

# Public Document Pack



COMMITTEE: **BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

VENUE: **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Corks Lane, Hadleigh**

DATE: **Monday, 18 September 2017 at 9.30 a.m.**

## Members

Clive Arthey  
Melanie Barrett  
Peter Burgoyne  
Barry Gasper

Bryn Hurren  
Alastair McCraw  
Fenella Swan

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## AGENDA

### PART 1

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ITEM	BUSINESS
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Page(s)

1 SUBSTITUTES AND APOLOGIES

Any Member attending as an approved substitute to report giving his/her name and the name of the Member being substituted.

To receive apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members to declare any interests as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at this meeting.

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2017 - TO FOLLOW

4 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

ITEM	BUSINESS	<u>Page(s)</u>
5	<u>BOS/17/8 VOID TIMES IN COUNCIL PROPERTIES</u>  Report by the Corporate Manager – Housing Options and the Corporate Manager – BMBS.	1 - 14
6	<u>BOS/17/9 INFORMATION BULLETIN</u>  The Information Bulletin is a document that is made available to the public with the published agenda papers. It can include update information requested by the Committee as well as information that a service considers should be made know to the Committee.  This Information Bulletin contains updates on the following subjects:  1. Community Engagement	15 - 16
7	<u>BOS/17/10 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST</u>	17 - 20
8	<u>BOS/17/11 BDC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FORWARD PLAN</u>	21 - 24

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 23 October 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

For further information on any of the Part 1 items listed above, please contact Committee Services on 01473 826610 or via e-mail at [Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk).

# Agenda Item 5

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Sue Lister – Corporate Manager – Housing Options Justin Wright Newton – Corporate Manager - BMBS</b>	<b>Report Number: BOS/17/8</b>
<b>To: Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 18 September 2017</b>

### VOID TIMES IN COUNCIL PROPERTIES

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the committee with information about the average time to re-let vacancies within Council housing stock and the action being taken to improve performance.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee has received assurances that appropriate steps are being taken to reduce void times and that the position be reported to Cabinet;
- 2.2 That the approach to reducing void times be endorsed;
- 2.3 That the performance against void targets be monitored and that any underperformance be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 Re-let performance has a direct impact on resources within the HRA. Rent loss and payment of council tax reduces the funds available for other activities. Average rent equates to £80 per week and with approximately 200 vacancies a year, a reduction of 7 days in the void time would achieve a saving of around £16,000 in rent loss and £3,500 in council tax.

#### 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

#### 5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is not closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Risks. However, risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Rent loss resulting from long void periods poses a risk to the Council's HRA business plan.	Unlikely (2)	Minimal (1)	Void Improvement Project, efficiency gains from improved utilisation of IT systems.

## **6. Consultations**

**6.1** There have been no consultations specifically associated with this report.

## **7. Equality Analysis**

**7.1** There are no equality & diversity implications related directly to this report, however the Housing Options service routinely undertakes equality impact assessments around service delivery.

## **8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

**8.1** Since April this year an integrated team has been responsible for carrying out repairs in void properties.

## **9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan**

**9.1** The services described in this report relate to the following strategic aim: Manage our housing assets effectively.

## **10. Key Information**

Babergh has around 200 void properties each year. During the time they are untenanted no rent is received and council tax has to be paid.

The work required from the time a tenant gives notice to the start of a new tenancy is carried out by the Housing Options Team and Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Services (BMBS).

The Housing Options Team visits the out-going tenant, advertises vacancies on Gateway to Homechoice, carries out viewings for potential new tenants and completes a number of administrative tasks.

BMBS carries out or arranges repairs and safety checks to bring the properties up to the Council's lettable standard.

### **10.1 Average re-let times**

The table below shows the average time to re-let vacancies within Council stock from the end of one tenancy to the start of a new one.

**Table 1: Average time to re-let**

Year	All properties	Major works	Minor works	Standard repairs		
				All	General needs	Sheltered
2015/16	43	148	49	31	25	48
2016/17	29	140	33	27	26	30
2017/18 quarter 1	44	63	57	41	41	39

The table is broken down to show the time to re-let different types of property. A small number of properties each year required extensive repair work which would have required an existing tenant to move out. Minor works include a new kitchen, bathroom, or a new heating system.

