

District Council Report

CAR PARKING

Cabinet met on the 4th Feb and resolved to approve the implementation of charges in Hadleigh, Sudbury and Pin Mill. The revised proposals were generally the same as the originals, but instead of 30minutes free parking an hours free parking was agreed. Also the original proposals were due to start in July, but this has now been pushed back and charges will begin no earlier than 1st October. This date will remain under review dependant on the situation with pandemic and the economy.

GENERAL FUND BUDGET

The Council approved the General Fund Budget proposals for 2021/22 and four-year outlook set out in the report, at the recent Full council meeting on 23 February 2021.

The budget looks to increase Babergh's share of council tax by 2.96%, the equivalent of less than 10p a week (£5 a year) for an average Band D property. The increase is part of a package of measures that the council feel will meet the medium-term financial challenges presented by the pandemic; help meet its ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030; and maintain services for residents and communities.

In addition to the council tax increase, the budget will also include a proposed increase of £2.50 a year to the annual brown bin garden waste subscriptions, taking the cost from £52.50 to £55 – the equivalent of an extra 10p per collection.

I presented some green party amendments that tried to introduce improvements to aspects of the planning process. Particularly looking to help planning compliance, increase planning committee training and to encourage community projects. We were also looking to initiate further green measures to protect our Biodiversity and kickstart climate change improvements. All amendments were rejected.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET

At the meeting Council also agreed the HRA Budget proposals for 2021/22 and four-year outlook.

This report includes a CPI + 1% increase of 1.5% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £1.35 a week. That Sheltered Housing Service charges be increased by £0.69 per week to ensure recovery of the actual cost of service.

Again we submitted amendments to assist housing with retrofitting of council properties, which were again rejected.

CENSUS 2021

The latest Census will take part across Babergh this spring.

Census outputs inform where billions of pounds of public funding are spent on services like transport, education, and health.

Census day will be on March 21 and will be the first Census run predominantly online, with households soon receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

ADOPTION OF THE REVISED TABLE OF FARES FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES

A new table of fares for Hackney carriage will come into effect from 5 April. The basic rate for daytime fares will increase by 20p from £3.00 to £3.20. Night rates will start at £4.80 and apply between 11pm and 7am instead of between midnight and 6am

MOTION CALLING FOR COUNCIL LEADER RESIGNATION

At the February Council meeting a motion was submitted by councillors in Sudbury calling for John Ward to resign.

John Ward has led on the proposed Babergh name change, the closure of the CAP in Sudbury, the failed sale of Belle Vue to Premier Inn and the instigation of Car Park charges. All without any consultation with the public or Councillors. The motion was ultimately rejected by 2/3 of the Council and was subsequently derided by Councillor Ward.