

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR SEMER PARISH COUNCIL

24th OCTOBER 2018

Introduction

As it's a little while since I joined you for one of your infrequent Parish Council meetings I will try to cover all the relevant Babergh activities/issues whilst keeping my report as short as possible.

Boundary Commission

✂ The Boundary Commission has confirmed its final recommendations for restructuring the current Babergh Ward patterns. As expected the number of District Councillors will come down from 43 to 32 and the new Ward (SE Cosford) will comprise the parishes of – Aldham, Elmsett, Whatfield, Nedging & Naughton, Kersey, Semer, Chelsworth and Lindsey – two more than the present arrangement.

✂ The Secretary of State is required to sign off the new Ward structure for implementation at the next local elections in May 2019.

As regards my position, I have been selected as a Conservative candidate for the new SE Cosford Ward.

Private Sector Housing

You will be pleased to know that following a recalculation using the govt's formula, Babergh DC now **has a 5 year land supply** for the private sector housing. This will allow the Planning Committee more flexibility when assessing planning applications than has been the case over the last two years or so. However, now for the bad news, only last night we were made aware of a potential glitch in that an appeal against refusal to permit Landex to build 24 houses in Boxford could return us to the "no we don't have the 5 year land supply." We are in a nonsense situation that we can't control as there is a new draft NPPF document in circulation that appeals panels are interpreting differently. Probably not relevant for Semer, but potentially a major issue for Babergh.

Merger of Babergh & MSDCs

You may be aware that the proposal to merge MS with Babergh was put on hold until Suffolk CC had the results of a study initiated by Colin Noble (the then Leader) into a Unitary Authority solution for Suffolk. The new Leader (Matthew Hicks) is less enthusiastic about the concept and he has pressed the "pause" button with the study.

My expectation is that merger Babergh/MS will be back on the Agenda in the not too far distant future but when I raised this at a recent Council Meeting I was assured that it would not be on the agenda before May 2019 when we have the next local elections.

Disposal of Corks Lane Buildings

The recommendation for redevelopment of the old Babergh Council offices (about 56 houses/flats) will go before the Planning Committee in October 18. I am a member of the Planning Committee and I will keep you advised.

Angel Court

The plans for the redevelopment of Angel Court (21 x one and two bedroom flats) are pegged to the fence for inspection if you are interested. Good news story for Hadleigh. Much needed.

Other Good News Headlines



Following the move to Ipswich, Babergh has now (at last) agreed to provide "pop up points" ie support facilities in the Hadleigh library (one half day a week – Thursday afternoons 1 pm to 5 pm) for ward members who need advice and don't want/can't get to Sudbury. Start date was Thursday 18th October 18, and as a trial it will run for 3 months.

- The 100% business rate retention trial for Suffolk in 2018/19 has been a valuable tool for important projects but will not continue in its present format. Instead, we expect another trial to be implemented for 2019/20 with a 75% retention.
- Budget pressure is manageable currently with a requirement to find approximately £2M over the next 4 year period. This can be achieved without cutting back on services.

-eg. car park charges.

Alan Ferguson