



## **TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER #8**

**November 2011**

**Welcome to our joint newsletter aimed at keeping all the town and parish councils, across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, informed about our plans to meet the financial and other challenges facing us.**

### **What's been happening?**

Since our last newsletter in September there have been some substantial progress in Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils move towards integration and transformation.

As you will be aware, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are transforming what we do, so as to achieve better outcomes and savings for our communities, through integrating our staffing structures across both Councils, while remaining as two separate entities.

Two appointments were made and these appointments ratified by both councils at the end of October. There's an item below which has more information on this.

We'll also update you on the outcomes of the recent Budget Challenge consultation and look at some of the feedback from the recent Town and Parish Council meetings.

### **Joint Integrated Management Team Appointments.**

Interviews to fill the Strategic Directors posts took place last month and the successful candidates and the positions which they will fill are:

- Joint Strategic Director - Corporate – Andrew Hunkin
- Interim Director of Transformation – Mike Hammond

This is a big step forward in our change and transformation journey.

Their task ahead – alongside Joint Chief Executive Charlie Adan – is to ensure that we work together and start shaping the new and transformed approaches to do what both

councils do, in different and better ways, including through closer working with many external partners.

We are now in the process of recruiting for the remaining two vacant positions - Joint Strategic Director - Place and the Joint Strategic Director – People. We hope to make appointments in January and that our two new colleagues will be with us in the Spring.

As soon as we have more information to share on this, we will let you know.

Recruitment for the joint Heads of Service has now taken place. After a rigorous assessment process - which included interviews and presentations in front of the Joint Appointments Panel and Stakeholders - we are delighted to be able to tell you about the appointments we have made:

- Joint Head of Housing – Martin King
- Joint Head of Communities – Jonathan Free
- Joint Head of Economy – Peter Burrows
- Joint Head of Environment – Chris Fry
- Joint Head of Corporate Organisation – Peter Quirk
- Joint Head of Corporate Resources – Katherine Steel
- Interim Joint Head of Programme Delivery – Chris Foti

The new joint Heads of Service will start in their new roles from December 1.

### **The Budget Challenge Outcomes.**

You will remember that Babergh and Mid Suffolk commenced an engagement process with community and voluntary sector groups and town and parish councils to provide the opportunity to inform the budget developmental process. This took the form of a series of structured questions aiming to identify the importance of particular services and delivery mechanisms to individual communities.

The consultation, called The Budget Challenge, ran through August and September and explained the scale and nature of the potential budget gap currently being faced by both councils. Like many councils, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are facing severe cuts in budgets for next year.

Reductions in the amount of money received from the Government, increases in inflation and demand on services, means that by working together, £2.8m in savings need to be found in order to balance the books for 2012/13. This could come from savings or by looking at ways to increase further income.

The Budget Challenge provided an opportunity for everyone to help shape the developmental process for budget options

Results from the Challenge have been analyzed, the following broad themes have emerged :

- In respect of service provision, there no clear preference regarding those services which should be reduced or retained at current levels.

- However a number of respondents supported highly visible universal services such as waste and recycling. Affordable housing was also a function which was supported by a larger number of respondents.
- A small number called the focus for cuts to be on discretionary rather than statutory services.
- Organisations tended to favour Council budget areas which linked closely to their own objectives (i.e. Suffolk Police and Safer Neighbourhood team funding).
- We received a wide range of excellent ideas and options for different service delivery models and cost saving options these can be considered and developed through the budget developmental process.
- There was a preference for environmental based services and those with a very local focus as being the most appropriate to be provided by community based organisations.
- There was no clear preference expressed with regard to charging policy and some concerns raised in respect of the impact of significant increases in the current economic environment. However many respondents did list a range of services for further investigation:
  - a. Collection of garden waste ( weekly in the summer)
  - b. Car parking
  - c. Land fill rubbish ( small surcharge for non recyclable)
  - d. Leisure

We will continue to engage with local communities through the budget developmental process; this will include attendance at local SALC area meetings and the Suffolk County Council engagement events in November and December 2011.

The views and information from the review will then be used to inform the more detailed work around budget options which will then be considered by Councillors.

### **What do you think?**

We value the comments of our town and parish council colleagues on how we plan to meet the financial and other challenges facing us.

If your council has any comments about our plans then please email us – and we will reply as quickly as possible.

For Babergh [workingtogether@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:workingtogether@babergh.gov.uk)  
 For Mid Suffolk [workingtogether@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:workingtogether@midsuffolk.gov.uk)

### **Keeping you informed**

Our councils have set aside a section on both our websites where town and parish councils as well as other key stakeholders can access information of particular relevance to them, including these newsletters.

These can be found at either:

[www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/workingtogether/keypartnersarea](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/workingtogether/keypartnersarea)

or:

[www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/KeyPartnersArea](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/KeyPartnersArea)