

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR NEDGING & NAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

TUESDAY 14th NOVEMBER 2017

Introduction

In addition to the decision to approve the application to build 41 houses in Elmsett, there is a huge amount of business going on the Babergh that will impact on all of the towns and villages in this area. Incidentally, as a member of the Planning Committee, I voted against the 41 houses decision, but currently the absence of the 5 year housing supply is causing a major problem to those tasked with deciding on applications.

However, officer recommendations for approval can be turned round as happened recently in Boxford when the Planning Committee refused an application for 21 houses in Boxford because of congestion

Public Access

The move of Babergh/Mid Suffolk Council staff was planned to be completed by the end of September. However, changes to staff T&Cs (mainly parking in Ipswich) required further negotiation with the Unions. That has now been completed and, as I understand it, employees have been given an additional one off payment of £500pp to accept the new T&Cs. Corks Lane will now be vacated at the end of next week (ie mid-November) , when all Council business will then be done from Ipswich, Stowmarket or Sudbury.

Boundary Commission

The Boundary Commission has issued its initial findings and recommendations. In our case, if I run again for re-election in 2019, the Ward will be known as "Whatfield Ward" and will comprise Whatfield, Elmsett, Aldham, Nedging & Naughton, Semer, Chelsworth, Monks Eleigh and Wattisham. I will no longer represent Kersey. Whatfield Ward will comprise **8 Parishes rather than the current 6**. You can access the proposed new structure on the BC website and you have until **11th December 17** to comment if you wish to do so.

Housing – Private Sector

The Babergh Planning Committee has approved applications for some 2000+ houses in the last few months. Our target for **houses built** rather than just approved is 335 per annum. Some of these approvals have been as a direct result of Babergh no longer having a 5 supply of land bank of potential building sites and it's a concern to me that it might be a blunt instrument. We have now agreed with Tom Barker, a member of the Babergh Senior Management Team that a more frequent review than annually is required. The actual format and delivery of this requirement of this has yet to be decided.

New Joint Local Plan (Draft)

The new draft Joint (Babergh & Mid Suffolk) Local Plan has modified the built up area boundary identified just one site for housing development in Nedging Tye. Please take the opportunity to comment on the draft as this will strengthen your case later when draft proposals become real proposals

NB Please bear in mind that applications will still be subject to the full standard Planning Committee scrutiny and that the Local Plan is likely to take priority over a Neighbourhood Plan.

Merger of Babergh & MSDCs

Thank you for letting me have your feedback on the merger option. Like you, I have reservations that need to be addressed before we move forward.

To put it mildly, this has now become the hot topic of the day following a "Call In" to the Scrutiny Committee by opposition Members. The proposal had been signed off by the Babergh Cabinet to agree in principle to merge subject to consultation. A number of us felt uncomfortable about the Cabinet's decision in light of the "no" referendum of 6 years ago. The Scrutiny Committee, of which I was a Member, voted to support the "Call In" by 6 votes to 1, saying that the Cabinet had not followed due process, and that there was insufficient financial information and insufficient information about the consultation to agree in principle a move to merger. The decision has been referred back to the Cabinet who are required to provide additional information. The revised Report will now be considered by the full Babergh Council. However, **the Cabinet, not the full Council**, has the authority to take the final decision.

I attended the most recent Cabinet Meeting in Ipswich on Thursday 9th November when this matter was briefly discussed again but only in the context of the Cabinet disagreeing with the Scrutiny Committee but acknowledging that they had to provide additional information and have it discussed in a full Babergh Council Meeting.

Since then you may have seen my letter in the East Anglian (photo copy provided) expressing concern about the lack of suitable finance information and the process of consultation etc which has resulted in a published letter from Cllr John Ward (a Babergh Cabinet member) accusing me of "destructive actions" and threatening me (and others who have expressed similar concerns) with disciplinary action ... whatever that may mean....

Disposal of Corks Lane Buildings

The Babergh Cabinet will consider the recommendations for disposal of the Corks Lane site on **7th December 17**. Watch this space

Alan Ferguson

(tel: 01449 741542 or 0797 407 5430)

14th November 2017