

# Public Document Pack



<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>MONDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2022 9.30 AM</b>
<b>VENUE:</b>	<b>KING EDMUND CHAMBER, ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH</b>

<b>Members</b>	
<u>Babergh Conservative Group</u> Melanie Barrett Siân Dawson	<u>Mid Suffolk Green and Liberal Democrat Group</u> Terence Carter Keith Scarff Keith Welham (Co-Chair)
<u>Babergh Independent Conservative Group</u> Adrian Osborne	<u>Babergh Green and Labour Group</u> Robert Lindsay
<u>Mid Suffolk Conservative and Independent Group</u> James Caston Paul Ekpenyong Dave Muller	<u>Babergh Independent Group</u> Kathryn Grandon John Hinton (Co-Chair)

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## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1**

#### **MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT**

Page(s)

- 1 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES**
- 2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
- 3 **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**
- 4 **JOS/22/22 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2022** 5 - 10

5           **QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

To consider questions from and provide answers to members of the public on any matter in relation to which the Committee has powers or duties and of which due notice has been given in accordance with the Committee and Sub-Committee Procedures Rules.

6           **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

To consider questions from and provide answers to Councillors on any matter in relation to which the Committee has powers or duties and of which due notice has been given in accordance with the Committee and Sub-Committee Procedure Rules.

7           **JOS/22/23 REVIEW OF LOCAL CITIZENS ADVICE AND THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS**   11 - 28

8           **JOS/22/24 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND CABINET PROTOCOL**   29 - 32

9           **JOS/22/25 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

To review the Council’s Forthcoming Decisions List and identify any items to be brought before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Please note the most up to date version can be found via the Website:

[Forthcoming Decisions List](#)

10          **JOS/22/26 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION TRACKER**           33 - 38

11          **JOS/22/27 BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**   39 - 42

To agree the Work Plan

12          **JOS/22/28 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**   43 - 46

To agree the Work Plan

**Date and Time of next meeting**

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 09:30am.

**Webcasting / Live Streaming**

The Webcast of the meeting will be available to view on the Councils YouTube page: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf\\_0D13zmegAf5Qv\\_aZSg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf_0D13zmegAf5Qv_aZSg)

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### **Introduction to Public Meetings**

Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Councils are committed to Open Government. The proceedings of this meeting are open to the public, apart from any confidential or exempt items which may have to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

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# Agenda Item 4

## BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 24 October 2022

### PRESENT:

Councillors:	James Caston	Paul Ekpenyong
	Kathryn Grandon	John Hinton (Co-Chair)
	John Matthissen	David Muller BA (Open) MCMI RAFA (Councillor)
	Adrian Osborne	Keith Scarff
	Keith Welham (Co-Chair)	

### In attendance:

Councillor(s):	Jan Osborne – Cabinet Member for Housing
Officers:	Housing Strategy and Policy Officer (RW) Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions (AAY) Corporate Manager for Tenant Services (RL)

### Apologies:

Councillors:	Terence Carter Robert Lindsay
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## 26 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 26.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Terence Carter and Councillor Robert Lindsay
- 26.2 Councillor John Matthissen substituted for Councillor Terence Carter.

## 27 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 27.1 Councillor Ekpenyong declared an Other Registerable Interest in respect of Item JOS/22/17 due to his position as Chairman of Mid Suffolk Growth Ltd. However, the item under discussion did not directly relate to the finances or wellbeing of that interest or affect the finances or wellbeing of that interest to a greater extent than the majority of inhabitants. Therefore, Councillor Ekpenyong was not prevented from participating in the debate and vote in respect of this item.

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

- 28.1 None received.

**29 JOS/22/16 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2022**

29.1 It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2022 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

**30 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

30.1 None received.

**31 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

31.1 None received.

**32 JOS/22/17 ANNUAL REVIEW UPDATE OF THE JOINT HOMES AND HOUSING STRATEGY AND THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024**

32.1 Councillor Jan Osborne – Babergh District Council’s Cabinet Member for Housing – introduced the report to the Committee outlining before Members the history of the strategy, the purpose of the document, and that the strategy’s delivery plan had been refocussed since its implementation.

32.2 The Housing Strategy and Policy Officer gave a presentation to the Committee outlining the progress of the strategy to date, the changes that have been made to the strategy, the refocussed delivery plan, the status of the 93 actions outlined in the delivery plan, and the 9 strategic aims that underpin the strategy.

32.3 Councillor Matthissen queried how many houses had been “self-built” or “custom-built” under the strategy. Councillor Hinton responded that Babergh had 47 self-builds and Mid Suffolk had 106 self-builds.

32.4 Councillor Hinton questioned the design of the houses and whether any were being designed as “homes for life”. The Cabinet Member for Housing responded that the Councils have a housing design guide that includes “homes for life” designs which would be used for upcoming developments when possible.

32.5 Councillor Ekpenyong followed up that external developers should be encouraged to use the housing design guide as much as possible.

32.6 Councillor Grandon questioned whether the need to downsize had been considered and if there were enough smaller properties being built. The Housing Strategy and Policy Officer responded that a downsizing policy was currently being explored. The Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions added that an Older Persons Housing Strategy was currently being developed that would also focus on downsizing and would ascertain the need for this through public consultation and engagement.

- 32.7 Councillor Grandon requested that the downsizing policy encompass the needs of all our residents rather than focussing exclusively on older people.
- 32.8 Councillor Matthissen noted that there needed to be more physical support, alongside the proposed financial incentives, to aid people in moving to smaller properties.
- 32.9 Councillor Grandon queried how many homeless people were currently within our Districts and what was being done to prevent there being a rise in the number of homeless people as a result of the cost of living crisis. The Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions responded that within Babergh they have received 46 applications (19 Prevention and 9 Relief) and 47 applications (20 Prevention and 7 Relief) in Mid Suffolk by the end of September 2022. Also, that those involved in the strategy were taking a proactive approach in response to the cost of living crisis and have been making residents aware of the support that they can receive from the Councils in the event that their placement in their home is threatened.
- 32.10 The Cabinet Member for Housing followed up that in Babergh there were plans to increase the temporary housing stock so that those coming forward as homeless could be put into accommodation as quickly as possible.
- 32.11 Councillor Ekpenyong queried the status of the homelessness applications that were not classed as "Preventions" or "Relief". The Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions responded that these applications did not meet the statutory requirements to be accepted but that some advice was still provided.
- 32.12 Councillor Caston questioned whether there was sufficient refuge provision within Mid Suffolk and whether we should be providing refuge provision for other districts to use. The Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions answered that there are self-contained units that could be moved between Babergh and Mid Suffolk as appropriate and that the Councils were working in partnership with the other Councils in Suffolk to ensure there was enough temporary accommodation available for those fleeing domestic violence.
- 32.13 Councillor Grandon queried about the work to reduce anti-social behaviour and whether consideration was given to placing tenants within communities that align with their social needs. The Cabinet Member for Housing responded that this fell under the strategy's allocation policy and that "health checks" would be carried out to ensure that current arrangements continued to meet the needs of both the Councils and our residents.
- 32.14 Councillor Grandon questioned whether the proposed electric vehicle charging points would be installed on houses for individual use or in public areas for communal use. The Corporate Manager for Tenant Services responded that this would be explored through a viability assessment in the future.
- 32.15 Councillor Muller queried whether Ukrainian refugees within the districts who