The columns for properties which required standard repairs show separate figures for sheltered properties and all other types. Sheltered vacancies are sometimes harder to let. This could be down to a number of reasons, including some funding for care issues at very sheltered schemes, location and demand.

## **10.2 Comparisons with other landlords**

Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) compiled by central government includes the average time to re-let standard void properties. Amongst Suffolk stock owning authorities the average time in 2015/16 was 39 days with a range from 20 to 67 days. In Norfolk, the average was 33 days with a range from 15 to 51. For Essex authorities the average was 35 which a range from 18 to 60.

In each county the higher performance was in the urban areas, primarily down to geographic spread (less distance to travel to properties and less time collecting materials etc). The average for rural districts, excluding Mid Suffolk and Babergh, was 48 days.

Corporate Manager - BMBS has visited the Flagship Group and at the end of September has a further meeting to discuss performance related issues and average timescales.

## **10.3 Factors which increase the average re-let time**

A number of factors affect the time taken to bring properties up to the lettable standard:-

Prior to work commencing in a void property an asbestos inspection has to take place and any components containing asbestos, such as floor tiles or bath panels removed. This work has to take place once the property is empty as this is an invasive survey and so the outgoing tenants cannot be exposed to asbestos fibres.

Some older long-term tenants have refused improvements such as kitchens or bathrooms which necessitates additional work to reach the lettable standard.

A minority of properties are left in a poor condition by the outgoing tenant and have to be cleared or require flea treatment.

Some properties are hard to let such as sheltered vacancies or bungalows in rural locations.

We have an ageing stock. Over half of our current void properties are over 50 years old.

#### **10.4 BMBS**

Prior to this April repairs in Mid Suffolk were carried out in-house and in Babergh by an external contractor. The launch of BMBS brings the two teams together to provide an in-house repairs service for both councils. BMBS is facing some initial challenges which have affected the time taken to complete repairs on void properties.

Two separate IT systems were consolidated onto a single platform (Open Housing) in December last year. However, the two councils still operate differently. With the implementation of the new team, members of staff are having to adapt to new roles and have steep learning curves. The void team leader appointed has been off sick since the end of June, so this has impacted on the consistency of the approach in dealing with voids from BMBS. A project is on-going to reconfigure the system and how it is used to support the business. This includes data cleansing, a review and streamlining of processes and procedures, integration of the BMSDC system with external contractors, staff training and temporary administrative resource to enable changes to be made whilst the day to day work of the service continues.

An additional team leader is being recruited which will double the resource available to focus on repairs in void properties and supervision of the trades team.

With the removal of the void co-ordinators / inspector's roles, the trades team itself is being given more responsibility to diagnose problems and complete the work needed to bring vacant properties up to the lettable standard. This removes the requirement for a surveyor to visit properties and specify the requirements and is intended so shorten the time taken to carry out repair work. A change to ways of working and the culture of the whole team are in progress but will take time to become fully embedded.

BMBS operatives have also been required to assist in the creation of a number of touchdown points across the district with a hub at Great Wenham (requiring some quite significant changes to lay out and function). Those operatives would normally be carrying out works on various properties across the district, so this will also have some impact short term.

#### **10.5 The Void Improvement Project**

Within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan is a section on increasing financial capacity and improving efficiency to deliver savings of £300,000 over three years.

Included within the plan is a reduction in the overall average re-let time to 21 days by 2019/20. With an average rent of £80 per week and 200 vacancies a year, a reduction of 7 days in the void time would achieve a saving of around £16,000 in rent loss and £3500 in council tax.

For reasons shown in 10.6 above there has been an increase in the time taken to repair void properties since April. The Void Improvement Project is currently focussing on the new processes and staff roles which flow from the launch of BMBS and the move out of the two offices in Needham and Hadleigh.

Other factors to be addressed include making best use of pre-termination inspections and IT solutions, understanding the reasons some properties are left in poor condition to reduce the number which require substantial repairs and visiting existing tenants who are likely to be offered a transfer to ensure their properties are up to standard. Within the pre-termination period, it is recommended that more information is gathered relating to works that may be required, instructions are given to outgoing tenants to what they will be responsible for, also highlighting condition of decoration and potential for carpets etc to be left to assist new tenants (also supporting the works done by other groups within the local area who support families on lower budgets).

