

To the Chairman and Parish Councillors
Holbrook Parish Council Meeting
16 December 2024

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are urging the Government to act now in England's "broken council housing finances"

A report this autumn "Securing the Future of Council Housing" was backed by more than 100 councils and highlighted that the national council housing system is in crisis with finances pushed to the brink by past national policy decisions.

28 October 2024 - Today Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have signed a joint statement urging the Government to help turn things round.

The statement reads "The new Governments commitment to "a council house revolution" is a huge step forward for communities across our country.

"The Chancellors first Budget and spending review are a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fix England's broken council housing finances.

"The last Government tore up its 2012 council housing settlement and left local government with a £2.2 billion black hole in its housing budgets

"Our report urges the new Government to turn this around, investing in urgently needed new council homes, addressing the unsustainable debt previously allocated to councils creating a Green and Decent Homes Programme so together we can deliver the more and better council homes growth that communities up and down the country so desperately need"

Cllr Deborah Saw BDC Council Leader and Cllr Richard Winch MDC Cabinet Member for Housing.

Pool reopening at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury faces frustrating but unavoidable delay

Initial repair work relating to a damaged roof which led to the pool's closure at the end of August was completed on schedule and it was hoped swimmers could return on 11 December

However, BDC, who owns the leisure centre has been taking the opportunity to carry out additional repairs and surveys on the pool while it is empty.

This has revealed a new problem which requires additional structure work (repair of glass roof of 170 glass panels) to the pool. This is expected to be finished by mid-February with a new opening date to be confirmed as soon as possible.

All other facilities at Kingfisher including the gym remain open. The pool is operated by the not-for-profit social enterprise Abbeycroft.

Treating tenants with respect and combatting social housing stigma

"Babergh and Mid Suffolk District councils are among the first in the country to sign up to a new campaign to stop social housing stigma"

An introductory workshop held in November saw tenants, councillors and council officers come together to explore how to tackle the unfair stereo typing of council tenants and the stigma associated with living in social housing.

As part of the council's commitment to Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign, the councils will now develop a range of commitments as part of a "tackling stigma journey planner" developed by the campaign together with the University of Durham, Sheffield Hallam University, the Chartered Institute of Housing, TPAS and YD Consultant (Tenant engagement experts)

Find out about the introductory workshop in [YouTubechannel](#).



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Councils spell out expectations of developers in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Councillors in both councils in November agreed new planning guidance to ensure local housing needs are met and future agricultural development is sensitive and sustainable.

The two **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDS)** adopted at both Council Meetings set out clear expectations of those looking to develop within the districts.

The Housing SPD lays out more details on the number and type of new properties required by each district on sites ensuring the right mix to meet housing needs, including adequate provision of affordable housing. The Intensive Livestock and Poultry SPD puts measures in place so intensive farming can sensitively co-exist within the district's rural economy as a valued part of the economy.

The new planning documents follow the adoption of Part 1 of the council's Joint Local Plan last year - the blueprint of the future development in the districts. The Housing SPD not only stipulates the number of affordable houses to be included within each development but also ensures that they are integrated across the site rather than grouped together.

The councils sought extensive feedback on both SPDs through public consultation and as a result incorporated several suggested amendments from interested parties ensuring that all comments and concerns were listened to.

Funding to put solar panels on school roofs in Suffolk has been granted

The Public Sector Leaders group has agreed £3.72 million of funding for Schools Solar Installation and Climate Action Fund project. The transformative countrywide initiative aims to place solar panels on up to 32 Secondary Schools in Suffolk.

The power generated will be sold at a discounted rate saving schools money on their energy bills and lowering their carbon footprint. A total of four megawatts of rooftop solar will be installed over a lifetime of the project.

The agreement will sell the generated-electricity to the host schools at a discounted rate for 25 years. Each school taking part in the project will also receive a student education package to go with the new solar panels.

Once the project is ready for delivery secondary schools across Suffolk will be contacted by the County Council to discuss the opportunity.

Students debate climate issues at councils COP-style event

Our joint councils saw over 90 year 8 & 9 students from across 10 schools in our districts and representative of 16 nations take part in a COP style event hosted by Ipswich High School.

The students debated real-world climate change challenges and emulated real-life negotiations as world leaders did at COP29. The event was facilitated by InterClimate Network and was designed to engage young people from different socio-economic backgrounds in climate change and its effect.

The Royal Hospital School represented the young people of Shotley Peninsula. As well as the COP-style debate the event also included a Q&A session with local leaders and organisations, and a mini green skills careers fair.



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“Wilder Communities”

Both councils have joined forces with Suffolk Wildlife Trust alongside neighbouring councils to help local communities protect and restore nature as part of a new partnership initiative.

The Wilder Communities partnership has received essential funding of £373,356 to be distributed across the next three years from the Public Sector Leaders Group.

This support ensures that the proposed programme can continue offering expert guidance and training to communities across Suffolk. The support has already seen the establishment of numerous community led projects in parks, allotments, churchyards and other shared spaces.

It is hoped that even more groups will now be empowered to take action ensuring a thriving interconnected landscape across the county’s rural and urban areas.

Christmas Activities

A very big thank you to all our many volunteers who have already provided us with wonderful entertainment, music, pantomime, choir concerts, Christmas fund raising events, Christingle service and all the various events still to be enjoyed up to the big day.

As we come to the end of a very exacting year for our residents as the cost-of-living pressures pile up and for many the struggle to keep going remains a challenge. Thank you Chair and Parish Councillors for all your support to your communities and to me throughout 2024.

A Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Mary McLaren

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4 December 2024



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