

# Quarter 4 Performance

## Babergh District Council

### June 2021 Cabinet





This performance report has been developed in collaboration with Cabinet members, Senior Leadership Team and corporate managers. It covers the period January - March 21 (Q4).

It covers a time where a further lockdown promoted the Senior Leadership Team and Councillors to review its strategic priorities and projects. This was to ensure the ambitions of the Corporate Plan, and critical services to support our communities and businesses during the pandemic were balanced. As part of this process it should be noted that a number of projects were paused.

Despite this, the council are finalists in the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021 - in the Customer Focus, and Asset Management and Regeneration categories, as well as being in the running for the prestigious Council of the Year award.

Please note:

- This is a high-level report, highlighting how the council is performing against its six key priority areas from the Corporate Plan (2019-27). It also gives a snapshot of the overall health of the organisation (including headline performance indicators) and looks in brief towards projects commencing in the next quarter.
- The report provides high level assurance that the council is delivering against the Corporate Plan.

# iESE Awards 2021

- We are delighted to report that we are once again finalists in the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021 - in the Customer Focus, and Asset Management and Regeneration categories, as well as being in the running for the prestigious Council of the Year award.
- Our planning enforcement team is flying the flag for us in the Customer Focus category, demonstrating how by harnessing technology and streamlining processes it has continued to deliver results despite the pandemic.
- In Asset Management and Regeneration category, our economic development team has shown how Sudbury's Virtual High Street is providing an innovative solution for businesses forced to close their doors during lockdown.
- Our place on the shortlist for the overall Council of the Year, is recognition of how our joint working and use of technology has helped us to support our communities through the pandemic, and champion places that people are proud to call home.
- We must now wait until the final on Wednesday 8 September, to find out whether we have been successful.



The Public Sector Transformation Awards



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils shortlisted for iESE Council of the Year Award 2021

# Customers

## Headline Performance Indicators

Combined data for both councils



**6,304**  
daily  
web visits (av.)

39% increase from Q3

Reason: disruption (weather), Covid-19 business grants on: council tax billing, waste



**513**  
calls per day (av.)

21% increase from Q3

Reason: council tax billing/housing repairs restarting (peak 900 per day)



**62**  
email responded to  
per day (av.)

35% decrease from Q3



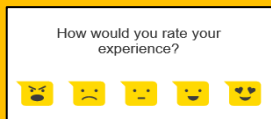
**928**  
Social media responses  
issued

49% increase from Q3



**51**  
compliments

34% decrease from Q3



**2**  
out of 5

Reason: service issues (e.g. missed bins), not about the website itself. New feedback tool being considered for Q1 2021.



**12%**  
abandon rate

5% increase from Q3

Reason: higher call volumes



**1 min & 52 sec**  
wait time (av.)

Reason: higher call volumes



**3.2k**  
recorded chatbot  
sessions

Average usage time: 28 seconds  
Most used service: waste



**215**  
stage 1 complaints

34% increase from Q3

87% not upheld, as majority were service requests e.g. a repair

# Customers

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 1:** We will implement the technology capabilities that support and enhance customer and employee experience, invest in our people to give them confidence to use and promote digital services and tools, and underpin this with an ethos and culture of listening and engagement.

**Progress:**

- Reviewed current complaints policy, engaging with tenants (via tenant sounding board) and officers.
- Telephony survey paused due to Q4 increase in customer activity, which is expected to restart in Q1. Enabled us to focus on supporting customers through the council tax billing period.
- The chatbot for environment and waste services went live in Q4. We have seen some positive activity levels predominately focused on waste services such as collection schedules, renewal of garden waste information and recycling information.
- Early findings from the chatbot are showing that approx. 3% of users are asking the bot questions relating to housing or council tax which the bot will let them know they cannot answer as the service is a 12-month trial for waste and environmental only.

**What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Complaint's policy review. This includes surveys to complainants over Q1 to ensure revised policy is based on customer feedback/is accessible.
- Improve our website's navigation, using insights from customer activity data from 2020, to ensure changes are most relevant to our customers.
- Produce trend data so we can compare the activity from quarter to quarter and understand how many people continue to try and use the chatbot for other services (aside from environment and waste).
- Review other chatbot and web chat options to ensure that we can see how the different types of technology may provide more online contact options for our customers.



# Customers

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 2:** We will develop and deliver a phased approach to supporting customers with digital inclusion and digital upskilling by working with like-minded community partners and using insight and intelligence to baseline our approach and measure our success.

### **Progress:**

- Actively engaged in the digital inclusion network across Suffolk.
- Working up our digital skills training offer for digital champions.
- The tenants digital skills survey was paused to allow us to gain initial feedback from the tenants board.

### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Trialling some digital skills training with Suffolk Libraries in May.
- A device lending through Suffolk Libraries will commence in late Q1, ensuring that we brief customers on how they can gain access to the tablet lending scheme.
- In May/June the tenants digital inclusion survey will commence to provide insight as to how we can support tenants with digital skills.

# Customers

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 3** – We are committed to putting our customers first by reviewing our current processes and re-designing them to ensure that they are simple, intuitive and maximise the use of technology.

**Progress:**

- Worked on our replacement customer payment system to a new, more accessible payment system. This will allow us to track customer payments and to make further improvements over 21/22.
- A new NVQ cohort for Business Process Reengineering has been created and we will agree how it will be delivered virtually over Q1. This will aid future improvement of our processes for the benefit of our customers.

**What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Our payments system improvements will launch over Q1 and we will then review the opportunities to further enhance the customer experience, making payments online or over the phone as simple for customers as possible.
- Commence additional process reviews in Q1 and look to share the progress from our original work, recognising that some of the improvements will not be realised until Q3.



# Babergh Communities

## Headline Performance Indicators



### Community Grants



**£139,683**

Capital Grant spend

*Projects supported include play improvements at Newton and the renovation of Chelsworth Church into a community space. 100% of the 2020/21 Capital Grant budget has been allocated*

**£70,775**

Covid-19 Emerging Needs spend

*Groups supported include food banks, community support groups, provision for young people and charities operating within the district. 100% of the CV19EN budget has been allocated.*

**£118,901**

S106 funds spent or allocated

*Including funding for new play area equipment in Brantham & Newton, as well as renovation of Long Melford FC's Stoneylands ground.*

**£4,582**

Minor Grant spend

*Projects supported include equipment for the Offshoot Foundation and Abi's Footprints Project in Great Cornard. 85.5% of Minor Capital Grant funding has been spent or allocated*

**£312,991**

Total amount of funding offered (not spent) through Capital, Minor and Covid-19 EN Grants

*(cumulative)*

**17**

Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprises (VCSE) supported

*All revenue-supported groups have been contacted on a regular basis throughout the pandemic, including Sudbury & District Citizens Advice, the Quay Theatre and Community Action Suffolk*

### Community Safety

*Anti-Social Behaviour cases reviewed by the ASB partnership;*

3

County Lines / Drugs / Alcohol

1

Domestic Abuse

7

Neighbour / Noise Nuisance

3

Open Spaces / Vandalism / Unauthorised Encampment



# Communities

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 1:** To create great places to live and to empower local people and communities to shape what happens in their area

### **Progress:**

- Working with Suffolk County Council on Women's Tour preparation for October, including engagement with communities and schools along the route.
- Supported our community groups with advice and support to apply to Community Restart Fund by Suffolk County Council.
- Completed Communities Strategy Action Plan.
- Updated the current Leisure, Sport and Active Participation Strategy, including two audits and stakeholder consultations to look at our built facilities and play pitches.
- The Joint Local Plan was submitted for Examination on 31 March 2021, this achievement is the culmination of five years' work. The examination hearing sessions will start on 21 June.

### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Set up a new Sudbury Cultural Group made up of professional bodies that represent part of the cultural infrastructure of the town.
- Armed Forces Day Event in June – Plans are progressing to deliver a Covid-19 safe event in Hadleigh with events taking place between 22nd – 26th June.
- Complete the Delivery Plan setting out the activities to be developed and delivered during the next financial year.
- We will aim to complete the refresh of the Leisure, Sport and Active Participation Strategy having consulted with key stakeholders and Councillors.

# Communities

## Objectives and progress



### What we committed to do and our progress

**Objective 2** – To effectively deliver our Community Safety Statutory responsibilities deliver on the priorities agreed within the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) Action Plan.

**Progress:**

BMSDC response to the Stella Maris Review included an extensive action plan of transformational improvements and activity.

Some key successes to date are:

- The roll out of ECINS (Case Management System) to report and manage high risk Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) cases.
- Improvements made to the effectiveness and frequency of ASB panel meetings, a revised Terms of Reference for each panel to discuss at a future meeting or workshop.
- Development of a draft Council wide ASB Policy to ensure consistency and transparency of approach across council services and to avoid potential silo working.
- Development of a suite of documents and tools to support officers manage ASB cases better to ensure interventions when required are appropriate and timely.

Continued support to the WSCSP and contribution to the ongoing activities set out in its action plan. The WSCSP reported its annual review to Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February.

# Communities

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 2** – To effectively deliver our Community Safety Statutory responsibilities deliver on the priorities agreed within the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) Action Plan.