There have been some significant delays caused by the work relating to asbestos surveys being carried out prior to work being able to commence. This process has been looked at and is being monitored to ensure that the impact is as minimal as possible, highlighting where problems have been encountered and learning from these lessons.

Tracking and influencing indicators for this project are set out in Appendix (A).

## 11. Appendices

Title	Location
(A) Void Improvement – Tracking and Influencing Indicators and Milestones	Attached
(B) Lettable Standard	Attached

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## Void Improvement – Tracking and Influencing Indicators and Milestones

Efficiency plans within the two Councils' Business Plans include reducing the time properties remain vacant between tenancies over the next three years.

### Target for reduction of void times in days

	17/18	18/19	19/20
Babergh	29	25	21
Mid Suffolk	35	28	21

The following indicators and milestones contribute to achieving this target

	Indicator/Milestone	Rationale	Resources Needed	Targets	
Page 7	1	Identify, monitor and set targets for the time taken for the different stages in the void process	A number of activities are required before a property can be re-let.  Setting targets for the main contributors to the overall void time and monitoring performance allows us to identify areas of concern and direct resources appropriately.	Staff time to record events in the void process and report on performance	Targets 1a to 1c to be monitored in working days on a monthly basis.  Taking into account the number of properties typically requiring major works, minor works or standard repairs the targets in working days would achieve an average total re-let time of 21 calendar days.
	1a	Asbestos surveys	Asbestos surveys are required before any repairs can be carried out. Asbestos removal may also be required.  Surveys can be carried out prior to the end of a tenancy but if not the time taken contributes to the overall void time.	Staff time to record events in the void process and report on performance	Average time to complete:  Asbestos surveys: 3 days
	1b	Completion of void repairs	Before a property can be re-let work is completed to bring the property to the lettable standard and to carry out safety checks.		Average time to complete:  Standard repair work: 5 days Minor works: 10 days

## Appendix A

		Due to the variable condition in which properties are returned by the out-going tenant, targets are set for the 3 different levels of work required.		Major works: 35 days
1c	Time taken from when properties are ready to let to the start of the new tenancy.	This records the time after BMBS has confirmed a property is ready to be re-let to the date a new tenancy commences and the void period ends.		Average time to complete:  5 days
2	Implement workflow within Open Housing	Workflow for the voids process will improve efficiency, accuracy and communication between the different teams involved in void management.  It will also enable reports to be run direct from Open Housing to monitor performance and remove the need to maintain manual spreadsheets.	Although some work was carried out prior to implementation of a consolidated OH, sufficient expertise and resource needs to be identified to introduce work flow to the voids process. Other priorities in the pipeline of OH development may take precedence.	Aim to complete by March 2018
3	Reliable advance dates for completion of void repair work provided by BMBS	Advance dates provide allocations officers with important information which allows them to prioritise their own workload effectively and ensure new tenancies start as soon as the property is ready to let.  They allow new tenants to plan their move and reduce "failure demand" from repeated calls to the allocations team asking for updates.  They are also an indicator of efficient management of the trades team.		

