

## **MARCH 2018**

### **COUNCIL MEETING 20<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2018**

Babergh District Council this week voted to approve their budget for 2018/19, including a 3.25 per cent increase in Council Tax (equivalent to £5 per annum for a Band D property). The decision was made against backdrop of cuts to central funding, which will see district council payments received from Westminster fall to zero by 2019/20.

The budget comes into effect on 1 April this year. Other results from the budget adoption will be:

- The council had already agreed in December 2017 that those most in need will not pay more than 5 per cent of their council tax bill under Babergh's Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Also the decisions made on 20<sup>th</sup> February included a decrease of 1per cent in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of 90p a week
- Net increase of £2 per week for tenants, which may be recoverable through Housing benefits depending on the tenant's circumstances
- No increase in the Sheltered Housing utility charges
- No increase in garage rents

I would like to remind you that full reports from Council and Cabinet Meetings, can be found online at:

Babergh: <http://babermidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=521&MIId=1017>

Mid Suffolk: <http://babermidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=522&MIId=1029>

### **AFFORDABLE HOMES UPDATE**

The cost of buying a home in Mid Suffolk is 9 times average salary and Babergh is approximately 11 times average salary levels. In addition, both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have significant waiting lists of people who need support to find a home. The Gateway to Homechoice currently has 1,751 active households in Babergh and Mid Suffolk on its register waiting for a social and affordable rented property.

As such Babergh and Mid-Suffolk adopted the New Build Affordable Housing Programme 2015 - 2018, the outcomes of this were 27 new build homes in Babergh. In addition the Right to Buy Reinvestment Programme 2015 – 2018 saw 23 homes purchased by tenants in Babergh 92% of these in tax Band A and B

The updated Affordable Housing Programme 2018 – 2021 and RTB (Right to Buy) Investment Programme will secure funding capacity to deliver 210 affordable Babergh homes using RTB Receipts, HRA Funding, Homes England Grant using Icen Homes Ltd as the development partner. Sites identified include Angel Court Hadleigh, 2 sites in Shotley and 1 in Brantham, with a further 26 sites in Babergh identified as possible development land.

### **HOUSEBUILDING/PLANNING**

I continue to urge anyone who wishes to comment, good or bad on planning applications, to do so by emailing [planning@babermidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planning@babermidsuffolk.gov.uk) and explaining your objection or support.

## **WATER STREET**

Whether you wish to believe it or not (and I hold my reservations) but Suffolk County Council Highways have finally given us a start date for the temporary weight restriction in water street. They have stated that “that the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is being processed with an operational date of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018”.

I sincerely hope this date becomes a reality.