

Babergh District Councillor's Report

February 2024

Budget Update

We are proposing to increase Babergh's element of council tax bills by 2.99%, the maximum we are allowed by government – any more would require a referendum to get approval. This is an additional £5.46 to £188.10 a year for residents in a Band D home. Babergh's proportion is only 9% of the total council tax and goes towards providing the many things we do.

Our gross expenditure is forecast to be £25.4m in 2024/25, with council tax funding 26.7% of that. The rest comes from government grants, business rates, fees and charges for services, and investment income.

We will be increasing our council house rents by 7.7% (CPI + 1%) for social rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £7.92 a week, and 9.4% (RPI + 0.5%) for affordable rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £11.1, a week.

The budget will be debated by cabinet on 8th February and then by council on 20th February.

Babergh urges Government to fix 'broken' funding for councils

Council leaders are calling for the Government to address a local authority funding crisis.

Parking Charges

As agreed by cabinet last month, we are conducting further engagement over plans to introduce short-term parking charges with all town and parish councils, district councillors, and other recognised groups. Engagement is already underway with the directly affected town and parish councils in Sudbury, Hadleigh, Lavenham and Chelmondiston.

Director of Operations Mark Emms is due to contact all other councils via their parish clerks over coming days with further information on how they can also have their say ahead of recommendations going back to cabinet. Please look out for further information soon.

Funding available for community action on climate change

Applications are being invited for The Suffolk Climate Action Community Match Funder. It is available to charities, community interest companies, parish councils, voluntary groups and other not-for-profit organisations, whose projects contribute to Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan.

£230,000 awarded to community projects across the districts

Projects across Babergh and Mid Suffolk have received a share of £230,000 in grants and funding as part of the councils' commitment to residents' wellbeing and ensuring communities have access to local community facilities.

Councils award funding to provide warm spaces this winter

More than 30 community projects in Babergh and Mid Suffolk have each received a share of more than £36,000 to keep residents warm and connected this winter.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk building control wins prestigious national award

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk building control team is celebrating after receiving a prestigious national award for its work at Black Pheasant Barn, near Sudbury – which judges described as “*an impressive, modern and environmentally conscious barn conversion delivered on a tight budget and under tight timelines*”.

More Brits overseas can now vote

British citizens living abroad are now eligible to register to vote in UK general elections, regardless of how long they've been living outside the UK.

Fully-funded EV chargers for community car parks

Do you know a community organisation with a car park who could benefit from a fully funded EV charger in your area?

Please make them aware of [the Plug in Suffolk scheme](#).

While applications for the second phase formally closed on 19 January, the project team have allowed a **grace period of a few weeks** for those who could turn around an expression of interest quickly.

Even if not, it's still worth exploring and helping local groups plan ahead for any future iterations of this or any other similar schemes. Find out more and an expressions of interest form via the link above.

£30K funding for environmental projects in Dedham Vale and Stour Valley

An annual grants scheme that sees over £30,000 awarded to environmental community projects across Essex and Suffolk has opened for another round of applications.

Do you know of any individuals or community organisations in your local networks that could apply? [Find out more](#)

Meetings

Cabinet, Council and Planning Committee meetings can be watched, either live or catch-up, on our [YouTube Channel](#).

For agendas and minutes, please visit the [Democratic Services homepage](#).

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