were coming to the end of their 6 month accommodation period had been rehoused. The Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions said that the team were experiencing difficulties due to a lack of supply within the private rental market and that they were working with other districts and hosts to sort out accommodation as a matter of priority.

- 32.16 Councillor Hinton highlighted that both Babergh and Mid Suffolk had a higher number of older people residing in the countryside in comparison to the national average and questioned how the strategy would ensure that older people retain access to well-connected communities. The Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions answered that the strategy would be consulting with older people to ascertain their needs and that partnership work with stakeholders such as health and social care would help deliver an appropriate housing supply.
- 32.17 Councillor Adrian Osborne questioned whether Gateway To Homechoice had been covered in the Housing Strategy. The Cabinet Member for Housing said that a health check would be carried out on the current Lettings and Allocation policy to ensure that the current arrangements continued to meet the needs of the Councils including Gateway To Homechoice.
- 32.18 Councillor Ekpenyong raised that there were seemingly conflicting requirements within the Homes and Housing Strategy and the Communities Strategy and questioned whether the proposed developments catered to all the strategies linked to housing. The Chair, Councillor Welham, responded that this point would be referred to Cabinet at an appropriate point.
- 32.19 Councillor Ekpenyong asked a further question concerning the number of garages available to rent in our districts and whether there were plans to remove excess garages and replace them with other developments. The Corporate Manager for Tenant Services responded that a number of reviews had already been carried out regarding the suitability of garage sites and what could potentially be done with the land should garages become low in demand. The Cabinet Member for Housing added that a comprehensive report on the garage review was planned to come to Cabinet in January 2023.
- 32.20 Members debated the report and raised the following points:
- That, when rehousing Ukrainian refugees, the Councils looked to house them in urban areas rather than rural areas to ensure that they would be placed in well-connected communities with access to multiple services.
  - Whether the new design guide for developments was ambitious enough and is encouraging the Councils to build homes to the highest standard possible.
  - What work was being done to increase the energy efficiency of the Councils' lowest rated homes.
- 32.21 Councillor Scarff and Councillor Osborne thanked the Officers for their presentation and recommended that future updates to the Committee on the



Homes and Housing Strategy be organised in a similar manner.

32.22 Councillor Welham suggested the following recommendations:

- 3.1 That Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Members have reviewed the contents of report JOS/22/17, including the appendices, and requests that the Portfolio Holders and Officers take account of verbal comments made by members of the committee. Also, that Cabinet bears these comments in mind when debating the refocussed delivery plan, the refreshed Joint Homes and Housing Strategy, and the Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 3.2 That the committee members support the strategic aims of the Joint Homes and Housing Strategy and agreed that the newly refocussed plan is reflective of the current challenges facing the housing sector whilst continuing to deliver the aims set out in the strategy.
- 3.3 To ask Portfolio Holders and Officers to consider further provision of financial and physical support to all residents wishing to downsize.

32.23 Councillor Matthissen proposed the recommendations as read out by Councillor Welham.

32.24 Councillor Grandon seconded the recommendations.

**By a unanimous vote**

**It was RESOLVED:**

- 3.1 That Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Members have reviewed the contents of report JOS/22/17, including the appendices, and requests that the Portfolio Holders and Officers take account of verbal comments made by members of the committee. Also, that Cabinet bears these comments in mind when debating the refocussed delivery plan, the refreshed Joint Homes and Housing Strategy, and the Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.**
- 3.2 That the committee members support the strategic aims of the Joint Homes and Housing Strategy and agreed that the newly refocussed plan is reflective of the current challenges facing the housing sector whilst continuing to deliver the aims set out in the strategy.**
- 3.3 To ask Portfolio Holders and Officers to consider further provision of financial and physical support to all residents wishing to downsize.**

### **33 JOS/22/18 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

33.1 The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted.

**34 JOS/22/19 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION TRACKER**

34.1 Councillor Welham advised that an updated version of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Action Tracker would be discussed at the next Joint Chairs' Briefing and brought to the next committee.

34.2 The Action Tracker was noted.

**35 JOS/22/20 BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

35.1 The Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan was noted.

**36 JOS/22/21 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

36.1 The Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan was noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11:25am.

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Chair

# Agenda Item 7

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>TO:</b>	<b>Joint Overview and Scrutiny committee</b>	<b>REPORT NUMBER: JOS/22/23</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>Cllr. Mary McLaren and Cllr. Julie Flatman – Cabinet Members for Communities</b>	<b>DATE OF MEETING: 21 November 2022</b>
<b>OFFICER:</b>	<b>Di Robinson - Director for Communities and Wellbeing</b>	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO.</b>

### REVIEW OF LOCAL CITIZENS ADVICE AND THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report aims to provide the following:

- 1.1 Context and background as to the changing landscape of the cost of living crisis
- 1.2 A summary of the work undertaken over the last 6 months against the 5-point plan which was agreed by both cabinets in June 2022.
- 1.3 Taking stock of lessons learned, work that has been completed or changed throughout the last 6 months, recognising our need to work collectively across the system and create an iterative and flexible approach to respond to the changing nature of the crisis.
- 1.4 The session will use BMSDC's work on the Action plan as a background and context for the work of Sudbury and District and Mid Suffolk CA's as key partners delivering services and support to our district's residents.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To review the content of the 6 month dashboard report
- 2.2 To review the information shared by Sudbury & District and Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice organisations and provide comment and feedback on key areas of priority and focus moving forward.

#### 3. KEY INFORMATION

- 3.1 Please see attached dashboard report.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

**7. CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 The dashboard report has been shared for consultation with internal stakeholders for feedback and comment.

**8. EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

8.1 There is no requirement to complete an EQIA at this time.

**9. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

9.1 The joint Corporate Plan is designed to address the challenges and provide opportunities for the wellbeing of our communities. Its vision is to have ‘Great communities with bright and healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home’.

