



Facing the Future

March 3 2011

**For town and parish councils in
Babergh and Mid Suffolk**

Welcome to our joint newsletter aimed at keeping all the town and parish councils, across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, informed about our plans.

Both councils have agreed that they want to integrate their staffing structures and in principle to merge together to create one new council covering the whole of south and central Suffolk.

We value the comments of our town and parish council colleagues as we move towards delivering our groundbreaking plans – subject to a range of criteria, including public support - that will both save money and protect as many of our existing frontline services as possible.

So, if your council has any comments on anything in this, or future newsletters, about our plans then please email us – and we'll do our best to reply as quickly as possible.

For Babergh: workingtogether@babergh.gov.uk

For Mid Suffolk: working.together@midsuffolk.gov.uk

What's been happening?

In February we started the recruitment process to appoint a new chief executive to spearhead plans to form a new single authority.

The new Chief Executive will be responsible for the integration of services across the two existing authorities and the possible creation of a new single council, if the public supports it and other criteria are met to satisfy the Secretary of State.

The successful applicant will be tasked with achieving financial savings, by creating a single staffing structure across Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, and this will go ahead whether or not the two councils are abolished and replaced by a new single council covering central and south Suffolk, or continue as two separate authorities.

The two existing Chief Executives Pat Rockall and Andrew Good have both decided not to apply for the new post.

If the recruitment goes to plan, the new chief executive will be announced following Council meetings on March 18.

Developing locality arrangements

You may recall that we ran a series of road show events during November and December 2010 with a linked questionnaire for all town and parish councils and community based voluntary and community sector organisations.

Firstly, thank you to those organisations who responded to the questionnaire.

Secondly, the key messages from this initial consultation are that there is a preference for grouping parish areas around geographic areas or thematic issues, the need to develop the existing district councillor role and provide more support for both councillors and communities. Any arrangements need to be seamlessly co-ordinated with other public sector organisations (i.e. Suffolk County Council) and those local needs must inform future service design and service transformation outputs.

This was however very much the initial start point for further engagement with communities in developing locality arrangements, which must meet local requirements as we move towards a potential single district council. We will be working closely with town and parish councils in developing the detailed locality arrangements for the area in the coming months.

What next?

The public vote for residents to decide whether or not they want Mid Suffolk and Babergh to combine to form one single authority, will be held after the local elections in May.

The voters' packs will be posted to everyone who is registered as a local government elector in the two districts during the week of May 9. To make it as convenient as possible, votes can be returned by post, by phone, by text or electronically over the following four week period.

We appreciate that you are all being asked to make a very important choice and we want to make sure that you have all the information you need to make an informed choice about the future of your district council.

We have produced a leaflet called Facing the Future (a copy of which is available online: http://www.babergh.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/AA2EB913-137C-4F26-9CFA-5F848B411506/0/FtF_2into1.pdf) which will be distributed to every home across the two districts. This leaflet will be included with the council tax bills which will be mailed out during the week commencing March 7.

Everyone in your parish or town should receive a copy of the leaflet but we would be grateful if you could forward on this electronic version to anyone who needs a further copy, or contact Vicky Smy on 01449 724850 or Paul Simon on 01473 826634, if you require paper copies.

If you have any questions regarding the poll or the potential merger please contact your local district councillor, call the Working Together helpline on 01449 724850 or email workingtogether@midsuffolk.gov.uk or workingtogether@babergh.gov.uk.

Don't forget, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, you can email: workingtogether@babergh.gov.uk or workingtogether@midsuffolk.gov.uk

Or contact the Chief Executive of either Council:

Andrew Good, Mid Suffolk
Email: andrew.good@midsuffolk.gov.uk
Telephone: 01449 724802

Pat Rockall, Babergh
Email: pat.rockall@babergh.gov.uk
Telephone: 01473 825710