**What we plan to do in the next quarter:**

- Continue to deliver the Stella Maris Action Plan with a focus on ensuring ECINS is rolled out to partners.
- Continue to work with WSCSP partners to deliver its action plan including contributing to:
  - The Suffolk Hope Awards taking place in June, launched during National Hate Crime Awareness Week.
  - The development of a Countywide ASB information sharing Agreement
  - Increased community engagement activity to increase awareness of the WSCSP priorities such Prevent and Violence against Women and Girls, Men and Boys.
  - Work with Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to develop initiatives in targeted areas that support the partnership priorities and to help them access Community Safety Partnership funding.
  - Continue to support national campaigns, including National Stalking Awareness Week – 19 – 23 April
  - Deliver domestic abuse training to teams and encourage staff to become Domestic Abuse (DA) champions.

# Communities

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 3** – To deliver a Community Grants Services that is inclusive and transparent, supports community participation & activity and works with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to develop thriving communities

### **Progress:**

**Community Grants and S106 Funded Projects include:** S106 contribution towards the extension of Hadleigh Skatepark, Capital Grants projects include car park renovations in Pinewood and Copdock Cricket Club, Village Hall extension in Nedging-with-Naughton and a play project at Chattisham and Hintlesham. Minor Grant projects include equipment for the Jets FC and a lunch club at Copdock Village Hall

**Revenue Grants:** 16 applications have been received for 21/22 and have been assessed using a revised assessment process and meetings have been held with all applicants.

**Locality Awards:** Projects supported during 20/21 include support for GoStart community transport, access improvements at Great Cornard's Stevenson Centre and Public Realm improvements in Holton St. Mary, Lavenham, Whatfield and Raydon. In addition, new speed indicator devices have been installed in Little Cornard and Brantham.

### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

**Community Grants & S106 funded projects** – Pipeline projects include Capital contributions towards outdoor gym equipment in East Bergholt and play equipment in Long Melford, with minor grants toward Sudbury in Bloom and the Rural Coffee Caravan's Hadleigh cookery project. Upcoming Village Hall improvement projects include Leavenheath and Preston St Mary.

**Revenue Grants** – Offer letter sent and initial healthcheck meetings completed.

**Locality Awards** – 20/21 Spend will be published on the Councils website and the 21/22 awards scheme launched in May/June.

**Grants Review** – Work on this was paused but the will restart again towards the end of Q1.



# Babergh Wellbeing

## Headline Performance Indicators



**28**



Families engaged in Holiday Projects in Glemsford

*It was not possible due to weather to have an activity session February half term.*

*The family cooking project was run in Great Cornard and 25 families attended all learning new skills.*



**7 (cumulative)**

Schools supported to help young and vulnerable people to live well

*No new schools signed up in Q4 – The project lead has now contacted all schools in the project and asked them to update their data. Activity packs have been created for the children to use. PE leads have met during Q4 with view to looking at an activity event for all schools to take part in during July (virtually or face to face). One new school lead to be followed up with Beaumont Primary school in Hadleigh*

**65**



Home But Not Alone referrals made across both districts by the Communities Team during this period

*50% of referrals were relating to access to food, with the remaining 50% being a fairly even split between requests for medication and asking for support due to poor mental health or struggling with social isolation.*

**2**



Outreach programme developed with Active Suffolk to support older people to live well

*Delivered in Glemsford & Holbrook/Shotley – no new referrals at Glemsford but 3 new ones at Holbrook/Shotley – this takes the total number in the Babergh project to 33. New Fit Villages project in Glemsford which is a virtual Pilates class with 12 attendances in first session. The team have been supporting the GP surgery and the social prescribing team as well as making plans for Activity Champion training are also working with the local project to support people with IT skills.*

# Wellbeing

## Objectives and progress



What we committed to do and our progress

**Objective 1** – To develop the Councils first Wellbeing Strategy to ensure that we put the wellbeing of our communities at the heart of everything we do.

**Progress:**

A draft Wellbeing strategy was completed and shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) late March for their observations and direction. As a result a number of changes and additions were suggested to ensure each of the outcomes will be achieved with a clear set of performance measures.

In the absence of a Wellbeing Strategy the Communities team has continued to support and deliver the following:

- A Project Plan has been developed to lead a programme on Youth Social Prescribing. If approved the Youth Social Prescribing Project will help young people to make connections with their communities, improve their wellbeing, to build positive and reliable relationships and to learn life skills for achieving their goals. A collaborative, place-based approach will ensure young people are enabled to access the support and activities they need, when and where they need them most.
- Postbox Project – ‘writing letters to tackle loneliness’ – Project has launched; 40 volunteers have signed up, Training is complete and 20 referrals have been received. The first letter writing pairings have started.