**10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct environmental implications directly associated with this report.

**11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

11.1 Cost of Living 5-Point Action Plan Dashboard Report

**Appendices**

Title	Location
(a) Cost of Living Crisis – Progress Report (November 2022)	Attached

**12. REPORT AUTHORS**

Samantha Lake – Corporate Manager Customer Operations

Vicky Moseley – Corporate Manage Communities

Elysa Dale – Cost of Living Coordinator



## **COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

### **A WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH – PROGRESS REPORT NOVEMBER 2022**

#### **WHAT ARE WE SEEING?**

From the drastic increases in utility and fuel costs, to higher food prices and the ever decreasing number of affordable properties, all across the district we are aware that our residents are feeling the impact of the cost of living crisis, and are finding it more difficult to satisfy their basic needs.

Additionally, as a district with a significant rural population, many of our households will experience additional pressures not seen to the same extent as those households living in more urban areas. Below is a snapshot of the issues being faced by our residents, compiled from a range of sources. For references, please see the final page of this report.

## Fuel Poverty and Transport

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As of 2020 there were an estimated 13.2% of households in Babergh who are in fuel poverty and 13.1% across Mid Suffolk, this is slightly below the national average of 13.4% [1].

While we do not yet have fuel poverty data for 2022, with the average price of oil more than doubling between June 2021 and June 2022 [5], the average household bill set to increase up to 64% [1], and rural properties being more likely to have an EPC rating of D or below [2], it is very likely that the number of households across the district who are experiencing fuel poverty is set to increase considerably.

Additionally, households who are not connected to a mains gas supply are shown to have a relative increased risk of fuel poverty of 7.1% [2]. In 2020 the percentage of households within Babergh who did not have access to mains gas was 36%, while in Mid Suffolk this was 52%. [4]

while rates of fuel poverty are similar across rural and urban populations, those living in rural areas are more likely to experience deeper levels of fuel poverty and have a larger fuel poverty gap. The average household in a rural area experiencing fuel poverty would require an additional £501 per year to pull them out of fuel poverty, while in urban areas this figure is £223 [2].

A considerable proportion of households in fuel poverty will have a pre-payment meter installed, 30.6% compared to 10.7% for households not in fuel poverty. [3] [6]

Citizens Advice have reported a national increase in the amounts of clients who are presenting with energy debt, as well as a year on year increase in the number of pre-payment meters being installed as a result of customer debt. There are currently 24,713 households within Suffolk on a pre-payment meter. [1]

In addition to the increase in the cost of heating their homes, households are seeing an increase in the cost of the fuel and transportation. The cost of filling up a vehicle has increased considerably over the last twelve months, with July seeing petrol and diesel prices 46.8% higher than the same month in the previous year. [17] While prices have declined somewhat in the last few months, this is anticipated to increase again as we move into winter following the decision by Opec to cut oil production.

This anticipated increase in car fuel costs will pose an additional strain for resident's budgets at a time when most essential costs are going up, particularly for those who need to travel in order to access essential services, employment and education, and those living in more rural areas of the district.

Households living in more rural areas already spend more on their transportation costs than their urban counterparts, with the average household in a rural village spending up to £55 more per week [2]. Those on a low income, who tend to own less efficient vehicles and already pay more car tax, are particularly vulnerable to these price increases. [19]

For those not able to drive, or without access to a car, public transport is a necessity; however the reduction in passengers since the pandemic in 2020 has led to reduced bus services, particularly across the East of England [18]. This risks creating barriers to opportunities in employment and education for our residents, as well as issues accessing cultural and social activities, and healthcare. [20]

Those on a low income, lone parent families and people with disability are less likely to be able to drive and have access to a vehicle, and therefore are more likely to be reliant on the provision of adequate public transport. [21]

## Housing

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Nationally and across the district the availability and affordability of housing has decreased. Since the pandemic there has been a sharp decrease in the number of available homes to rent, caused in large part by the increase in the number of second homes and holiday lets in rural areas across the country. In March 2022 53% of buy-to-let properties that were sold left the private rented sector. [11] Currently across Babergh and Mid Suffolk only 11.9% of households are in privately rented properties [12].

This drop in availability has led to higher demand for the privately rented properties that remain on the market, causing an 11% increase in asking rents in rural areas. [2] Property Mark reported in July 2022 that 82% of member agents saw a month on month increase in rents. [10]

The gap between the Local Housing Allowance for benefits and the current market rent makes it increasingly difficult for households in receipt of benefits to afford their rent [22], of 160 properties advertised in Ipswich across the month of July, not a single one was affordable for a household on benefits. [7] Across Babergh and Mid Suffolk the gap between Housing Benefit/ Housing Element rates and market rents is over £100 per week for larger properties and just under £50 per week for smaller properties.[9]

Across Babergh and Mid Suffolk 34.1% of households own their properties with a mortgage [12]. The recent increase in interest rates will make it more challenging for owner occupiers to afford their housing costs. Owner occupiers are not eligible for traditional benefits to assist with their housing costs such as Universal Credit Housing Element, Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payments, or the Household Support Grant, leaving them with limited access to support.

## Food Security

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Nationally, food and non-alcoholic beverage prices rose by 13.1% in the 12 months to August 2022 [14].

Sudbury Citizens Advice have reported that they are receiving more calls from clients in need of welfare assistance such as food parcels, and Storehouse, the primary foodbank for the Sudbury area, has reported a 42% increase in demand compared to July/ August, with children making up 50% of recipients on average.

Stowmarket food bank supplied 124 food parcels during September, an increase of 20% compared to August/ July, and have provided 665 food parcels since the start of the financial year.

Living in rural areas without access to a car or good public transport may reduce a household's access to affordable food, with more households opting to use local shops where food prices may be higher, [2] [15].

With a higher proportion of residents above pension age across Babergh and Mid Suffolk (25.6% vs the national average of 18.2% [14]), these residents are more likely to be digitally excluded [16] and unable to complete food shopping online, which could again lead to a higher use of local shops at an increased cost for those in rural areas across the district.

