

July 2018

Cabinet

There have been more changes to the Cabinet this month with fellow ward member Peter Patrick stepping down (as I'm sure he will have mentioned) and being replaced by Independent Conservative Simon Barrett.

Kathryn Grandon (Con) has also joined the Cabinet in a Communications role and someone I will be working closely with on a large project due to be completed in December.

With my Cabinet role expanding, and a new position on the Audits and Standards Committee, while having to juggle my day job as a freelance journalist and publisher of Shotley Peninsula News and Features, I have decided to step down from being a full-time member of the Planning Committee.

My place will be taken by Independent Group Leader Clive Arthey, former chairman of planning development, and I will still be available on occasion to substitute on the committee when required (hopefully not too often).

Councils to Pilot Pioneering Developer Contributions Database

As part of my portfolio I'm delighted to introduce a new computer software system where residents and those in the development industry will be able to see how money collected from developers as part of planning agreements is being spent on providing infrastructure for local communities when a new

Babergh is working with the software provider Exacom as part of a pilot exercise involving two other local authorities to hone this innovative, new database which will transform the way that information is held for developer contributions paid for by legal agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Babergh's Section 106 and CIL data will be used by the software provider in the launch of the Planning Obligations Public Facing Module across the country. This will be hosted on the Councils' websites later in the summer and will enable people to search for information by district, ward, parish or infrastructure type with details of where monies are collected, allocated and spent. It will also allow people to see legal agreements secured as part of the planning process. The information will be updated daily.

Question time

The Leader of Babergh District Council, Councillor John Ward and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jan Osborne will be holding a public question time for residents on Saturday, July 21, 10am - 12 noon at Shotley Village Hall

Babergh exceeds housing land supply target

Babergh District Council has published its Annual Monitoring Report, demonstrating a

Housing Land Supply of 6.7 years – meeting the government's requirement of five years.

As of Wednesday 11 July, the Council considers it can demonstrate this land supply, meaning that Babergh can prove that there is enough deliverable land to meet the number of homes that need to be built over that period to meet housing need.

The Council has been unable to demonstrate this land supply since April 2017, but now the updated figure has been made possible as a result of a proactive approach to delivery.

Plans for former council headquarters in Hadleigh

Babergh District Council's Cabinet have voted to draw up a planning application to develop up to 58 new homes on the site of the council's former Hadleigh offices.

At a meeting of Babergh's Cabinet on 12 July, councillors voted to draw up a planning application to develop the former office site as residential properties, while retaining the listed buildings and part of previous extensions to the offices. The application will cover the former offices at Corks Lane as well as the car park south of the Brett, including Bridge House.

Housing Revenue Account

The Government has now announced the regulations on bidding for additional Housing Revenue Account borrowing, which will include the opportunity to use additional borrowing along with Homes England Grant or Right to Buy Receipts.

The question on what a high affordability locality has been answered as follows:

High affordability pressure areas are defined as those where there is a difference of £50 or more per week between average social and private rents at the local authority level.

As a result Babergh qualifies to bid for additional borrowing and will be submitting one.

CIFCO

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' property investment management company, CIFCO Capital Ltd, has made six acquisitions in its first year which are generating an annual return of £1.4million.

Each of the two councils has invested £25million and has a 50 per cent shareholding in CIFCO, which reports to two holding companies, Babergh District Council (Suffolk Holdings) and Mid Suffolk District Council (Suffolk Holdings).

At the end of the first year's trading, a total of £23,572,000 has been invested by CIFCO in six

assets, generating a total of £1,410,466 in annual rental income

Council launches new online payments system for land charges searches

A new online payments system has been introduced for those buying homes in Babergh. The new system allows those requesting a Local Land Charge Search – which carries with it a search fee – to pay quickly and easily online, via credit or debit card. Most Land Charge Service customers are solicitors and agents delivering conveyancing services to those buying a house although anyone can request this service regarding any property.

Boundary Commission for England

The commission intends to report its final recommendations on the parliamentary constituency boundaries to the Government on or shortly before September 5 2018, in order that they have every chance to lay the report in Parliament before the party conference recess begins on September 13. Once the Government has laid the report in Parliament, the commission will publish our final recommendations on our website.