# Wellbeing

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 1** – To develop the Councils first Wellbeing Strategy to ensure that we put the wellbeing of our communities at the heart of everything we do.

**What we plan to do in the next quarter:**

- Focus will be given to completing Wellbeing Strategy and presenting it to Full Council at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. Consultation on the final during May with the aim of sharing at a cabinet briefing at the end of May.

In the mean-time the Communities Team will continue to deliver and plan wellbeing projects and activity such as those listed below:

- Active Wellbeing, in Glemsford is due to finish May/June 2021 – Active Wellbeing (AW) team continue to support the social prescribing team and are working with Onelife Suffolk to look at health walks in the area
- Active Wellbeing, in Holbrook/Shotley runs until end of August 2021 – AW team continue to support the social prescribing team and are working with the Shotley Open Spaces (SOS) team to promote health walks with Onelife.
- Active Schools work will continue with the schools and we will engage with our leisure operator Abbeycroft Leisure (ACL) to ensure some of the work continues.
- Our Parks event will take place in Great Cornard hosted by Gt Cornard Parish Council at the Stevenson Centre – the pilot project will hopefully start in late April 2021 and continue until Oct 2021. In addition the Park run and Junior Park run will be restarting after Easter at Great Cornard along with the new event at Alton water which was formally a Great Run Local event and has now been taken over by Park Run.
- Continue to support the development of a revised Leisure, Sport and Active Participation Strategy. Member workshops have been arranged for the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April to share progress

# Babergh Environment

## Headline Performance Indicators



**114**

New garden waste subscribers

*Total subscriptions to date 15,649, there has been a continual increase in the number of subscribers throughout the year.*



**15.66%**

of recycling collected was identified as contaminated or too small to process (under 45mm)

*Items included mainly glass, wet paper and bagged waste. This is an increase of 2.48% from Q3. (Data from Materials Recovery Facility input sample)*



**4**

Building Control visits in connection with dangerous structures

*The building control team dealt with 4 reports of unsafe structure, these all related to reports of unsafe walls.*



**160**

Incidents of fly tipping

*This compares to 81 for the same period in 2019*



**99%**

of fly tips cleared in 48 hours

*Fly tipping data relates to tips on public land only*

# Environment

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 1** – To achieve the Councils' ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030, following the adoption of the Carbon Reduction Management Plan.

**Progress:**

- The transition of the waste fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel is progressing well. Funding has been obtained from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for installation of the fuel tanks and a contractor has been appointed. The procurement of a fuel supplier is underway with an anticipated implementation date of July 2021.
- A successful joint bid for £1.4m was made with Mid Suffolk to the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The funding will be used on measures towards 'decarbonising' the leisure centres and the Wenham Depot through the installation of heat pumps and/or renewables.
- Solar car port and battery storage/EV charging project progressing following March Cabinet approvals, we are pre-planning and tender for technology/installation partner.
- A Business Case has been developed for a new water filtration system at the Kingfisher pool which will recover waste heat and recycle water.
- Agreement has been reached with Abbeycroft Leisure to transfer leisure energy tariffs from blue to green certified low carbon tariffs.
- We have partnered with the Energy Saving Trust to identify suitable public car parks in which to expand the Council's network of electric vehicle charging points. Infrastructure constraints are being scoped with UK Power Networks before a bid for funding to the Government's Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) grants scheme.

**What we plan to do next quarter:**

Work towards implementation of the waste fleet HVO project by July 2021.

- Complete the scoping of decarbonisation works for the leisure centres and Wenham Depot and tender for the works.
- Apply for planning permission and tender for the Solar Carports/Battery Storage project.
- Report to Cabinet for capital funding for the new water filtration system at Kingfisher.
- Work with Vertas to secure the transition of the leisure centres to green energy tariffs.
- Complete scoping works for the electric vehicle charging points project and submit a bid for funding to OZEV.

# Environment

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 2** – Improve the biodiversity of the district, consistent with the biodiversity pledge adopted by the Council

### Progress:

- Our Biodiversity Action Plan highlights tree stock and condition surveying as a priority area for our Arboricultural Team. The ground-based survey of all the trees on our land will give us an accurate list of species, size and age of our tree population. Excess carbon dioxide is building up in our atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, removing and storing the carbon while releasing oxygen back into the air. In one year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced when you drive your car 26,000 miles.
- Mapping work is underway of our public realm spaces, so that we have a clear understanding of land owned by the Councils, current wildlife corridors (including animals, plants and ecosystems); mapping will help identify suitable tree and hedge planting locations and where wildlife corridors need to be established, enhanced or protected.
- Application form completed and published for Town and Parish Councils to undertake tree and hedge planting.
- Phase 2 of the Design Council project has focused on user research to identify how people use their local green / open space and how people value it.