## Health and Wellbeing

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As we enter the winter months, those households facing fuel poverty may choose not to heat their homes due to the financial implications. We know that cold homes can cause and aggravate many health conditions including; respiratory conditions, cardiovascular diseases, poor mental health, dementia, injuries, hypothermia, and problems with childhood development. [1]

Children living in cold homes are more prone to exposure of damp and mould, both of which contribute to developing asthma and acute asthma attacks. Damp and mould may contribute to approximately 10–15 per cent of new cases of childhood asthma across Europe. [1]

Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board recently reported that in Suffolk the median number of excess winter deaths per year is 110, of which it is estimated that 11 are as a result of fuel poverty and 24 due to cold homes. [1]

Areas with high levels of deprivation have significantly higher rates of adult and child obesity, with many cheap foods having high levels of sugar, salt and fat. [24],

Poverty and deprivation can also have a large impact on mental health, as well as being an underlying cause [25]. Areas with increased poverty rates experience higher levels of mortality from suicide and alcohol and drug related causes, with a higher proportion of young people in poverty found to be experiencing mental health symptoms, compared to those from higher income households. [1]

Financial difficulty increases the risk of domestic abuse, with women living in low-income households being 3.5 times more at risk of suffering domestic violence than those in higher income households.

Suffolk Mind have advised that average emotional wellbeing levels across the county have now dropped to below pandemic levels. This drivers of this have been recorded primarily as a lack of security and control.

## The Impact on our VCSE's

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Organisations across the VCSE sector have, on the whole, reported an increase in customers who require higher levels of support, in conjunction with increased core running costs and a general reduction in volunteers.

Sudbury Citizens Advice have reported a 558% increase in debt issues since April 2021, and a 70% increase in requests for charitable support due to increased costs which are not covered by current benefit rates. Of the clients they are advising, they are seeing a 38% increase in case complexity, and specialised volunteer tools have been developed to assist volunteers on complicated areas of advice such as energy support.

Citizens Advice in Mid Suffolk are reporting consistently higher client numbers compared to previous years and have seen a sharp increase in the number of clients contacting them for energy advice, which did not decline over the summer as with previous years. They have also reported an increased number of clients with negative budgets, households whose basic outgoings cannot be brought in line with their income despite support.

Homestart have advised that, due to the current cost of fuel, they are experiencing an increased number of volunteers claiming for expenses, and that they have lost several volunteers who have had to find paid employment as a result of the cost of living crisis. Several members of staff have also taken on additional part time employment to top up their income.

The increase in the price of fuel is also greatly impacting the core costs of organisations who require transport as part of their operating model, such as the Rural Coffee Caravan.



## HOW DOES THIS ALIGN WITH OUR FIVE POINT PLAN?

With the above themes emerging as challenges for our residents across the district, we are looking at how we can incorporate support for these issues into the Cost of Living framework laid out in our Five Point Plan.

	Coordinating Government Support	Using Our Discretion	Partnership Working	Maintaining Good Health	Access to Food and Nutrition
Fuel poverty and Transportation	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Food Security					✓
Health & Wellbeing			✓	✓	

## OUR RESPONSE

### COORDINATING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Co-ordination of government support to ensure it reaches those people who need it.

#### Council Tax Energy Rebate of £150 – COMPLETE (one off commitment)

We have now concluded the Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme, residents within Babergh and Mid Suffolk who have a Council Tax band of A -D have now received their energy rebate.

Babergh		Mid Suffolk	
Number of households	31,998	Number of households	34,773
Funds distributed	£4,799,700	Funds distributed	£5,215,950

#### Energy Rebate Discretionary fund – IN PROGRESS

Phases 1 & 2 of the Energy Rebate Discretionary Fund have now concluded, phase 3 is now being implemented to pay an energy rebate to those in receipt of Council tax Reduction.

The following funds have been awarded from the fund to assist households who are not otherwise eligible for the Council Tax Energy Rebate.

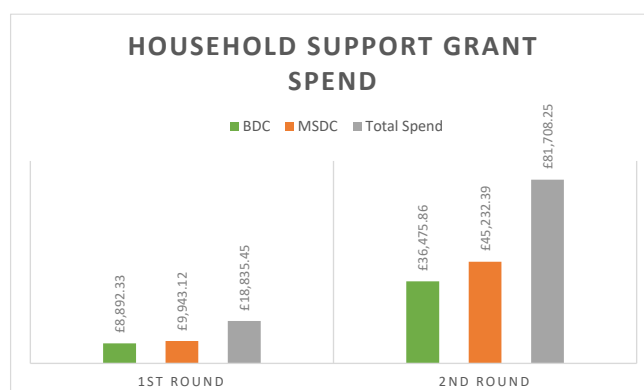
Babergh		Mid Suffolk	
Number of households	198	Number of households	247
Funds distributed	£29,700 29%	Funds distributed	£37,050 23%

#### Household Support Grant – IN PROGRESS (two rounds complete)

A total of £102,543.70 has been distributed across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to support vulnerable households who are struggling with their housing costs.

A total of 41 households in Babergh and 43 in Mid Suffolk have been supported through the fund.

We have now opened applications for the third allocation of the housing portion of the household support fund, where we will be looking primarily to support vulnerable households in the private rented sector.



## EXERCISING DISCRETION

**Exercise Discretion when proving welfare support and advice to support those people who could potentially fall on hard times.**

### Discretionary Housing Payments – IN PROGRESS

We continue to work closely with Shared Revenues Partnership to deliver discretionary payments to vulnerable households who are struggling with their housing costs.

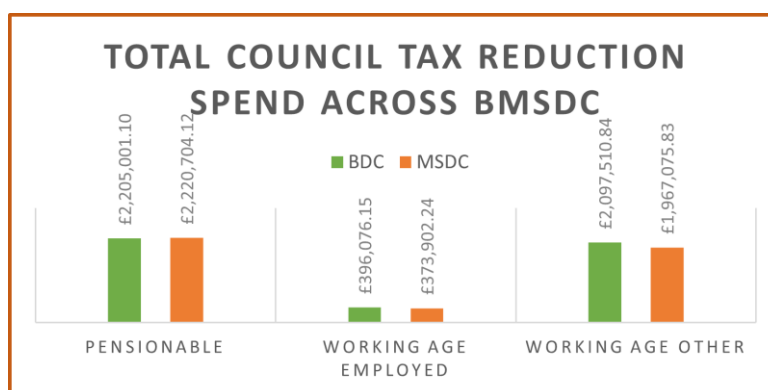
These funds help reduce the accrual of rent arrears and as well as other debts, and help to reduce the risk of homelessness to households across our district.

Babergh		Mid Suffolk	
Number of households	41	Number of households	31
Funds distributed	£37,244	Funds distributed	£39,328

### Council Tax Reduction – IN PROGRESS

There are currently a total of 8,791 households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction across Babergh and Mid Suffolk District.

