

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR NEDGING & NAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 11th JULY 2017

Introduction

This is an interesting period in the Babergh Conservative administration as the process and governance change decisions that were taken in the last 2 years are now being implemented.

Governance Arrangements

After the Babergh AGM in May 17 we moved to a Cabinet governance arrangement. Seven Cabinet Members have been appointed with stronger powers of decision (responsibility) and authority. This (in theory at least) should make decision making quicker and easier although the power of decision making will rest in the hands of a smaller group of Councillors. This will be monitored through a strong **Scrutiny Committee**.

NB Any member of the public can now attend Cabinet Meetings in Endeavour House, Ipswich wef September 17 – details can be found on line.

Babergh/Mid-Suffolk Move to Endeavour House Ipswich

The move will take place in the middle of the year and be completed by September 17. With a shared back office Officer support arrangement this should make us more efficient as we will sit alongside our County Council colleagues and money will be saved by not having 2 half empty District Council buildings. However, the move will be challenging although we will ensure that support arrangements are put in place so that constituents do not have to go to Ipswich if they wish to meet with Council Officers. The 2 main support offices (Sudbury & Stowmarket) will be manned 5 days a week with a small staff in place from 9am to 5pm. In addition, there will be about 9 other locations available where residents can ask to meet Council Officers rather than travel to Ipswich. These will not be manned but booked as and when required.

Disposal of Corks Lane HQ

At my request, the Leader of Babergh District Council has asked that she and I be given a copy of the brief to our selected architect (Purcell of Colchester) for the recommended disposal solution for the current HQ building. I do not want to find ourselves in a situation a year from now where we are presented with a "fait accompli" – this has to be addressed now to agree a way forward if not the final solution. I am planned to meet with Jennie Jenkins and the Officer responsible for this area of business on Wednesday 12th July 17 and I will brief further as and when I see the potential options.

Boundary Commission

As I have briefed previously, the Boundary Commission (BC) is looking at the number of District Councillors that we have in Babergh DC. Currently we have 43, but the Chief Executive has advised the BC that we require only 31 to populate the various committees that are needed to manage day to day business. The Boundary Commission unsurprisingly

has accepted the number 31 (effective for next District Council elections in 2019) and as an Administration we will now try to get our heads round a new Ward structure with 31 District Councillors, each one (in a perfect world) with responsibility for representing 2388 electors. **It is likely that there will be changes to the current South Cosford Ward** as it has grown by 11% since the last Commission work was completed – 10% max is the assumed trigger for change.

As well as Councillors, every member of the Babergh registered voting public is entitled to express a view on boundary restructuring. This can be done by accessing the Babergh website (search for “Babergh Boundary Commission”) for advice how this can be done. **Consultation period finishes on 14th August.**

The new boundaries will be effective in May 2019, the date of the next Babergh DC elections

Housing – Private Sector

As I have reported previously, we are not building nowhere near the number of private sector houses that are required for our growing population in Babergh. However, I will remain strongly in favour of “right type”, “right place” and “right number” as we look at individual planning applications.

However, we now have the added complication of Babergh no longer having a 5 year supply of building land and this tilts the balance in favour of planning applications for developments in both our towns and villages.

Refusal applications has just become considerably more challenging.

Alan Ferguson

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11th July 2017