63	37%	41%	22%	
Stutton	33	6%	52%	42%	
Young People	235	26%	39%	35%	

<b>How big a problem in your area do you consider graffiti to be?</b>					
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Serious Problem</b>	<b>Slight Problem</b>	<b>Not a problem</b>	
Hadleigh	40	10%	35%	55%	
Sudbury	61	8%	40%	52%	
Stutton	32	3%	41%	56%	
Young People	229	10%	47%	43%	

<b>How big a problem in your area do you consider vandalism to be?</b>					
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Serious Problem</b>	<b>Slight Problem</b>	<b>Not a problem</b>	
Hadleigh	43	33%	51%	16%	
Sudbury	65	28%	43%	29%	
Stutton	32	13%	59%	28%	
Young People	232	14%	49%	37%	

N.B due to rounding not all totals will equal 100

<b>How big a problem in your area do you consider litter/rubbish to be?</b>				
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Serious Problem</b>	<b>Slight Problem</b>	<b>Not a problem</b>
Hadleigh	43	33%	51%	16%
Sudbury	65	40%	49%	11%
Stutton	33	24%	67%	9%
Young People	231	32%	48%	20%

### **Give easy convenient access to quality services**

<b>Do you agree people can contact Babergh at a time and in a way that suits them?</b>							
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	43	9%	60%	14%	12%	2%	2%
Sudbury	68	6%	59%	24%	6%	3%	3%
Stutton	31	16%	52%	16%	6%		10%
Card responses	79	19%	39%	17%	5%	14%	5%
Young people	234	9%	21%	21%	26%	11%	15%

<b>How are you most likely to want to contact Babergh in the future?</b>		
	<b>Forums (base: 222)</b>	<b>Young People (base: 231)</b>
Telephone	86%	60%
In person at the offices	27%	15%
Email	25%	32%
Letter	22%	27%
Website	3%	22%
Text	1%	6%

<b>In the future when would you be most likely to want to contact Babergh?</b>				
	<b>Base</b>	<b>8.00-9.00</b>	<b>9.00-17.00</b>	<b>17.00 - 21.00</b>
weekdays	245	15%	69%	15%
weekends	109	16%	64%	19%

N.B due to rounding not all totals will equal 100

## Raise individual and community ambitions, and encourage active citizenship

<b>Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?</b>							
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	43	7%	26%	25%	25%	12%	5%
Sudbury	67	7%	39%	14%	29%	10%	1%
Stutton	34	3%	29%	26%	26%	16%	
Tenants' forum	7	14%	57%		29%		

<b>To what extent would you agree or disagree with the statement 'In my neighbourhood people from different backgrounds get on well together'?</b>							
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	42	10%	60%	26%	2%	-	2%
Sudbury	65	15%	54%	25%	3%		3%
Stutton	32	19%	63%	13%	3%		2%
Young people	232	12%	48%	24%	5%	3%	8%

<b>To what extent would you agree or disagree with the statement 'There are opportunities for me to get involved with voluntary groups in my area'?</b>							
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	40	37%	52%	8%			3%
Sudbury	66	18%	47%	21%	9%		5%
Stutton	28	25%	43%	14%	7%		11%
Young people	234	9%	20%	20%	26%	11%	14%

<b>To what extent would you agree or disagree with the statement 'People in my neighbourhood pull together to improve things'?</b>							
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Hadleigh	42	12%	50%	21%	14%	2%	
Sudbury	65	9%	40%	32%	14%		5%
Stutton	31	29%	29%	32%	10%		
Young people	232	5%	27%	32%	22%	6%	10%

N.B due to rounding not all totals will equal 100

<b>Do you think that Babergh should provide some financial support to establish a university in Suffolk?</b>				
<b>Forum</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Hadleigh	44	30%	61%	9%
Sudbury	66	30%	48%	22%
Stutton	33	39%	33%	28%
Young People	222	70%	9%	21%

