

To Chairman & Councillors – Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren – Stour Ward
17 April 2023

Having never experienced the end of an Administration Period of a District Council before it, has been rather strange to be attending Cabinet and Council Meetings which are the final statements of a group of people who may or may not meet again after the local elections on the 4th May 2023. Some committees like Planning are continuing and Cabinet portfolio holders are still contributing to their directorates and making some decisions.

Babergh District Council 22 March 2023

Prior to the meeting Councillors gathered to pose for the “end of term photograph” though one group chose not to participate.

Construction Infrastructure Levy

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies have been collected since the implementation of CIL in April 2016. There is no prescribed way for Councils to decide upon the spend of money through CIL, so Councils must agree their own approach and review processes.

There is a diverse spectrum of approaches across the country from Unitary Authorities who have absorbed CIL into their individual Capital Programmes to others who ringfence all funds to be spent locally. The CIL Expenditure framework that was adopted by Babergh District Council in 2018 continues to support local infrastructure projects and the system is open to Parish Councils and groups to submit proposals to the CIL Team with well documented and comprehensive applications. The CIL team are very happy to work with applicants through the rigorous process that is required. Last year the CIL Team provided on-line training for Parish Councils on navigating the CIL process. It was very successful and will be repeated this year. I would recommend that all Parish Councils take advantage of this training as it is a good way to understand how to apply for funding when the Parish does not have the funds or has not generated their own neighbourhood CIL.

The amount of money available to applicants is up to £100k recognising that funding is only available for 75% of the total project cost. Well done to Stutton Community Association who recently were successful in their bid to upgrade Stutton Village Hall.

Since its inception in Babergh, the CIL Expenditure Framework has been reviewed yearly on four previous occasions and I have been on each Joint Member Panel.

The Council approved the amendments to the CIL Expenditure Framework and the CIL Expenditure Framework Review Strategy as a result of the Fifth Review - March 2023

A sixth review is being planned for October 2023 and it was agreed that the Joint Member Panel be retained to inform this sixth review. A yearly calendar is available in relation to CIL bids Rounds. See the website.


Joint Local Planning Enforcement Policy 2023

All our Parish Councils during my tenure have experienced the work and support of the Planning Enforcement Team. This is an important team who manage developments authorised and unauthorised. Some of the team are ex-police officers who are very skilled in managing complex and emotive situations however all the team in my experience have responded promptly and effectively. This ensures that public confidence in the planning process is being maintained.

Enforcement powers are discretionary. Carrying out robust and appropriate investigations into all complaints received is a requirement but not every complaint requires action to be taken.



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX
Telephone: (0300) 1234 000
www.babergh.gov.uk www.midsuffolk.gov.uk



The Council approved the Joint Local Planning Enforcement Policy 2023 as the current policy required updating and amendment to reflect current approaches to good practice and good customer service. This work was undertaken by a Joint Member Working group and the policy will be reviewed in 12 months' time.

The updated version with a flow chart can be found on the Council Website.

Councillors Parental Leave Policy (covering maternity, paternity shared and adoption leave)

The council approved the adoption of the Parental Leave Policy for Councillors. This policy will make public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded and contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of local authority councillors.

Ward Duties would be covered by other councillors who had been nominated by the councillor taking the leave and if that was not possible the Political Group leader would be consulted.

Pay Policy Statement 202/2024

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have a single organisational structure with harmonised pay, grades, terms and conditions of service which covers both Councils. Approving the Council's annual pay statement is a statutory requirement as is the Council's gender pay gap statement.

This was approved by Full Council.

District and Parish Council Elections 4 May 2023

In conclusion I would like to thank the Chairman and all the Parish Council for their support over the past 4 years. It certainly was an amazing journey. No one could have foreseen the Pandemic, The war in Ukraine and the Cost-of-Living Crisis. I have been committed to representing Stour Ward to the best of my ability and my learning curve has been steep. As a Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing I have welcomed the opportunity to discover other activities in the district and what can be achieved locally by that experience.

Wishing everyone a successful Local Election.

Mary McLaren
Cabinet Member Communities and Wellbeing
District Councillor – Stour Ward (Harkstead, Holbrook Sutton)

04 April 2023



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