	Babergh (households)	Mid Suffolk (households)
Working Age	2,453	2,288
Pension Age	2,019	2,031



An alternative proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme has now been agreed by Cabinet which would see full reductions for eligible households in receipt of Universal Credit and legacy benefits. The public consultation for these proposals will run until the 24<sup>th</sup> November.

## EXERCISING DISCRETION (continued)

### Support for our tenants – IN PROGRESS

Our Income Officers continue to adopt a person centred approach to any tenant who is struggling to afford their rent, this has become all the more crucial in recent months as households struggle with increased costs. Officers are reporting an increase in households with complex issues, which require more intensive support to resolve.

Officers refer tenants in need of support to our Tenant Support Team for assistance with debt and income maximisation, this is in addition to referrals to external agencies such as Citizens Advice.

Our Tenant Support Team also work pro-actively with tenants in Housing Association and privately rented accommodation to assist them to sustain their tenancies.

The tenant support team currently have 121 active cases across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, and have received 240 referrals since April 2022, of these there have been 196 positive outcomes so far.

Since the start of the financial year officers have assisted residents within Babergh to claim £30,604.15 in benefit income, and £17,304.25 in Mid Suffolk.

	Babergh	Mid Suffolk	Total
<b>BMSDC tenants</b>	86	79	165
<b>Housing association/ private tenants</b>	41	34	75

### Feedback from our tenants:

*"I just would like to thank you so very much for all of your support and understanding over the last few years. I was left in a bad situation with arrears on the rent account a few years ago and my housing officer has greatly supported me through this and has shown huge amounts of compassion, support and empathy. My housing officer has been so understanding towards me during this difficult time and has helped me to sometimes re-adjust payments to keep to the agreed payment plan when I had other outgoing expenses like hospital appointments which I had to go to. My housing officer has also arranged food parcels for me and to be completely honest I really couldn't have gone through this time without her continued support, empathy and understanding."*

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

**Maximise partnership working and established systems to provide targeted support in localities where there is a particular trend and need, implementing a targeted family-first approach.**

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### **Working with partners to create a single view database and production of legally compliant data sharing agreements - IN PROGRESS**

We have been working collaboratively with Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics to create a dashboard to help us identify those who are at risk of crisis.

This work requires significant collaboration to ensure we have data sharing agreements in order to share and use data from a wide variety of partners and sources.

### **Appointment of Cost of Living Coordinator --COMPLETE**

We have successfully recruited to the Cost of Living Coordinator post; Elysa Dale started in the role on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October and will be working to bring together key departments and agencies in order to deliver the Cost of Living Action Plan.

### **Funding of Sudbury & District Citizens Advice and Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice – COMPLETE**

We are funding Sudbury Citizens Advice and Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice. A one off uplift of 30% has been paid to Sudbury Citizens Advice and Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice in recognition of the increased demand for their services over the coming year. This will be reviewed annually.

### **Working with our voluntary sector partners – IN PROGRESS**

We have set up monthly meetings with external partners and advice agencies from across the district who are directly supporting residents with the Cost of Living crisis. We can share information on the issues affecting our residents, the initiatives being delivered across the district to support people with these issues and identifying possible barriers to success. We will be looking to widen the reach of these meetings moving forward.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING (continued)**

### **System wide investment in Suffolk Warm Handover and Suffolk Infolink – IN PROGRESS**

We are actively participating in the Community Support Systems Subgroup of the Collaborative Communities Board to assess how the current platforms, Suffolk Warm Handover and Suffolk Infolink, can be developed, or replaced in order to create a single directory of services that would facilitate referrals between relevant organisations, anonymous data reporting, and a payment by use system that will enable effective social prescribing and feedback of user experiences and outcomes.

### **Referrals of vulnerable households who require additional discretionary support – IN PROGRESS**

We continue to promote the Suffolk Information Partnership's 'Warm Handover' referral internally across our customer service and housing teams. We are working closely with Suffolk County Council as part of the Collaborative Communities Board Community Support System Subgroup to look at ways of driving increased use of the Warm Handover referral and improving the user experience of the platform.

### **Working with communications colleagues to drive campaigns in line with cost of living objectives – IN PROGRESS**

Following the appointment of the Cost of Living Coordinator, we are working with the BMSDC communications team to develop a clear communications campaign that will ensure that residents are easily able to access information regarding the cost of living.

In addition to this we are working with the Independent Food Aid Network (UK) to raise awareness of the various support agencies within the district that residents can approach for assistance with the cost of living. This will be via digital signposting form, accessed via the BMSDC website, and using bespoke diagnostic leaflets which aid users in identifying relevant support available to them.

### **Provision of support and confidential advice for Babergh and Mid Suffolk staff and key partners- SCOPING**

We have had initial discussions with Organisational Development on the best approach to embed this wellbeing support into our service. We will be developing this in phase two of the programme.

## Maintain Good Health

Whether that be referrals for mental Health support, discounts at our gyms and swimming pools, engaging in community led 'wellbeing' initiatives, volunteering and socialising via local initiatives

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### **Calendar of family friendly events - IN PROGRESS (one round completed)**

Two Family Fun days have been delivered by the Communities Team during August in Sudbury & Stowmarket.

Both Family Fun Days were well attended and gained positive feedback, with all those attending asking that the event is continued. There were many local services used, including information on health and wellbeing, as well as support with the cost of living. 179 activity spaces were pre-booked by HAF children, with many more joining in on the day. Family picnics were also available for HAF eligible children which was well received.

### **Understanding the impact of the cost of living crisis on our VCSE organisations IN PROGRESS**

During September, a number of workshops were delivered with officers, health professionals and the VCSE via the Connect for Health platform to explore concerns and agree key activities to be further explored via the INTs, especially using data to target communication of support available to known areas of deprivation.

### **Working with partners to ensure vulnerable households have access to fuel and travel vouchers via the LWAS scheme - IN PROGRESS**

We are holding monthly internal meetings with members from departments across the council, as well as operational meetings with our VCSE stakeholders, to discuss the support available to vulnerable households via the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.

Between April – September 2022 there were 40 fuel vouchers awarded to residents in Babergh with a total value of £1960, and 50 vouchers awarded to residents in Mid Suffolk totalling £2450.

## Maintain Good Health (continued)

### **Community- led projects to support with mental health and wellbeing**

We continue to work closely with our health partners to deliver projects which seek to build community resilience and improve the wellbeing of our residents, including, but not limited to the following;

ICOPE- Undertaking assessments with participants aged 75+ living at home in the South Rural INT area (Babergh) to understand their health and wellbeing needs, and provide preventative care through community interventions.