# **Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Joint Lettable Standard**



## Joint Working Together' Void Standard

Item	Void Standard
<b>General</b>	<p>This standard sets out the <u>minimum</u> level of condition that must be achieved before a tenant moves in to a vacant property. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return vacant properties to use quickly to provide much needed accommodation and to minimise rent loss.</li> <li>• Ensure properties are clean, safe and secure,</li> <li>• Undertake, as far as possible, all repairs and improvements that have been identified when the property becomes vacant prior to the new tenant moving in.</li> <li>• Advise incoming tenant of the timescale for any outstanding repairs to be carried out and the estimated programmed dates for any improvement works in the future.</li> <li>• Take responsibility for any alterations or improvements carried out by the previous tenant, if fit for purpose</li> </ul>
<b>Electrical</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a full safety test of the electrical systems in the property</li> <li>• Remove non-Council electrical fittings. e.g. brass/chrome switches/sockets, dimmer switches and replace with white PVC fittings</li> <li>• Remove electrical fittings e.g. spotlights installed by previous tenants, make good and re-charge outgoing tenants for the work</li> <li>• Ensure whenever possible, that consumer units will be readily accessible with reusable fuses or fitted with Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCB's) or Residual Current Circuit Breakers (RCCB's).</li> <li>• Ensure a mains-operated smoke detector is fitted to each floor of the property. In houses the ground floor will have a smoke/heat type detector.</li> <li>• Disconnect un-authorized electrical supplies to non-habitable outhouses and garages.</li> </ul>
<b>Gas/Oil/ Solid Fuel installations</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a full safety inspection on any, gas, oil or electrical heating in accordance with the current safety regulations and provide a copy of the Safety Certificate to the incoming tenant.</li> <li>• In cases of card meters with debt, clear the debt prior to the start of the new tenancy.</li> <li>• Where there is no oil remaining for the central heating system, cap off the supply until a new delivery is made, and then test, re-commission and provide the Safety Certificate.</li> <li>• Any appliances which have been installed by previous tenants will be removed.</li> <li>• Decommission any open flue (or room-sealed) solid fuel appliance, brick up the opening, and ensure the flue is capped and vented to eliminate the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and any future compliance issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Heating/ hot water</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all homes will be provided with an adequate and safe form of central heating and hot water supply.</li> <li>• Drain down heating systems if weather conditions make it imperative to do so, and re- commissioned at the start of the new tenancy.</li> <li>• Ensure hot water cylinders will be fully insulated and operational, including an immersion heater whenever possible.</li> <li>• Ensure roof tanks are fully supported, lagged and made of a non-metallic substance.</li> <li>• Ensure pipe work in roof voids (or the like) is adequately lagged.</li> <li>• Provide an accessible stop tap that isolates all incoming supplies to the property. The location of this stop tap will be recorded in the handover documentation.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