### What we plan to do next quarter:

- We are commissioning a satellite survey. Satellite images combined with powerful computer processing will allow us to create a map which shows every tree over 3m tall in each ward across our districts.
- Parish and Town Councils identified as sites for trials of novel meadow and verge management techniques to be contacted, proposals to be worked up and agreed.

# Environment

## Objectives and progress

### Sustainable environment for



**Objective 3** – To promote a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment for our districts.

#### **Progress:**

- Working with our colleagues in Public Health to respond to the pandemic and support businesses in their preparations for re-opening as lockdown eases.
- Promoting the correct recycling of items within household recycling bins through leaflets and social media promotions working with the Suffolk Waste Partnership.
- There has been a significant increase in the incidents of fly-tipping this year. There are a number of possible Covid-19 related reasons:
  - Household Waste and Recycling Centres were initially closed and now operate on a booking system.
  - People spending more time at home and having 'clear-outs' of unwanted household belongings which in the past may have been donated to charity shops which have also been closed during the pandemic.
  - The number of people offering 'clearance service' via social media, may not all be authorised traders who are then not disposing of the waste in the correct way.
- The increase in fly-tipping has had a direct impact on the Public Realm operations team, regularly taking staff away from the winter works programme to carryout fly-tipping clearance activities.

#### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Hoping to be able to move towards more 'business as usual' activities. Focusing on our core areas of work in particular food safety and animal licensing inspections. High risk businesses which are overdue visits will be prioritised for visits whilst we continue to use remote methods of assessment for those that are lower risk to protect our staff and the general public.
- For 2021/22 we are focusing on reducing the amount of glass in recycling bins and encourage them to be recycled through the bottle bank scheme.
- A draft litter and fly tipping strategy is being created.

# Babergh Housing

## Headline Performance Indicators



30

Households placed into temporary accommodation

*There was a slight reduction in homelessness presentations during Q4, which is not surprising as we had seen quite an increase in Q3. We were also in a 'lockdown' situation, which meant the eviction ban was re-introduced.*

55



Properties relet (not temporary accommodation)

*The figures remained at 55 for Q4. However, Q3 and Q4 did see an increase from earlier in the year. This will be carefully monitored as a larger number of properties can have an impact on void times, if we don't ensure sufficient capacity to carry out the repairs required.*



17

New Affordable Homes Acquired or Built

*During 2020/21 we acquired or built an additional 29 units of affordable housing in Babergh. A mix of 2 and 3 bedroom properties, including some bungalows. 12 properties were purchased; a number in Sudbury and Great Cornard, with further S106 acquisitions on 2 sites in Lavenham.*



47

cases where homelessness has successfully been prevented or relieved

*There was a slight increase in successful outcomes in Q4, which is positive. The team continue to work diligently on all cases to prevent or relieve homelessness wherever possible*



24

average number of days for VOID re-lets

*Although there has been an increase (7 days) in void times between Q3 and Q4, overall for the financial year voids performance has been within the target of 21 days. This is a significant achievement, given the challenges faced including three lockdowns, delays in materials, reduction in works being completed by multiple trades at the same time due to social distancing and an increase in void properties. The cumulative void figure for the year is 21 days.*



# Housing

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 1** – Enabling delivery and provision of homes within the Districts.

**Progress:**

- Progress continues on our Council owned sites and direct delivery to provide more homes within the District:
  - Angel Court, Hadleigh (21 properties) due to complete end of June 2021
  - Ipswich Road, Brantham (9 properties) – on site and due to complete November 2021
  - Queensland, Shotley (8 properties) – on site and due to complete July 2021

The BMSDC are currently on site with four developments which will deliver 79 affordable homes in the next two years, with a mix of social rent, affordable rent tenure and shared ownership (part buy/part rent).

- During Quarter 4, a total of 34 housing specific applications were granted, which will deliver 49 homes.

**What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Put in place a plan for the marketing and sale of shared ownership properties on S106 acquisitions and on sites which the Councils are delivering with our development partner Icenl.
- Review the internal process for delivery from pre-planning to post- handover of properties to the Councils.
- Progress phase 2 sites to planning.
- Complete drafting of design guide and technical specification for new housing delivery.
- Progress towards a 5 year delivery pipeline - identifying gaps in delivery and potential opportunities.