Ageing well Programme – Working with SPOT Wellbeing to deliver outreach wellbeing programme for across four locations in the Mid Suffolk area

Active Schools – Working with Active Suffolk to deliver active schools programme with 7 schools currently engaged, aiming to reduce childhood obesity and improve physical and mental wellbeing.

### **Working with leisure providers to expand existing social prescribing - scheme - IN PROGRESS**

GPs are now universally able to refer participants across all four council owned facilities.

Both providers are looking at expanding their offers, with Abbeycroft accepting referrals from Home Start and offering free access to facilities, while Everyone Active are offering free access to young people in care.

We are also building on the success of this scheme by looking to provide residents with mental health issues who are clients with The Greenlight Trust and The Blossom Charity, access to free membership through the GP referral scheme.



## ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

**Whether that be participating in healthy eating exercises/initiatives, organising a community garden to grow produce, setting up of a Community Larder or providing extra support to local food banks to meet any unmet need.**

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### **Expansion of Holiday Activities and Food Programme – IN PROGRESS**

BMSDC is working with local providers to coordinate a programme of free activities and healthy meals during the school holidays for children and young people.

The programme is funded to cover the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays but BMSDC are also ensuring that there is a good offer during the half term holidays. The children who take part will enjoy fun and enriching activities in a safe and sociable environment and have the opportunity to develop new skills or knowledge and try out new experiences.

At least one meal per day will be included and the children will improve their knowledge and awareness of healthy eating.

The scheme aims to help families develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.

### **Understanding the root issues which drive foodbank use - IN PROGRESS**

Since the inception of the Five Point Plan we have reviewed this heading; whilst we continue to work closely with our partners at Suffolk County Council to better understand the issue of foodbank use, we have also explored the implementation of community supermarkets.

Community supermarkets can bridge the gap between Food Banks and Affordable Supermarkets like Aldi and Lidl. The concept of the Community Supermarket is early intervention, enabling individuals and families to build financial resilience and to retain control of their own finances even in areas of food or nutritional poverty.

If the Councils Investment Plan for the allocation of UK Shared Prosperity funding is successful, it is intended to progress with the creation of a community supermarket in each district to encourage a sustainable alternative to food banks

### **Mapping potential sites for growing community produce - IN PROGRESS**

Through the mapping work completed by Public Realm, a list of allotments has been collated with spaces for additional plots identified. We are now reviewing how best to progress with this initiative.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The current plan includes many commitments which we will continue to deliver as we enter phase two, from using our discretion to alleviate financial hardship, building on our partnership working to identify vulnerable households and provide support, and ensuring clear communication surrounding the local and government support available for households in our district.

We have utilised the headings provided under the current Five Point Plan to form our approach to supporting our residents, and this has been helpful in part. As the circumstances evolve our intention is to review these headings to ensure our approach remains responsive to the ever changing needs of our residents.

The plan should be iterative and flexible to ensure that we can both continue the work in progress, respond to changes quickly and efficiently, appreciating that we don't have all the answers and we need to work at a hyper local level with our VCSE partners to develop community resilience moving forwards and learn lessons from our response to COVID-19.

As we move into the next phase of our plan, there are several key priorities that need to be considered. Initially, how we respond to the crisis, in the short term, as well as looking ahead to develop a sustainable plan and enhance community resilience.

### Short term crisis

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We recognise, that winter will bring several pressures, particularly supporting residents with access to warm and welcoming spaces. We are already working with our VCSE partners, such as the rural coffee caravan to map our warm spaces. Additionally, we are providing access to grant funding to increase our warm space offer.

There are several pop-up foodbanks starting across the districts, therefore mapping work is required to ensure that we are able to support those in short term food crisis.

A tailored communications plan needs to be developed to ensure that we are providing bespoke support to those in need, this will be through both the production of self-service signposting/information forms, as well as working with partners and front-line teams to encourage take up of existing and new schemes.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> round of household support fund is included within our short-term crisis support, as well as other existing funding opportunities. We will continue to work closely with Suffolk County Council to help our residents access the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, and will explore the feasibility of accessing this data in line with our data sharing agreements to identify vulnerable groups.

## Longer term/ community resilience building

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A key part of the future focused plan is to widen our network of VCSE partners, to gain insight at a hyper local level to help shape shared initiatives and outcomes. We recognise that we have already started this work but growing the membership will have a wider and greater impact.

Prevention is a key area of focus, to reduce those falling into crisis. Early intervention will be critical, such as greater use of our warm handover provision. We also need to ensure our front-line teams are equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise early support needs and know the best way to support our residents.

We also want to develop community resilience; in part this will require scoping for financial capability sessions with key partners.

Targeted communications campaigns will ensure that residents are aware of the assistance available to them to help them through the cost of living crisis, and how to access the organisations best placed to support them.

Alongside this we will also be exploring community supermarkets, as part of our UK shared prosperity funding investment plan, to support those suffering food poverty to bridge the gap between the crisis support of food banks and affordable supermarkets.

Lastly, ensuring that where customers wish to gain digital skills, they have wider opportunities to do so. Therefore, we will extend our digital inclusion provision to include small groups or one to one support in four libraries to support people increase digital confidence and support with social isolation. Alongside the extension of our free tablet loaning scheme to help residents stay connected and gain access to information, advice, and guidance.

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# Agenda Item 8

## BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Corporate Manager Governance and Civic Office.</b>	<b>Report Number: JOS/22/24</b>
<b>To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 21 November 2022</b>

### SCRUTINY/CABINET PROTOCOL

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To agree a Scrutiny/Cabinet Protocol for overview and Scrutiny to promote a culture of accountability, openness, and transparency within Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, recognising scrutiny as a key enabler within that culture.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny approves the Scrutiny/Cabinet protocol attached.

#### 3. Financial Implications

N/A

#### 4. Legal Implications

N/A

#### 5. Risk Management

N/A

#### 6. Consultations

- 6.1 The Leaders and Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs have been consulted.

#### 7. Equality Analysis

N/A

#### 8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 8.1 This protocol has been written for both Councils to adopt.

#### 9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

- 9.1 This decision will support the “Strengthened and clear governance to enable delivery” element of overarching **Enabled and Efficient Organisation** priority for the council

#### 10. Key Information

- 10.1 This protocol has been formulated following the creation of an action plan for Overview and Scrutiny as a result of the Councils’ peer review.

10.2 The protocol defines clearly the role of Overview and Scrutiny, Cabinet and Officers to promote a culture of accountability, openness and transparency within Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils', recognising scrutiny as a key enabler within that culture.

