



TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

September 2013

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.

Two years on Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have successfully created a single-delivery organisation serving two sovereign councils.

At the heart of our approach has been a shared strategic view at both a political and managerial level. This has allowed us to both confidently and openly engage with staff, councillors and other partners in many different ways – both established and new – in co-shaping what the model looks like without losing the necessary focus demanded of us by both changes to the Government’s funding and localism agendas.

Starting with the appointment of a single Chief Executive in May 2011, we have been working through three phases:

- **“Best of the Best:** using the best of our existing talent to create the inner core of our second and third tiers of management
- **“Working Together”:** our integration programme which is now close to completion has seen us creating 400 new roles covering both councils with ‘financial headroom’ for the challenges ahead and a clear focus on People and Place outcomes
- **“Smaller, Smarter, Swifter”:** our transformation programme aimed at creating the right behaviours, relationships, cultures and opportunities to ensure that we contribute to these People and Place outcomes

This strategic approach - which seeks to harness the self-leadership capacities internally and unlock the power of external partnerships at a time of growing austerity - has resulted in some key initial achievements:

- **Smaller:** 9% annual net revenue savings (c.£1.8m per year), management team down by 50%, with further reductions projected

- **Smarter:** resources are being re-oriented via the single delivery model into achieving positive outcomes. Our integration programme which is now close to completion has seen us creating c. 400 new roles covering both councils with 'financial headroom' for the challenges ahead and a clear focus on People and Place outcomes
- **Swifter:** an organisation that is less reliant on management but strongly led politically and culturally so that we can maximise self reliance and confidence in our front line colleagues, create highly effective partnerships with public, voluntary and private sector colleagues and our communities, stay ahead of the field, build confidence in our ability to deliver and find new ways of funding what we do so that we can maximise the potential for positive outcomes for our people and our places with reduced dependence on grant funding from government.

In June 2013, in recognition of everyone's efforts we were awarded the 2013 MJ Award in the 'Shared Services' category.

By the summer of 2013, we achieved a fully integrated workforce in 36 new joint operational delivery teams. After months of working with staff and the unions, we will have harmonised pay, terms and conditions. We have embarked on an organisational development programme across the Councils and are part of the LGA Future Councils programme with our Suffolk partner councils which has resulted in the launch of the Suffolk Collaborative partnership

Our transformation enquiries – root-and-branch wholesale reviews of our activities and our use of resources — are led by councillors and involving staff, customers, service users and other partners and are aimed at being innovative and creative in how we deliver outcomes for our communities. The objective is to reduce our reliance on shrinking Government funding and build up our financial sustainability in the years ahead.

Post Office Community Enterprise Fund

Did you know awards of up to £10,000 are available to encourage sub-postmasters to work with local people to develop innovative ideas for how Post Office branches can support their local communities?

In a letter to Council Leaders and Chief Executives last month, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Don Foster acknowledged many sub postmasters already offer facilities and services which go far beyond their core business, he said he believed there is great potential for post offices to further strengthen their role as a community hub by providing additional services or facilities which help local people, or by using their commercial skills to offer support to local groups and businesses.

There is £200,000 available to support up to 20 schemes in England in 2013/14. Sub-postmasters have until 18 October to work with local people to develop ideas and submit an application for up to £10,000 to put the idea into practice. Applicants will need to demonstrate they have consulted local people and the proposed scheme has support from the community.

More information about the competition is available on the Post Office's website at <http://www.postoffice.co.uk/community-enterprise-fund> where members of the public can also download a flyer on which they can write their ideas and take them along to their local post office to start a discussion.

Parish Liaison Meetings

Parish Liaison meetings held on the 28th and 29th November last year provided very useful opportunities to share concerns and ideas. We are keen to organise another set of these meetings soon so will be in touch with dates and an agenda in the near future.

