**Babergh District Councillors Annual Report 2020/21**

It’s been an extremely difficult year for all our communities with the Pandemic, I believe what this has shown is how wonderful our residents, community groups along with parish councils, local businesses and indeed our district and county councils have all worked above and beyond to help our residents, local support groups and our businesses during the past 12 months.

I have kept this report limited on COVID details as I wanted to show that our District Council whilst working tirelessly in supporting our communities has also been able to function and provide the essential services that we rely upon month on month whilst introducing new initiatives and programmes in our district to allow it grow and prosper.

Below are just some of the updates provided during the year.

**April 2020**

Various Grant programmes continue to provide essential support during the Pandemic.

Garden Waste collections suspended.

**May 2020**

Virtual District Council meetings start as legislation is passed to allow this.

Commemorate VE Day safely message from Babergh on 8th May.

**June 2020**

A new Discretionary Grant opened for businesses based in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, market traders, bed and breakfasts and small charity properties.

**July 2020**

**COVID-19 forces re-think for future of Sudbury Town centre** - Plans for the future of Sudbury town centre – including a hotel and restaurant at Belle Vue – are back on the drawing board, due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

**Funding boost of nearly £300,000 for Babergh communities** - Communities are set to receive funding totalling £299,000 for local projects, including the regeneration of St Peter’s in Sudbury, a community venue in Chelsworth and play area in Newton.

**August 2020**

**Stick with it Suffolk – wear a face covering** - Suffolk residents are being asked to keep looking out for each other and combat Covid-19 by wearing a face covering in shops, following new Government guidance introduced on Friday 24 July.

**Chilton Woods development takes a major step forward** - The long-awaited Chilton Woods development site on the edge of Sudbury took a major step forward last Month, as Suffolk County Council exchanged contracts with housing developer Taylor Wimpey.

**Babergh communities to benefit from CCTV investment** - Councillors have agreed to an £180,000 upgrade in CCTV provision – ensuring Hadleigh and Sudbury remain safe and thriving towns that people are proud to call home

**September 2020**

**Leisure upgrade provides post-lockdown boost** - A £2.4m extension and refurbishment at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury is making it possible for more customers to enjoy a safe return to fitness following lockdown.

**Shopping local could provide lasting impact on the high street -**High Streets across Babergh and Mid Suffolk could benefit from almost £19m of additional income over the next 6 months, if all adults spent an extra £5 by shopping local every week.

**Homes Sweet Homes – Babergh’s multi-million pound investment in social housing** - Babergh District Council has recently secured a deal for 45 new-build homes in Sudbury to help low-income house-hunters – part of a multi-million pound investment in council housing across the district.

**October 2020**

**New in-house public realm service set to pave way for biodiversity ambitions** - Babergh’s cabinet has approved plans which will see the management of public open spaces, playgrounds, and litter bins move in-house, in line with neighbouring Mid Suffolk.

**New owners announced at former Philips Avent manufacturing site** - Babergh District Council has welcomed the announcement of new owners at the former Avent manufacturing facility on Lower Road in Glemsford. The site has been sold to GCB Cocoa UK Limited, a subsidiary of the Malaysian firm Guan Chong Berhad (GCB) Group. The site will now be used to manufacture a range of cocoa products.

**November 2020**

**Self-isolation support payments for low-income earners in Babergh** - Residents on low-incomes and unable to work because they have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, can now claim a £500 payment to compensate for loss of earnings.

**Doors open on Sudbury’s Virtual High Street** - Shoppers can now enjoy the very best of Sudbury from the comfort of their front room as the new look Virtual High Street opens its “doors”.

**December 2020**

**New Covid-19 support grants launched** - Businesses in Babergh who have had to close their doors to customers as part of the current national lockdown may be eligible for a second wave of grant funding through the Government’s Covid-19 support packages.

**Green light for councils’ biodiversity vision** - Councillors at Babergh approved their first Biodiversity Action Plan to protect and strengthen biodiversity – supporting the councils’ carbon neutral aims.

**2020 Innovation Award winners announced** - The winners of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Innovations Awards were announced at a virtual ceremony

**January 2021**

**Rapid rise in COVID-19 cases and pressure on health and care force Suffolk into Tier 4 restrictions** - An alarming rise in COVID-19 infection rates across Suffolk and pressure on hospitals, care homes and social care has resulted in the county entering Tier 4.

**Work to improve Cavendish Way and Minden Road area to begin** - Plans to regenerate the Cavendish Way and Minden Road area of Sudbury have taken a major step forward, as the £900K restoration of four council housing blocks is underway.

**Leisure centre throws open doors after £2.4m refurb** - The new-look Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury has officially opened its doors following a £2.4m extension and refurbishment – providing leisure facilities for the town for years to come.

**February 2021**

**New home for customer access point at Sudbury Library** - Babergh District Council, in partnership with Suffolk Libraries, has announced its customer access point will move to Sudbury Library. The access point, co-designed by Suffolk Libraries, will provide digital support and face-to-face services.

**Go ahead for emission-cutting fuel plans** - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will cut their fleet’s carbon emissions by up to 90% by using HVO fuel – supporting the councils’ carbon neutral aims.

**New recycling campaign aims to get Suffolk's recycling right** - Every year, more than 10,000 tonnes (1 in 5 lorries worth) of recycling from Suffolk homes is rejected. This is due to residents placing the wrong items in their recycling bins. A new campaign 'Together we can get our recycling right' has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership to tackle the problem.

**March 2021**

**Community testing** - 1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 do not have symptoms and may be unwittingly spreading the virus to other people without knowing. To tackle this, Suffolk has introduced community testing (also known as lateral flow testing or rapid testing) for those who are unable to work from home. A number of community testing centres have recently opened across Babergh, including sites in Sudbury, Nayland and Holbrook. To find out more, or to make an appointment go to the Suffolk County Council website

**Babergh parking changes agreed for October at the earliest** - Babergh District Council will continue to subsidise an hour’s free parking to support its high streets, with changes to council car park charges expected to come into effect later this year.

**Plug in Suffolk** - Plug in Suffolk is now providing grants for the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points at non-profit locations such as community centres, parish council car parks and village halls. Visit Green Suffolk’s website or contact Suffolk County Council’s environment strategy officer Peter Frost to find out more about the funding.

**Babergh budgets for financial stability and sustainability** - Councillors have agreed Babergh District Council’s budget for 2021/22 – delivering financial stability post-Covid while still delivering the council’s commitment to climate change.