

## **District Councillor Report (December 2024)**

Dear Councillors,

Never a day or week seems to go by without some potential critical change in our lives is launched by our new government. The Chancellor has delivered her first budget with one or two 'eyebrow' raising changes in both NI and Capital taxation. Increases in Employer National Insurance and restructuring of Agricultural and Business Property Relief (APR & BPR) to name just a few. I suspect there will be several more significant changes that will impact upon us, but we will need to wait and see...?! I mentioned in my November report, difficulty in planning ahead when the financial information is so late arriving – there's still no change on that score. We have been working extremely hard in anticipating a difficult budget and have closely scrutinised much of our structural 'labour' costs. This should enable us to reduce our reliance on reserves to back fill the potential gap. We still face a difficult few months in pulling together our 2025/26 expenditure programme. We continue to be supported by our long-term commitment to CIFCO – the councils' commercial property investment programme. CIFCO will make a six-figure positive contribution to the authorities' budget again this year.

Many of you will have read the news articles concerning the 'Biggest shake-up in Services for 50 years' (EADT 26<sup>th</sup> November). As I mentioned at the beginning of my piece, our new government are reviewing much of what 'Local Government' (District, Borough's & County) are up to and how effective we all are at delivering services to communities. Clearly, there is merit in doing so as it would be fanciful to imagine that improvements can't be found. Nothing has been agreed and there will be some discussion before a potential trajectory or structure can be open for consideration. My personal view is there is much to be gained from 'conjoining' the role of district and county councillor as it would, give your 'local government' representative, much more control over how they can provide a much more effective service to the communities they serve. Lets watch this space..?!!

Please be mindful of the Brockley Woods planning application, being received by Suffolk County Council development control committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December (at the time of writing this meeting is being pushed back to 2025). This meeting is open to councillors and members of the public. If you haven't been to a planning meeting at Endeavour House before and you fancy coming along, let me know and I'll arrange for a seat to be reserved for you. I hope to be present alongside my colleagues, Cllr Helen Davies and Cllr David Busby and, of course, our friends and neighbours from Bentley & Copdock/Washbrook. I continue to urge members to scrutinise the terms of the application and respond to the consultation. Please take the time to consider this application and leave your views on SCC website.

### **Babergh Notes**

I attended the BDC Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November. The Co-Chair of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee (JASC) Bryn Hurren presented the councils Annual Treasury Management Report for 23/24 for noting.

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Sallie Davies, presented two new supplementary planning documents (SPD's) on BMSDC Housing and BMSDC Intensive Livestock & Poultry SPD's for adoption by Council. Both were adopted and now formed part of the growing and guiding content of our JLP.

Babergh planning committee met on 13<sup>th</sup> November to consider two applications. The first and most important was a S73 application by Taylor Wimpey to review the housing mix on part of their development in Brantham. The application asked for a small increase in 4 bed homes and a reduction in 3 bed homes. Planning committee members scrutinised the context of the application and the evidence to support these changes and asked Brantham PC to offer evidence to contest these changes. Brantham PC hasn't created a neighbourhood plan, so it was difficult to substantiate resisting the change in bed size along with evidence supplied by TW that 2 and 3 bed units were in less demand. The application was granted. The second application was for a 'non-lit' advertising board on the junction of Corks Lane (adjacent to the development) for BDC. This application was granted.

The joint BDC Overview and Scrutiny committee met on the 11<sup>th</sup> November where we reviewed and scrutinised the councils 'Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Reduction Management Plan'. The paper was presented by Cllr Helen Davies the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Nature Recovery & Biodiversity'. The Council continues to make progress towards the 2030 target, but the 'hard yards' remain ahead of us which will need 'capital input' that can only be achieved in conjunction with central government funding.

As ever, I remain open to any members who would like to be briefed on specific anonymised examples of the council's work, in this area, please let me know. These meetings are also open to both parish councillors and members of the public wishing to attend either in person or online.

#### **District Councillor Resident Surgeries**

My regular meeting opportunity for residents in the library will be Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 9.30 – 11.00am. The forward date for next month will be Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 9.30 – 11.00am. No appointment is necessary, but if residents need more of a confidential chat, please let them know beforehand so I can arrange some privacy. I'm also available 'on demand' at the PC office in conjunction with Julie.

John (Whyman) Cllr - Babergh Council Member – Capel St. Mary

[John.Whyman@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:John.Whyman@babergh.gov.uk)

**Mobile: 07928 512597**