# Housing

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 2** – Reducing our carbon footprint, working towards specific actions within the Carbon Reduction Management Plan

### Progress:

- Our Surveyors have completed a Level 5 Diploma in Retrofit Coordination and Risk Management. This will enable the evaluation of properties within our council stock, that are suitable for retrofit to be identified and planned by us rather than outsourcing which will reduce the time delay.
- In addition to the retrofit training, we have:
  - Embarked on a programme to collect up to date Energy Performance Data for every home in our stock.
  - Working with the Energy Saving Trust who have given us access to data (at an address level) for each council home. This data means we can deliver a programme of works that is tailored to every BMSDC owned home across the districts . In addition, it will provide the ability to determine area-based retrofit schemes, drive decarbonisation plans and assist with the application of grants in a much timelier fashion.
  - Our programme of fitting energy efficient heating continues and consistently evolves as technology improves.
  - Allocated a budget to energy measures for our homes, with £1m set aside for insulating solid wall properties and those that are hardest to treat.
- Engaged with architects who have completed designs for us to work to with our retrofitting programme at Harleston Corner. These designs will now be going out to a Quantity Surveyor to cost and plan in the works which we plan to start in Q1 2021/22.

### What we plan to do next quarter:

- Develop a specification policy for all New Builds which will focus on the carbon footprint of not only the building but also the supply chain to ensure that all properties built by BMSDC going forward have the least impact possible. Due to the pandemic, this new specification piece of work was placed on hold. We will be taking up this again when lockdown restrictions are lifted. A target for this to be completed will be Q4 2021/22.

Central Suffolk Lettings growing success has continued throughout 2021. We have provided private rented homes for over 90 homeless households. 19 of these homes are as part of the new rent guarantee scheme – which offers tenant security alongside a comprehensive, professional lettings offer to private landlords.

Currently Central Suffolk Lettings are assisting 131 homeless households to secure private rented accommodation across the Districts.

Some highlights of 2021:

- Founded a Suffolk wide local authority private lettings forum with members from each local authority in Suffolk.
- Finalised the building of a mainstream service from a two-year pilot plan with one permanent member of staff, and two fixed term employees running the current project with plans to expand into the coming year.
- Three successful energy grants for private landlords secured through Private Sector
- Full tenant support service to 90 households
- Full compliment of staff working to ARLA accreditation

### What our customers are saying:

\*Eliza and \*Rosa (14yrs) had to flee their home in fear of their own lives after Rosa fell victim to child exportation by a London gang – Rosa also had to leave her 18yr old brother behind. They moved into our temporary accommodation with few belongings but within weeks, Central Suffolk Lettings had found them a private rented property in a location that was safe to them. The property had three bedrooms so that Rosa could be reunited with her brother. Our service not only found the property, but we were able to support the family in changing their address and updating benefit agencies and arranged for all their belongings to be transferred from their previous property. The Social Care Worker said: *“I just wanted to say a huge thank you for your hard work and brilliant multi agency working in regard to Eliza and Rosa. The fresh start has been pivotal in the risks being reduced for Rosa and she is starting to feel safe again. Thank you again and it was really great working with you.”*

Kevin Berwick, a private landlord with a property on our Rent Guarantee Scheme: *“I commend you highly on your people skills, communication skills and integrity. I always feel you respect the interests of both landlord and tenant and are always on top of your brief. Any time I have emailed you, you have got back to me very quickly. I appreciate this a lot, especially as I no longer live in the UK. You have always managed to make time to respond to any of my queries, no matter how busy you were.”*

*\*Names have been changed.*

# Housing Case Study

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils purchased a new build property and worked with Suffolk County Council's occupational therapy team to adapt the property to meet the specific needs of local family with a disabled daughter, providing a secure, long term home.

Several major adaptations were needed on the family home to ensure that their daughter could remain at home and live in an environment that met her requirements.

The home was provided through Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils' Housing Assistance Policy, and a number of options were looked at by the housing team to find a solution that met the housing needs of the whole family.

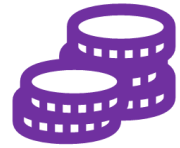
The family who moved into their new home in February this year said: 'We would like to say a big thank you to all for purchasing the house for our daughter's needs, we are over the moon; One, you have all been there for us as a family to meet our needs for our daughter and two, for a superb bungalow it is amazing'





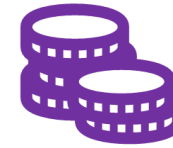
# Babergh Economy

## Headline Performance Indicators



### Covid grant funding:

7,212 grants paid worth **£34,934,942**



**£4,937,901**

Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSNG) (Closed) (Addendum) Nov and Jan Lockdowns