### **Council Tax**

<b>Which of the following would you favour in relation to Council Tax</b>	
<b>Base</b>	<b>129</b>
No increase in Council Tax, but with reductions in services	12%
Council Tax increase at the rate of inflation, with possibly some reduction in services	43%
Council Tax increase slightly above the rate of inflation to maintain and improve services	44%

### **Overall satisfaction**

<b>Overall how satisfied are you with the services Babergh Council provides?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	<b>150</b>
Very Satisfied	10%
Fairly Satisfied	68%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	13%
Fairly dissatisfied	5%
Very dissatisfied	2%
Don't know	

## THE STATE OF THE DISTRICT EVENT: COMMENTS

### Promote healthy living and reduce health inequalities

- A new Hadleigh swimming pool would be good, but the money could be spent on other activities
- How much consideration has been given to the use of private enterprise when looking at the future of the Hadleigh swimming pool?
- Would a new swimming pool for Hadleigh offer other facilities as well?
  
- Publicise leisure events better – target specific audiences
- Can playing fields be utilised more, including playing fields at schools?
- More dance facilities are needed
  
- The Council needs to strike a balance between health issues and cost - especially when health is seen by some as falling outside the remit of a district council
- Need to do more to promote healthy lifestyles
- More needs to be done to reduce smoking
- Need to consider the impact of alcohol on health
- More education on and promotion of drug and substance misuse needed
  
- Better promotion of Care and Repair and other services provided to older people

### Increase the supply of housing that local people can afford to rent or buy

- What is the definition of ‘affordable’ housing?
- Do people want to own or rent?
- High land prices have an impact on affordable housing prices
- The public need to understand where affordable housing is required
- More houses need to be supported by more infrastructure
- Need to ensure rural villages aren’t ‘spoilt’ through the provision of low cost housing. Involve local people in identifying potential sites.
- There will be rural decay if young people are not able to buy or rent in the area
- Continue using brownfield sites
- Encourage older people to downgrade to smaller properties. It is accepted that this is difficult to put into practice, especially in rural areas
- Council Tax should not be lower for 2<sup>nd</sup> home owners (the Council charges the maximum amount allowed – 90%)

### Maintain a safe, clean and sustainable environment

- Everyone needs to reduce the amount of waste they produce. Landfill sites are filling up.
- Look into the possibility of turning waste into energy
- Are there plans for any more recycling sites?
- The Council needs to increase publicity of its prosecutions for litter dropping and fly-tipping in order to deter others.
- Babergh needs to publicise the work it undertakes in partnership with others to address crime

- There is a need for more police ‘on the beat’. They need to be visible.
  - Contacting the police can be difficult
  - Introduce more community support officers and street wardens as part of the neighbourhood policing initiative. However young people feel that police officers are more of a deterrent
  - Behaviour of young people is sometimes misinterpreted
  - Need to identify crime hotspots
  - The media increase the fear of crime
  - Need to address anti-social behaviour so that crime does not escalate
  - There is concern over the licensing laws and the later hours being granted
- Areas of outstanding beauty need to be protected

#### Give easy convenient access to quality services

- If the Council only opens late one evening per week, there could be confusion as to when that evening was
- The public want value for money
- Better promotion of the services provided by the Council
- More joined up working required in the delivery of services
- Promotion of the concessionary travel scheme

#### Raise individual and community ambitions, and encourage active citizenship

- Is Active Citizenship a core priority for Babergh? Is Babergh trying to do too much?
- The Council should consider an employee scheme to encourage volunteering, and set an example
- The Council should work in partnership with others to bring about increased volunteering
- Feedback following consultation exercises needs to be improved. Need to explain what can and cannot be done better
- Need to work closer with parish councils
- There needs to be proper consultation with young people. A great deal of thought needs to be given to the consultation methods used
- Young people will continue to be lost if Suffolk doesn’t have a university
- Federation of Small Businesses would support the creation of a university if it was business orientated
- High value jobs and a university need to go together. Growth in employment opportunities is needed
- There is a need to attract larger employers into the area