## Appendices

Title	Location
(a) Scrutiny/Cabinet Protocol	Attached

## 11. Background Documents

[Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan](#)

### Authorship:


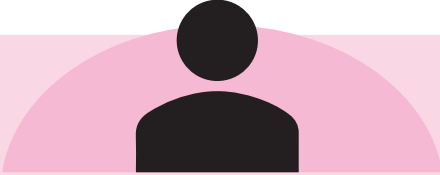

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# SCRUTINY & CABINET PROTOCOL



The purpose of this protocol is to promote a culture of accountability, openness and transparency within Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils, recognising scrutiny as a key enabler within that culture. The protocol sets out how Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members, the Cabinet and Officers will work together to deliver effective, outcome-focussed scrutiny.

 <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members will:</b>	 <b>Cabinet Members will:</b>	 <b>Officers will:</b>
<p>Take their role on the O&amp;S committees seriously, preparing for meetings in advance and committing to attending for the whole of the meeting</p>	<p>Respect the impartiality, value and independence of the O&amp;S Committees</p>	<p>Proactively participate in the scrutiny process – attending Committee meetings and Chairs’ briefings, preparing and presenting clear and concise information to the Committees and responding positively to questioning by the Committee Members</p>
<p>Participate in regular training to develop their scrutiny skills</p>	<p>Proactively seek the O&amp;S Committees’ input in executive decision-making and policy formation</p>	<p>Respect and value the contributions made by the O&amp;S Committees - actively seeking out the expertise of the Committees when developing solutions and preparing reports to support decision-making</p>
<p>Focus their attention on strategic scrutiny topic with clear value added for residents and communities, rather than specific ward or personal interests</p>	<p>Attend and participate positively in O&amp;S Committee meetings where items are being discussed that fall within their portfolio</p>	<p>Promote the role and importance of scrutiny inside and outside the Councils</p>
<p>Undertake scrutiny with openness and impartiality and without political motivation</p>	<p>Respond positively to feedback from the O&amp;S Committees and give reasonable and timely consideration to their recommendations</p>	
<p>Provide constructive challenge as a ‘critical friend’ of the Cabinets to engage decision and policy making</p>	<p>Promote the role and importance of scrutiny inside and outside the Councils</p>	
<p>Make recommendations which have a clear purpose and set out expectations for response and implementation</p>		
<p>Promote the role and importance of scrutiny inside and outside the Councils</p>		

## How will we achieve it?

- Working together in a culture of mutual trust and respect and adhering to the Code of Conduct.
- Monthly meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees, held in public and livestreamed.
- A realistic and robust work programme, developed at the start of each municipal year and aligned, where appropriate, to the work programme of the Cabinets and Councils.
- Monthly O&S Strategy Meetings between the Leaders of the Councils and the Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny.
- Fully scoped scrutiny reviews, demonstrating clear links to the Councils’ strategic priorities and proposed outcomes.
- Tracking the recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny Committees and evaluating their impact.

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## JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION TRACKER

The purpose of this action tracker is to document and track the progress of all recommendations made by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This tracker seeks to inform committee members on the implementation of their recommendations and the subsequent decisions reached by Cabinet. This tracker is updated ahead of and following each meeting of the Committee.

Date	Item Ref	Item Title	Recommendations	Key Officer	Progress	Status
24.10.22	JOS/22/17	<a href="#">Joint Homes and Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019 - 2024)</a>	3.1 That Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Members have reviewed the contents of report JOS/22/17, including the appendices, and requests that the Portfolio Holders and Officers take account of verbal comments made by members of the committee. Also, that Cabinet bears these comments in mind when debating the refocussed delivery plan, the refreshed Joint Homes and Housing Strategy, and the Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.	N/A	07.11.22: Draft minutes with a record of the verbal comments and recommendations made by Members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were provided to the Cabinet Members for Housing for their further consideration.	Completed
			3.2 That the committee members support the strategic aims of the Joint Homes and Housing Strategy and agreed that the newly refocussed plan is reflective of the current challenges facing the housing sector whilst continuing to deliver the aims set out in the strategy.	N/A	N/A	Completed
			3.3 To ask Portfolio Holders and Officers to consider further provision of financial and physical support to all residents wishing to downsize.	AN	07.11.22: Draft minutes with a record of the verbal comments and recommendations made by Members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were provided to the Cabinet Members for Housing for their further consideration.	Ongoing
30.09.22	JOS/22/8	<a href="#">Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Parking Strategy</a>	1.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report and that a verbal presentation of the comments made at this meeting be provided to Cabinet	N/A	03.10.22: Councillor Hinton made a verbal representation at Babergh Cabinet. 03.10.22: Councillor Welham made a verbal representation at Mid Suffolk Cabinet.	Completed
			1.2 That Cabinet is requested to carry out further work to replace carparking demands with alternatives by looking at other areas that have done so successfully.	FD		Not Started
			1.3 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks that a report be provided to the Committee in due course to review the progress on the Parking strategy implementation plan.	FD	30.09.22: Confirmed that progress reports will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny once implementation had begun.	Ongoing

30.09.22	JOS/22/9	<a href="#">Shared Revenues Partnership - Council Tax Reduction Scheme</a>	1.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet Option 3 as the preferred option for the Consultation for the Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Scheme.	N/A	<b>03.10.22:</b> Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinet voted unanimously to consult on Option 3 as set out in Appendix B of this report as the basis for a revised (Working Age) Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24	Completed
	JOS/22/11	<a href="#">Recommendations from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group for Rural Transport</a>	1.1 That Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Babergh Cabinet that an analysis of the unmet demand for community transport in the district be carried out.	AN	<b>01.11.22:</b> Will be timetabled to go to Cabinet at the next Overview and Scrutiny Strategy meeting between the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and the Leaders.	Ongoing
			1.2 That the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that Suffolk County Council be informed of the apparent lack of publicity of community transport across the district, and to encourage joint working between Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and Suffolk County Council to promote community transport services.	AN		
			1.3 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that the feasibility of providing an electric bus project throughout the district, similar to that being implemented by Mid Suffolk be investigated.	AN		
			1.1 That Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Mid Suffolk Cabinet that, as part of the development of the electric bus project, local consultations to elicit unmet transport needs should be carried out – one covering an urban area and one covering a rural area.	AN		
			1.2 That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committees recommend to Cabinet that Suffolk County Council be informed of the apparent lack of publicity of community transport across the district, and to encourage joint working between Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and Suffolk County Council to promote community transport services.	AN		