*2372 grants paid*

**£ 40,012**

LRSNG Closed (Tier 2 period) (closed Pubs)

*Paid to 30 businesses*

**£ 282,732**

LRSNG Open (Tier 2)

*304 grants paid*

**£59,818**

LRSNG (open) (Tier 2) discretionary element

*55 grants paid*

**£47,000**

Christmas Support Payment

*Paid to 47 businesses*

**£1,392,185**

Additional Restrictions Grant (discretionary grant for businesses affected by Nov and Jan Lockdowns and Tier 4 restrictions)

*617 grants paid*



**96.8%**

of business rates collected

*This is 1.6% below target, impacted by the pandemic, with priority given to administering the various grant schemes. Better than forecast during the year.*

# Economy

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 1 – Connected and Sustainable** :To be one of the best-connected places in the East of England and be a testbed for new innovation in clean growth industries

### Progress:

- Continued work with Town and Parish Councils to support reopening of the High Street in line with Government guidance.
- Brief drafted for Hadleigh grow on space scheme and to report to June Cabinet meeting.
- Project team set up to run Localised energy showcase event to be held in autumn 21. Venue confirmed as Wherstead Park.
- Funding bid submitted to Nesta Challenge Fund to deliver an innovation pilot for listed buildings.
- Sustainable Travel Officer appointed to deliver on active travel projects, create new walking and cycling trails and deliver projects linked to our zero-carbon agenda.
- New cycling storage facilities agreed for Hadleigh.
- Wayfinding Strategy commissioned for Sudbury.

### What we plan to do next quarter:

- Progress development of digital infrastructure strategy for rollout of ultrafast broadband and promotion of broadband vouchers to businesses.
- Develop specific sector intelligence for key sectors to inform investment and business support in Clean Growth.
- Develop costed pipeline of projects in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Sign legal agreement and project documentation for the delivery of Sproughton Enterprise Zone.
- Work with Suffolk County Council to develop projects linked to Active Travel phase 2 funding.
- Secure funding for Sudbury bus station through the newly launched Levelling Up Fund and look at alternatives.
- Report to Cabinet on Hadleigh workspace development, and refresh of workspace and grow-on study evidence post-Covid.
- Progress to next stage all capital projects/pipeline including securing delivery partner for solar carports.



# Economy

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 2 – Innovative and Creative** :We will become a growing area for Innovation, Enterprise and Creativity in the East

### Progress:

- 3,731 business grants paid to businesses worth £6.67m in relation to national lockdowns and Tier 4 restrictions.
- Developed new discretionary policy for January lockdown to support businesses excluded from main grants programme.
- Supported the inaugural Artificial Intelligence (AI) Festival hosted by Innovation Labs and BT to showcase innovation and opportunities across the Districts – created infographic and a virtual marketplace stand for the event to engage with delegates.
- Innovation Network launched with first event focusing on support for innovative businesses from University of Essex, University of Suffolk and the Growth Hub – 30 participants at this event.
- First Innovation Newsletter was published.
- Extended the Innovation Cluster Steering group to create an Innovation Board covering both Districts with an extended board membership reflecting the new terms of reference.
- New Town Centre Business Liaison Officer has been appointed to support rollout of Virtual High Street to Hadleigh.
- Digital Skills programme brief published and Menta appointed as delivery partners to support businesses to maximise the opportunity of the Virtual High Street.

# Economy

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 2 – Innovative and Creative** :We will become a growing area for Innovation, Enterprise and Creativity in the East

### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Develop policy for discretionary Restart grants.
- Launch “Shop local” programme to support independent retailers and businesses across the Districts.
- Launch extension of Virtual High Street programme to Hadleigh, including recruitment of a coordinator and delivery of digital skills programme.
- Launch of new innovation grants programme.
- Commence review of evidence base for the new Economic Strategy and launch Recovery Strategy.
- Development of an Inward Investment website to ensure the Districts are promoted to investors as a place to locate.
- Progress plans for a Centre of Excellence linked to Innovation Labs to showcase innovation in the region.
- Support plans for redevelopment of key employment/development sites including Brantham and Delphi.

# Economy

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 3 – Successful and Skilled** :We will raise levels of aspiration and ambition in our districts and recognise and celebrate our success

### Progress:

- Commission Menta to provide an updated workspace assessment post Covid-19.
- Support the Local Enterprise Partnership and Visit East of England to bid for Education and Skills Funding Agency funding for VENI project to raise skills levels across the visitor economy.
- Successful bid submitted for £90K to deliver Innovate Local project to support pilot workspace projects in town centres.