<b>Water supply/ waste</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the property is free of leaks and all stop taps will be in good working order.</li> <li>• Ensure any waste pipes will be free flowing and free of leaks.</li> <li>• Inspect and sanitise the water systems in line with regulations relating to legionella ensuring all shower heads are cleaned or replaced.</li> <li>• Provide a cold water supply and waste suitable for a washing machine in the kitchen</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that locks to all external doors will be to insurance standards where possible with a minimum of two sets of keys.</li> <li>• Remove keys to locking windows (this is now a health &amp; safety recommendation to ensure any loss of keys does not prevent upstairs windows being opened in the event of a fire)</li> </ul>
<b>Floors</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that concrete/cement based floors will be dry, flat and free from excessive cracking, and ready to receive carpet or covering without preparation work being necessary.</li> <li>• Repair damaged or missing floor tiles with a levelling compound to provide a suitable surface for floor coverings.</li> <li>• Ensure that timber floors will be dry, flat and free from any signs of excessive movement, rot or wood worm infestation. Any timber floors in a poor condition will be covered with plywood (or similar).</li> <li>• Leave a vinyl floor covering that has previously has been fitted (kitchen or bathroom) if it is free from damage.</li> <li>• Provide a non-slip floor covering to kitchen &amp; bathroom floors.</li> </ul>
<b>Kitchen</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that adequate storage space is provided by cupboards, floor units or storerooms/pantries.</li> <li>• Provide cupboards with all drawers, door fronts, blanks, hinging mechanisms and openers in full working order. It should be noted that where a non-standard kitchen has previously been fitted some repairs may not fully match.</li> <li>• Ensure shelving will be clean and free from signs of dampness, is securely fixed and level without any excessive marking, chipping or staining, and sealed at all edges to tiling, sinks etc.</li> <li>• Replace sinks (complete with plugs and chains) that have excessive marking or chipping</li> <li>• Where possible provide space for a cooker, fridge and washing machine will be provided.</li> <li>• Ensure taps are easy to operate without undue pressure.</li> </ul>
<b>Bathroom</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure suites are clean, free from defects and leaks and securely fixed (complete with plugs and chains) with all panels and other fixtures (hand rails, towel rails etc.) secured and undamaged</li> <li>• Ensure taps are easy to operate without undue pressure.</li> <li>• Provide a new toilet seats</li> <li>• Provide a new non-slip floor covering whenever possible</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously fitted non-standard bathrooms (which will be expensive to maintain) will be left until such a point where it is too expensive to maintain them, they will then be removed and a new bathroom fitted.</li> <li>Retain previously installed wet rooms in flats and bungalows, but first floor installations will be replaced by a traditional bathroom.</li> </ul>
<b>Walls &amp; ceilings</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all walls &amp; ceilings will be in a sound condition with no loose plaster</li> <li>Remove flammable polystyrene ceiling tiles and coving and the remaining surface prepared for decoration.</li> <li>Ensure all tiles are securely fixed and free from cracks.</li> <li>Provide a minimum of three rows of wall tiles over baths, worktops, sinks and basins.</li> <li>Provide full height around the bath for over-bath showers</li> <li>Ensure all handrails will be safe and securely fixed.</li> </ul>
<b>Internal doors/ joinery</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all internal doors will open and close freely and will be fitted with handles and catches in good working order.</li> <li>Check that all internal joinery is sound, securely fixed, free of major defects and have a surface suitable for decoration, and remedy if not</li> <li>Ensure that all internal woodwork is free from active woodworm or rot.</li> </ul>
<b>Windows/ Glazing</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all windows will be, as far as possible, draught-proof and watertight, and will open and close freely.</li> <li>Check that any glazing extending below 800mm from floor level will be either safety glass or will be replaced by a timber infill panel fitted.</li> <li>Replace any cracked glass, or failed double glazed sealed units</li> </ul>
<b>Decoration</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leave all rooms in a condition such that they are ready for the incoming tenant to decorate.</li> <li>Not remove wall or ceiling paper which is in good condition will be left.</li> <li>For properties in poor decorative order compensation or vouchers will be issued to the incoming as a contribution to decorating costs for each affected room in accordance with a defined scale of costs</li> <li>Seal existing 'artex' walls and apply a plaster skim coat that does not contain asbestos</li> </ul>
<b>Clearance</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear every property of all belongings from the previous tenancy, with outgoing tenants being re-charged as necessary</li> <li>Remove carpets and curtains and other fittings left by the out-going. tenant with outgoing tenants being re-charged as necessary</li> <li>Ensure properties will be free from any pests and/or vermin.</li> </ul>
<b>Gardens/ Externals</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange for any substantially overgrown weeds, shrubs, trees and grass will be cut back.</li> <li>Lop or remove trees if they are likely to cause structural damage.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove sheds or outbuildings and</li> <li>• Fill in fish ponds</li> <li>• Ensure external walls are free from major defects and graffiti.</li> <li>• Check all paths, driveways and any other pedestrian areas to ensure they are free from 'Category 1' trip hazards.</li> <li>• Remove existing water butts. These are only permitted if fitted under a tenants alteration request. You will be advised to remove these at the point of a pre-termination inspection and recharged if not removed and the pipework made good prior to the property becoming empty.</li> </ul>
<b>Insulation</b>	We will identify the level of loft insulation and upgrade the insulation on a planned program
<b>TV Aerials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants in individual properties are responsible for the aerial system or satellite system.</li> <li>• We will ensure that aerial socket faceplates are intact and securely fixed.</li> <li>• We will maintain communal aerials systems in blocks of flats</li> </ul>
<b>Cleaning</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweep or vacuum all hard floors and/or carpets and mop all vinyl sheeting and/or tiled floors</li> <li>• Damp wipe all fixtures, fittings (including electrical face plates), cills, radiators, pipes and ledges</li> <li>• Clean all windows internally and ensure vents are clear.</li> <li>• Clean and de-scale wash hand basins, baths and toilets including around the U bend as required and polish taps.</li> <li>• Wash all worktops, cupboards and sink units inside and out.</li> <li>• Clean/degrease all extractor fans and degrease behind appliances.</li> </ul>
<b>Roof space</b>	We will clear roof spaces of any alterations, previous stored items, debris, rubbish or clutter. The outgoing tenant will be recharged.
<b>Outbuildings</b>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <p>Ensure that attached or detached outbuildings are not intended for habitable use and can only be used as storage areas. These areas will not be upgraded in terms of heating, security or insulation.</p>
<b>Work after start of tenancy</b>	<p>While the Councils will endeavour to carry out repairs and improvements while a property remains empty there is always a possibility that planned maintenance work will be undertaken at a later date.</p> <p>Such works will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• replacement windows or double glazed units</li> <li>• new exterior doors</li> <li>• a new kitchen</li> <li>• a new bathroom</li> <li>• a new or improved central heating system</li> <li>• minor roof repairs</li> <li>• repairs to gutters</li> <li>• repairs to downpipes and drains</li> <li>• loft insulation top ups</li> <li>• repairs to paths, walls, fencing and gates.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

