

District Councillor Term Report 2019 – 2023

Planning.

The Joint Local Plan has been progressing in two parts with Part 1, concentrating on the various Development Control policies, being published for consultation recently. Work continues on Part 2.

1,187 homes approved via planning applications and 333 affordable homes were delivered of which 165 were new council homes. Only 1.4% of Babergh planning decisions have been overturned on appeal in a two-year period – well below the Government's 10% threshold.

CIL - £18m collected. £3m spent with another £3m allocated. Major contributions to support Gainsborough house and St Peters church in Sudbury.

S106 - £227k to support 18 projects.

Climate Change & Environment

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils were the first rural authorities in the UK to commission a full tree canopy survey. More than 100 trees and 780 metres of hedgerows planted as part of our biodiversity action plan.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan approved to identify and support schemes across the district.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils became the first rural councils in the UK to start the switch from diesel to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) to fuel its fleet of bin lorries. Working with waste collection provider Serco, this decision has delivered a CO₂ reduction of 467,000kg - an 89% CO₂ reduction per kilometre. The fleet had previously represented the biggest proportion of the councils' CO₂ emissions.

Leisure Centres

£2m new pool in Hadleigh and £2.4m on Kingfisher leisure centre improvements.

The 40 'solar carports' in Sudbury's Kingfisher car park were completed, but unfortunately suffered some damage in recent winds. We are looking into design issues with the manufacturer to prevent similar issues in the future. More than 500 solar panels have also been installed on the roofs of Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury, and Hadleigh Pool and Leisure.

Waste and Recycling

We have been concentrating on reducing contamination of recyclables in the blue bins. As markets for recyclables become ever more demanding it is important that we have the right materials in the blue bins and that they are clean, dry and loose.

Recycling increased 12% from our 'bring' sites - mainly glass, but also textiles.

Green waste subscribers increased 17% to 16,789.

Since 2021, we have given out nearly 3,000 bags of compost to residents.

Grants obtained (across both districts)

CoVid - £43.8m in grants to 8,500 businesses, including grants to village halls. Lock-down accelerated our digital development, moving to much more online working and service delivery.

£1,718,500 of external funding secured for growth and climate change projects, including £750,000 public sector decarbonisations and £400,000 for solar carports.

£1,964,216 in external government grants.

£350k awarded in capital grants to support 37 projects.

Economy

We developed 'Virtual High Streets' for Sudbury, connecting shoppers with 176 local traders through an online platform. It has also been rolled out to Hadleigh (65 businesses).

Our Innovation Awards celebrate some of the trailblazing businesses in the district. We held the awards in 2020 and 2022, on both occasions the finalists were a fantastic showcase for the talent helping to drive economic prosperity in Babergh. The awards particularly look to identify businesses using innovative solutions, approaches and technologies to reach new customers, become more sustainable or grow their business.

Finances

It has been a difficult period for financial management with Government requiring us to do more with less. We have just completed a reduction (over 50%) in the amount of space we occupy in Endeavour House giving us probably the smallest footprint of any council.

CIFCO investments continue to provide over £1m of income each year for the council. Portfolio values have fluctuated less than the market and we are currently looking at a reduction.

Recent increases in material and resource prices are making some projects unviable.

Finally, it has been a pleasure to represent you over the last four years and I thank you all for your support.