### What we plan to do next quarter:

- Launch a “trade local” scheme to celebrate the innovation from our businesses during Covid-19 and maintain ongoing local business to business trade.
- Scope an innovation futures pilot with a local school.
- Development of workspace strategy and delivery plan across the District to ensure we have sufficient workspace.
- Commence delivery of Innovate Local programme through opening of Innovation Hub in Sudbury and market stall space in Hadleigh.
- Develop full plans for Hadleigh Employment land for Cabinet decision in June.

# Babergh Health of the Organisation

## Headline Performance Indicators

*Combined data for both Councils if not specified*



**4.06** *(cumulative)*

average no. of days  
sickness per FTE

*This is an improvement on the  
previous year when the total days  
lost per fte reached 8.13 days*



**530**

Total number of days lost  
to sickness

*Top 2 reasons for absence:  
30% Mental Health  
14% Hospital/Post-operative. A reduction  
of over 50% on the previous year*



**120+**

staff attended the Virtual  
Wellbeing Programme

*10 virtual sessions delivered since April focusing on self-  
awareness and responding to adversity. We plan  
to deliver these continually throughout the next year.*



**175,000**

Babergh Twitter  
impressions

*'impressions' are the number of  
times a Twitter  
user sees our Tweets*



**398,000**

Babergh Reach for  
Facebook

*'reach' is the number of unique users  
who had any content from our Facebook  
page or about the page enter their screen*



**1457**

Babergh Committee /  
Council meeting views

# Health of the Organisation

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 1** – Develop and implement a comprehensive 'People' Strategy that ensures we are a great organisation to work for, that our people are supported to learn and grow, energised and enabled to deliver our ambitions

### **Progress:**

- Continue to develop our early careers programme and recently held our internship assessment days which proved a great success. We have offered places to 8 successful candidates who will join us on the programme across the Councils for the summer months.
- Working with the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, we have agreed 7 placements via the Kickstart scheme and those people will work with us for 6 months to learn new skills.
- Carried out a Learning Needs Analysis and have produced our Learning and Development Plan for the next 12 months and as part of that, are currently trialling new on-line learning for some of our Health & Safety requirements.
- Developed our People Wellbeing Strategy and our plans for the next 12 months in order to support our people.
- Continue to support the delivery of the Accommodation and Agile Working Strategy.

### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Review our people priorities as part of our strategy to ensure we support our people and line managers in the right way as we start to emerge from Covid-19.
- Carry out a Health and Wellbeing audit with a group of our employees.
- One of our apprentices has been nominated for Apprentice of the Year and we are supporting the Awards later in April as a key facilitator.
- Scoping out the work around resourcing and continuing to review our policies.

# Health of the Organisation

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 2** – Provide robust effective management of the Councils finances, including our capital projects and contracts. We will use our resources in a sustainable way and prioritise based upon our Corporate Plan.

### **Progress:**

- General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets approved for 2021/22
- Quarterly financial monitoring for capital, revenue and reserves.
- Regular monitoring and projections of the financial impact of Covid-19.
- Designing a new business case pro forma and ensuring the relevant financial information is captured and reported in a more structured format for each project.
- Implemented cash management module within the finance system, facilitating automated bank reconciliations and cash allocation.
- Work is underway reviewing the Councils annual spend analysis to ensure we have contracts in place for all areas of significant spend and a complete contract register.

### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Finalise and adopt the new business case proforma and more structured reporting for project spend.
- Work with Corporate Managers to review annual spend in their areas to ensure all contracts are in place and review their plans for pipeline spend.
- Scope out the work required to improve our Finance system.

# Health of the Organisation

## Objectives and progress



**Objective 3** – Effective and efficient management of our property portfolio to make the best use of our assets.

### **Progress:**

- The Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was adopted by both Councils in January 2021.
- Commissioned space planning and interior design consultants in March to advise on the next steps for reviewing our office accommodation at Endeavour House, with initial plans expected at the end of April for review and consultation as part of the work to deliver the accommodation and agile working strategy resulting from the opportunities presented by the emergency for new ways of working ensuring the best use of our accommodation in the future including a review of operational accommodation requirements e.g. Depots.
- Continue to work with tenants to agree leasing and rent repayment strategies for any rental arrears accrued as a consequence of Covid-19.

### **What we plan to do next quarter:**

- Delivery against SAMP action plan particularly progress against high priority embedding a corporate approach to property.
- Endeavour House - Initial proposals and design development during May and June.
- Put a stakeholder engagement plan into place for each of the Phase 2 housing sites to ensure that local communities are kept informed/consulted on developments in their areas.
- Working with Babergh Growth to deliver the redevelopment of the former HQ site to deliver regeneration and income for the Council.