<b>Homes Standard</b>	At least three double socket outlets in the living room, kitchen and bedrooms; Electrical socket in the bathroom for electric shavers and toothbrushes; and Carbon monoxide detectors (linked to smoke detectors wherever possible). To be reviewed after 12 months in conjunction with the average void costs.
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### **BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **INFORMATION BULLETIN – 18 SEPTEMBER 2017**

The Information Bulletin is a document that is made available to the public with the published agenda papers. It can include update information requested by the Committee as well as information that a service considers should be made to the Committee.

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#### **1. Community Engagement**

The Senior Leadership Team does take into account the feedback from all aspects of community engagement, particularly the feedback received from the presentation to Joint Scrutiny Committee by the Tenant Forum and Suffolk Food Hall business. Indeed, as part of our Public Access Strategy going forward, we are seeking better ways of engaging with communities, customers, businesses, tenants, and all those with whom we have dealings in a professional, customer and community-focused way. The feedback that we have received is an important element of this work.

We do take a pragmatic approach where we can, and where we have the flexibility so to do. Staff are receiving training accordingly, and the Customer Service Team, even without a Corporate Manager or Assistant Director, are striving to work better and improve the way we do business even in advance of the complete implementation of the Public Access Strategy.

The website was recently the subject of some positive and helpful feedback from our Parish Liaison Meetings, and we have made changes to it in order to improve responses and communications. Where we have not done as well as we would like is the operation of the 0300 single telephone number. However, the response times for answering telephone calls have improved significantly since the number was introduced, and there has been a commensurate fall in the abandoned call rate. For example, in May where our performance was not as good as we would have liked, it was taking over 4 minutes to answer calls, we were only answering 78-80% of them and our abandoned call rate was high at 19-20%. Through good teamwork, training and close supervision by the seniors in the staff, by the end of June we were consistently answering calls in times ranging from under 20 seconds to just over a minute. The answer rate was 91-96%, with abandoned rates down to 3-9%. August figures were good with calls answered in about 1 - 2 minutes, 90-98% answered and only 1 - 10% abandoned. We are re-working the telephone answering script based on customer feedback, and we shall be using a professional recording studio in The Mix at Stowmarket with a trained voice-over person to give a better telephone response in the coming weeks, at no cost because we are being helped by The Mix in Stowmarket and an internal colleague. In addition to this, we have been training staff throughout the organisation in over-the-telephone card payment procedures to cut down service failure that has existed up to now.

In terms of responding to customers through media other than emails, we shall be using Skype for Business when the Customer Access Points in Sudbury and Stowmarket are up and running and once the move to Endeavour House is complete. Skype for Business is going to be used at the Customer Access Points to connect people with back office staff if we need to. This, together with a 24/7 website and self-service options for payments, planning and waste collection should improve our service to customers overall.

There has been a cultural change in the organisation as a result of the decision to move to Endeavour House and in the way that we will provide our services to customers, this is particularly so with Agile working. There is more to do and we continue to make cultural changes throughout all our teams. The communication for the move to Endeavour House has improved, but we do recognise that as ever with these matters, there are always lessons that can be learned about how it could have been more effective".