Community Rights

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a range of "Community Rights" aimed at helping communities to improve the places where they live and work. These include:

- Neighbourhood Planning - a new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work. It gives local people a say over where new homes, shops and offices will be built and what they will look like, and the confidence they will have the proper support to cope with the demands of new development. Neighbourhood planning provides a genuine opportunity for local people to influence the future of their area.
- Community Right to Bid for "Assets of Community Value" - The aim of the new Right is to give community groups time to make realistic bids to buy land or buildings that are of importance to the local community when they come up for sale. Under the Community Right to Bid, community groups are able to nominate non-residential buildings or land within their communities as 'assets of community value' which cannot be sold without the community group being given the opportunity to put together a bid to purchase the asset.
- Community Right to Challenge - This duty requires the Council to consider and either accept or reject expressions of interest from community groups who wish to run a council service. If the expressions of interest meet certain criteria laid down in the Act and subsequent regulations, the local authority must run a procurement exercise.

Both local authorities have had interest from parish councils and community organisations who wish to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, or nominate Assets of Community Value. The Assets of Community Value listed so far have been public houses where the community is keen to try and secure them for the communities continued benefit and to extend their role – so if the loss of your local pub or shop or play area is a concern please contact us to see if the Community Right to Bid could help in giving the community the opportunity to secure them. This could apply if the property is up for sale now or just as a precautionary step for the future.

More information, and contact details, are available on the Council websites at:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/your-community/community-rights/>

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/your-community/community-rights/>

For further information contact tracey.brinkley@babergh.gov.uk

Have your say to the PCC

The next wave of public meetings by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Tim Passmore are set for the autumn.

Tim Passmore will be joined by the Chief Constable, Douglas Paxton and a senior police officer from the local area to answer questions about policing in the county.

Tim says, "Suffolk is a wide area to cover and I have tried to position these meetings to ensure that everyone can access one reasonably easily. I really hope to get a good crowd at each meeting so we can have a really interesting and open discussion."

"Listening to the views of people living and working in Suffolk is key to my role as Police and Crime Commissioner so I really hope that people will do their very best to attend to let me know what they think of policing in the county.

He added, "I appreciate not everyone wants to speak at a public meeting so I would also encourage people to come along to listen if that's what they prefer."

The meetings start at 6.30pm:

MID SUFFOLK: The Cedars Hotel, Needham Road, Stowmarket
Monday 7 October

BABERGH: Sudbury Town Hall, Market Hill, Sudbury
Thursday 10 October

Full details are on the PCC website, www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk; there is no need to book.

Planned Closures of A14 and A11 in Autumn 2013

Advanced notice has been given that parts of the A14 and A11 will be temporarily closed in the autumn for maintenance work carried out by the Highways Agency. Anyone planning travel in or out of the Mid Suffolk and Babergh area is advised to plan accordingly.

The A14 is due to be closed around the end of September/early October between Junction 55 (A14/A12 Copdock interchange) and Junction 58 (A14/A12 Seven Hills interchange): this stretch includes the Orwell Bridge. More information on the timing of the closures and diversion routes will be provided by the Highways Agency nearer the time. [Highways Agency website](#)

Parts of the A11 will also be closed over three weekends in October:

- Weekend 1 - *northbound closure* of A11 and exit/entrance of A1101 to Mildenhall, 10pm on Friday 4 October to 6am on Monday 7 October 2013.
- Weekend 2 - *northbound closure* of A11 and exit/entrance of A1065 Brandon Road, 10pm on Friday 11 October to 6am on Monday 14 October 2013.

- Weekend 3 - *southbound* closure of A11 and exit/entrance of A1101 to Bury, 8pm on Friday 18 October to 5am on Monday 21 October 2013

Information on the exact dates of the planned closure of the A14 should be posted on the [Highways Agency website](#) as the information becomes available.

Textile Recycling

To reduce the thousands of tonnes of clothes and textiles being sent to landfill in Suffolk each year, Suffolk councils are hoping local people will sign up to the clothes and textile recycling scheme.

Anyone wishing to participate just needs to pop their old and worn out clothes and shoes into the council textile recycling bag, tie it securely and then place it into the recycling bin on top of the other loose recycling. This will ensure your textiles remain clean and dry. (No loose textiles are accepted).

Textile recycling bags are available from most council offices and all Suffolk libraries. Alternatively ring 0845 603 9412 or email textiles@suffolk.gov.uk



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
For Mid Suffolk 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

or:

www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/KeyPartnersArea