

MID SUFFOLK AND BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCILS' MEDIA RELEASE

JOINT CABINET SESSION TO CONSIDER POTENTIAL MERGER

For immediate release: Thursday 5 October 2017

Simultaneous meetings of Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Cabinets will consider the future of the relationship between the two districts, including a recommendation to consider dissolving both current councils and replacing them with a new single council.

The meeting, to take place in the King Edmund Chamber in Endeavour House at 9.30am on Friday 13 October, will consider a report from council officers, outlining the various options for the future relationship between Babergh and Mid Suffolk:

- Continuing the existing partnership approach, without any further change;
- Forming a wider partnership with 1 or more other district/borough councils;
- Dissolving the two Councils (Babergh and Mid Suffolk) to form a new single district council for the area;
- Forming a Unitary Council for the area (or some other larger area);
- Creating a Combined Authority for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (with or without other Councils);
- Forming a stand alone 'mutual style' company (with or without other public and / or private sector partners) to deliver all public sector services in the area.

The report was written by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Chief Executive, Arthur Charvonia, at the request of the Council Leaders to review the options to further evolve the Councils' partnership working, which started in 2011.

The report recommends that both Cabinets provisionally endorse the option of dissolving the existing councils and forming a new council. Should the Cabinets decide to do so then comprehensive public engagement will take place during the autumn to test this opinion, and understand the views of residents, stakeholders, partners and staff. Once this is completed the results of this public engagement and a detailed Business Case will need to be further considered by both Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The full report can be found online at:

Babergh:

<http://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=521&MId=1017>

Mid Suffolk:

<http://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=522&MId=1029>

Arthur Charvonia, Chief Executive of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, said: "Both Councils are currently consulting our residents on what the future of our fantastic places should look like over the next 20 years. It makes sense, therefore, that alongside this consultation on the Joint Local Plan, we also consider what type of local government arrangements will be needed to deliver the vision and ambitions contained in the Joint Local Plan.

“Mid Suffolk and Babergh formed our award-winning partnership in 2011, not long after the Coalition Government was formed. Since then there have been two further General Elections and changes of both Government and policy. Demand for our services, need, aspiration, funding, and wider political and economic circumstances have therefore changed significantly in that time. The success of our partnership working has enabled the Councils to withstand these challenges over the last six years. However, as explained within the report, simply doing more of the same is unlikely to be able the Councils to effectively address our future challenges, nor leave us best placed to deliver the ambitions and opportunities that our residents want and deserve to see. It is therefore important that both Councils carefully consider this and listen to the views of our residents, stakeholders and staff.”