## Forthcoming Decisions list (KEY, EXEMPT AND OTHER EXECUTIVE DECISIONS)

### September to December 2017

Status	Subject	Summary	Decision Maker & Decision Date	Contacts:		Reason for Inclusion
				Portfolio Holder(s)	Officer(s)	
New	Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 7 September 2017	Lee Parker	Paul Bryant/Paul Munson 01449 724771 <a href="mailto:Paul.bryant@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Paul.bryant@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
New	Quarter one Budgetary Control	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 4/7 September 2017	Peter Patrick	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 <a href="mailto:Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision
<b>Amended</b>	Quarter One Budgetary Control	For comment and agreement	Cabinet <b>9 October 2017</b>	John Whitehead	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 <a href="mailto:Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision
<b>New</b>	New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan	To agree the proposals for endorsement	Cabinet 9/12 October	John Ward Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 <a href="mailto:Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision
<b>Amended</b>	Leisure Strategy	For comment and agreement	Cabinet <b>9/12 October 2017</b>	Julie Flatman/ Margaret Maybury	Chris Fry 01449 724805 <a href="mailto:Chris.fry@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Chris.fry@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision
<b>Amended</b>	Regeneration Proposal Business Case	EXEMPT	BDC Cabinet 12 October 2017 BDC Council 24 October 2017	John Ward	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 <a href="mailto:Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.

# BOS/17/10

<b>New</b>	Investment and Commercial Delivery	EXEMPT	BDC Cabinet 12 October 2017 BDC Council 24 October 2017	John Ward	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 <a href="mailto:Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.
<b>Amended</b>	Land Acquisition – Business Case	EXEMPT	MSDC Cabinet 9 October 2017 MSDC Council 26 October 2017	Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 <a href="mailto:Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.
<b>New</b>	Investment and Commercial Delivery – New Business Model	EXEMPT	MSDC Cabinet 9 October 2017 MSDC Council 26 October 2017	Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 <a href="mailto:Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.
Amended	Future Options HQ Sites	To agree and recommend to Full Council for adoption	Cabinet 9/12 October 2017 Council 24/26 October 2017	Nick Gowrley Jennie Jenkins	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 <a href="mailto:Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Amended</b>	Public Realm Transformation Project	EXEMPT	Cabinet <b>6/9 November</b> 2017	David Burn Margaret Maybury	Peter Garrett 01449 724944 <a href="mailto:peter.garrett@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">peter.garrett@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.-
<b>New</b>	Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) – Amendments from April 2018	To agree and recommend to Full Council	Council 24/26 October	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 <a href="mailto:Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	To seek approval to go out to public consultation on options for changes – recommendation to Full Council

<b>New</b>	2018/19 Budget Report	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 4/7 December 2017	Peter Patrick John Whitehead	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 <a href="mailto:Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision
<b>Amended</b>	Quarter Two Budgetary Control	For comment and agreement	Cabinet <b>4/7 December</b> 2017	Peter Patrick John Whitehead	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 <a href="mailto:Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Katherine.steel@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision
<b>Amended</b>	Suffolk Framework for Growth – Housing, Economic and Infrastructure Strategies	To agree and recommend to Full Council for Adoption	Cabinet <b>4/7 December</b> 2017	John Ward/Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 <a href="mailto:Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Louise.rawsthorne@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
New	Half Yearly Performance Report – April to September '17	For comment and agreement	Cabinet <b>4/7 December</b> 2017	Peter Patrick Glen Horn	Karen Coll 01449 724566 <a href="mailto:Karen.coll@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Karen.coll@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
New	Neighbourhood Plan Update	For comment and agreement	Cabinet TBA	David Whybrow/ Lee Parker	Paul Bryant/Paul Munson 01449 724771 <a href="mailto:Paul.bryant@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Paul.bryant@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision
New	Introduction of Fixed Term Tenancies	For comment and agreement	Cabinet TBA	Jan Osborne/ Jill Wilshaw	Sue Lister 01449 724758 <a href="mailto:Sue.lister@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">Sue.lister@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	Key Decision

If you have any queries regarding this Forward Plan, require further information about Council or Committee meetings, please contact the Governance Team on 01449 724673/01473 826610 or Email: [CommitteeServices@babbergh.gov.uk](mailto:CommitteeServices@babbergh.gov.uk)

If you wish to make any representations as to why you feel an item that is marked as an “exempt” or confidential item should instead be open to the public, please contact the Monitoring Officer on 01473 825891 or Email: [emily.yule@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:emily.yule@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk). Any such representations must be received at least 10 working days before the expected date of the decision.

