

District Council Report

Helpline for the most vulnerable - 0800 876 6926 free to call 7 days a week, from 09:00 to 17:00

- **Planning applications during Covid-19**

The Planning Charter forms part of the Constitution adopted by Babergh District Council. The current charter includes a planning protocol which places restrictions on the use of officer delegations to determine planning applications. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Planning Committee cannot meet as frequently to conduct business and therefore to comply with statutory determination deadlines more applications need to be determined by officers under delegated authority. The applications to be decided under delegation will depend on how controversial they are.

The first virtual planning committee took place on Thursday 30th. The meeting was conducted using Skype meeting and persons wishing to speak on an application needed to register their interest to speak no later than two clear working days before the Committee meeting. The meeting was generally successful with only a couple of recesses as people dealt with troublesome laptops.

Also for the next 12 weeks the council has suspended provision of a hard copies for public viewing and the display of a Council site notice in relation to applications at community venues.

During this time the council will provide emails and letters of documents if necessary, for specific persons/purposes, or to provide individual alternatives on a case by case basis and as necessary upon request.

- **CIL Funding review**

The 2nd CIL expenditure framework review has been approved. The review was due to go before full council meeting this month so that it would be in place before the next bid round, which is due to start in May. As the April meeting was cancelled the decision to approve has been made in consultation with the Chairs of the Councils. A number of changes to the framework have been made including no 100% CIL bids and minimum and maximum bid limits.

- **Business Innovation and Growth fund**

Councillors have agreed a £300,000 funding programme for small businesses in towns and villages across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to be allocated over the next three years. Small businesses from start-ups to those looking to expand, will be able to apply for a grant from one of four different funding streams.

The new scheme will provide a much needed boost to businesses to help sustain and create jobs, provide opportunities to grow and innovate, as well as react to the changing business landscape.

The grants can be used in a variety of ways from improving environmental outcomes and sustainability, accessing professional advice and training, improving disabled access and business frontage or for the development of technology-based business solutions. The grant value will be up to £2.5k for each of the funds except the Enterprise and Innovation Fund which will have a maximum limit of £5k. The criteria, eligibility and application process will be confirmed once the business grant fund programme is launched later this year.

- **Parking Management**

Car parking enforcement (CPE) powers transferred from the police to local authorities across Suffolk on the 6th April. With more limited resources due to Covid-19, we will be supporting the national response to the pandemic in our districts by prioritising our service to maintain access for our emergency, care, delivery, refuse and highways services. Parking enforcement is an important public service keeping our roads safe and ensuring access for goods and services.

Our partners at Ipswich Borough and West Suffolk Councils who are carrying out CPE in our districts on our behalf, will be taking a common-sense view and focusing on tackling obstructive and dangerous parking on our roads on behalf of Suffolk County Council.

We have also relaxed the restrictions in our car parks to help key workers and residents carrying out essential tasks find parking and will review this as required over coming months.

- **Useful contact info–**

- Homeless or becoming homeless - 0300 123 4000.
 - Email - housingsolutions@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk
- Domestic Abuse - 0300 123 4000 during office hours, or 0808 168 7794 out of hours.
- Tenant help – Phone 0300 123 4000 from 8.45am Monday to Friday
 - For emergency repairs or to report dangerous structures 0808 168 7794
 - Text mobile service for hard of hearing customers 07827 842 833
 - Email rent collection team hreincometeam@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk
 - Email tenancy support team tenancysupport@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

All this information is available on our website: www.babergh.gov.uk/features/our-covid-19-response