Arthur Charvonia

Chief Executive

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

If you require this document in large print, audio or Braille or in a different language, please contact the Governance Team on 01449 724673/ 01473 826610 or email [CommitteeServices@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:CommitteeServices@babergh.gov.uk)

# Agenda Item 8

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Ben Staines, Project and Research Officer</b>	<b>Report Number: BOS/17/11</b>
<b>To: Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 18 September 2017</b>

### FORWARD PLAN FOR 2017/2018

The table below is a draft of the forward plan for the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This table will be reviewed at each meeting and could be amended in the light of new items arising or as a result of items on the Forthcoming Decisions List being selected for scrutiny. It could also be revised to take account of items previously scrutinised by the Joint Scrutiny Committee and being reviewed at this meeting.

### Date of Committee – 23 October 2017

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Joint Strategic plan reference</b>
West Suffolk Crime and Disorder Partnership	To fulfil the requirement for O&S to meet as the Crime and Disorder Committee for Babergh District Council.	Jonathan Free – Assistant Director – Communities and Public Access	Continued support for health and wellbeing outcomes that prevent interventions.
Supporting Business Growth	To look at how business rates retention could be maximised and how the growth of micro-businesses could be supported.	Lee Carvell – Corporate Manager - Open for Business	Engage with and support business to thrive; Increased understanding of local businesses and their needs.
Neighbourhood Plans	The Corporate Manager – Community Planning and Heritage was asked to report back on progress on the recommendations made by the Joint Scrutiny Committee in April 2017.	William Newman - Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning	Communities engaged as early as possible - community led planning

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Joint Strategic plan reference</b>
Community Grants	The Corporate Manager – Strong and Safe Communities was asked to report back following a ‘health check’ of the groups receiving grants.	Sue Clements - Corporate Manager – Strong and Safe Communities	Targeted grants and funding to support Community capacity building; Community led solutions to deliver services and manage assets.
Performance Management	To consider the performance measures that have been developed since the matter was considered at the July meeting of the Committee.	Karen Coll - Corporate Manager – Business Improvement (Communities)	Intelligence-based community insight and outcome-focused performance management.

**Date of Committee – 20 November 2017**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Joint Strategic plan reference</b>
CIL	Review of the impact and delivery of the CIL regime for Infrastructure	Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning	Agree where growth goes
Review of the effectiveness of preparations for the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act	To review the actions that are being taken to prepare for the anticipated impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act being implemented in April 2018	Heather Sparrow – Corporate Manager - Homeless Prevention and Older Persons	Make best use of our existing Housing assets
Scoping a review of the Legal Services Partnership.	To identify what the Committee would want to look at in this review and also what the aims, objectives and desired outcomes, of the review would be.	Emily Yule - Assistant Director – Law and Governance.	Financially sustainable Councils; Strengthened and clear governance to enable delivery.

**Date of Committee – 18 December 2017**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Joint Strategic plan reference</b>
Review of the Legal Services Partnership.	To carry out the review in accordance with the aims, objectives and desired outcomes identified in the scoping carried out at the November 2017 meeting.	Emily Yule - Assistant Director – Law and Governance.	Financially sustainable Councils; Strengthened and clear governance to enable delivery.

**Date of Committee – 22 January 2018**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Joint Strategic plan reference</b>
Draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2017/18 Budget.	To scrutinise the papers before final presentation to Full Council and to make any suggestions of changes felt appropriate.	Katherine Steel - Assistant Director – Corporate Resources	Financially Sustainable Councils

**Topics identified for review by O&S but not currently timetabled:**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Services.

Plan for this to be reviewed 12 months after the implementation of the services, in April 2018.

Home Ownership Review.

This was on the forthcoming decisions List for July 2017 but has been deferred for consideration in August 2017.

Costs of the move to Endeavour House

This was resolved to be considered 3 months after the move has been completed.

Pre-application planning process

To be scoped three months after introduction for review after six months (probably in October 2017 and January 2018 respectively).

Crime and Disorder Panel meeting

Required to take place at least once in 12 months following September 2017 meeting.

Authorship:

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