Date	Item Ref	Item Title	Recommendations	Key Officer	Progress	Status
27.06.22	JOS/22/2	<a href="#">Capital Investment Fund Company (CIFCO CAPITAL LTD) Business Trading and Performance Report</a>	1.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny committee notes the CIFCO Business Plan and Business Trading and Performance and ask that the minutes of this meeting be taken into account at Full Council.	N/A	<b>25.10.22 and 27.10.22:</b> Minutes were attached as Appendix E as part of the CIFCO item that went to both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Full Councils for consideration.	Completed
			1.2 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the CIFCO Business Plan and Business Trading and Performance is robust for 2022 – 2023	N/A	N/A	Completed
			1.3 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Full Council that future CIFCO business plans continue to be scrutinised by the Councils' Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee and then reported to Council.	N/A	<b>25.10.22 and 27.10.22:</b> Babergh and Mid Suffolk Full Councils voted in favour of Recommendation 3.3 "That future CIFCO Business Plans continue to be scrutinised by the Councils' Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee and then reported to Council."	Completed

Date	Item Ref	Item Title	Recommendations	Key Officer	Progress	Status
25.04.22	JOS/21/30	<a href="#">Draft Empty Homes Policy</a>	1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee compliments the officers on the report and presentation and recommend to Cabinet that the policy be adopted taking in to account the following recommendations:	N/A	<b>04.07.22 and 05.07.22:</b> Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinets voted in favour of Recommendation 1.1 "That Option 1 - the new Empty Homes Policy, as set out in Appendix A of this report and considering the recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 25th April 2022 be approved".	Completed
			1.2 That Overview and Scrutiny considers that the maxim loan of £20k is insufficient and asked that Cabinet raise the level of loans and consider if a nominal rate of interest should be applied.	N/A		
			1.3 That loans for works to improve for energy efficiency of homes should also be available.	N/A		
			1.4 That the information in the communication plan is strengthened including publicity via Parish Council and local community groups and that a briefing note be circulated to Councillors when the policy is adopted.	N/A		
			1.5 That Cabinet be asked to monitor the budget for empty homes this year and consider whether an increase is required for 2023/24.	N/A		
			1.6 That further quantitative information is provided to members of the committee on the empty homes' loans and the financial implications for the Councils.	N/A		
			1.7 That close working is encouraged with the Homelessness Outreach officers.	N/A		

Date	Item Ref	Item Title	Recommendations	Key Officer	Progress	Status
21.03.22	JOS/21/25	<a href="#">Review of Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP)</a>	1.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report	N/A	N/A	Completed
			1.2 That the comments made by the Committee regarding the name of the partnership and the format of the action plan be reported back to the WSCSP.	N/A	<b>21.03.22:</b> Passed on to representatives from BDC and MSDC to feedback to the WSCSP.	Completed
			1.3 That the reporting toolkit for all Members be updated and circulated	VM		Not Started
			1.4 That a training session be held for all Members to ensure that all Councillors have knowledge and awareness of their role in respect of identifying and reporting crime and safety issues in their area and are able to support their town and parish councils when discussing crime and safety.	VM		Not Started
			1.5 That a simplified version of the action plan is circulated to all councillors with the O&S chair's report to full council on this item.	VM	<b>21.06.22 and 23.06.22:</b> The Chairs reported on the recommendations from JOS/21/25 as part of their annual Overview and Scrutiny update to Full Council.	Ongoing

			1.6 Review the timing of the WSCSP report based on the meeting cycle of the partnership and ensuring that the most up to date position is reported and to review the format of the report to ensure that the information is clear, concise and has a strategic focus.	VM	04.10.22: Decided by Chairs at Joint Overview and Scrutiny Briefing that the next WSCSP review would take place in June 2023 to allow for a review of the entire year. This review will then come back to committee on an annual basis.	Completed
			1.7 To explore whether the strategic assessment is available from the County	VM		Not Started

Date	Item Ref	Item Title	Recommendations	Key Officer	Progress	Status
17.01.22 (BDC Only)	BOS/21/1	<a href="#">Draft General Fund (GF) 2021/22 and Four Year Outlook</a>	1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the General Fund budget 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook.	N/A	N/A	Completed
			1.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a report from Cabinet on the outcomes of the performance framework on a six-month basis.	KS		Not Started
	BOS/21/2	<a href="#">Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Four Year Outlook</a>	1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook.	N/A	N/A	Completed
			1.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny recommends that the information about the use of sub-contractors be included in the quarterly performance monitoring report.	KS	07.03.22: Incorporated into the quarterly monitoring report and will become a statutory part.	Completed

Date	Item Ref	Item Title	Recommendations	Key Officer	Progress	Status
13.01.22 (MSDC Only)	MOS/21/1	<a href="#">Draft General Fund (GF) 2022/23 and Four Year Outlook</a>	1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the General Fund budget 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook and asks that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Officers take into consideration the comments made at the meeting.	KS	N/A	Completed
			1.2 That the budget preparation process is reviewed by the S.151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to ensure that the O&S Committee can be involved earlier in the development of the budget, enabling a more strategic approach to scrutinising the budget. Further that the Monitoring Officer and Constitution Working Group reviews the terms of reference for the O&S Committee and the JAS Committee to ensure that financial scrutiny is being undertaken in the most appropriate way.	EY	21.11.22: General Fund Budget and Housing Revenue Accounts now go to Overview and Scrutiny Committees in November to allow for a more strategic and beneficial approach where O&S's recommendations have enough time to be implemented.	Completed
	MOS/21/2	<a href="#">Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Four Year Outlook</a>	1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook	N/A	N/A	Completed
			1.2 That information is provided for the level of council rent compared with other authorities for benchmarking for the current year and the number of tenants receiving rent rebate in the current financial year be provided to Council in February and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their review of the Budget in the next municipal year.	KS	24.02.22: Figures provided in the February Council papers as requested	Completed

	Mca/21/32	<a href="#">Call In of the Decision from Mid Suffolk Cabinet (06.12.21)</a>	1.1 Refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, together with the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cabinet will then take a final decision and that decision cannot be called in.	N/A	<b>07.03.2022:</b> Mid Suffolk Cabinet voted in favour "4.1 That the Cabinet decision on 6 December 2021, to adopt the new Hackney Carriage and Private hire Vehicle Licensing Policy, be confirmed and that the matters raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, particularly in relation to electric vehicles, be referred to officers and the Licensing and Regulatory Committee for further work before being presented back to Cabinet."	Completed
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Date	Item Ref	Item Title	Recommendations	Key Officer	Progress	Status
20.12.21	JOS/21/20	<a href="#">Review of Local Citizens Advice</a>	1.1 To thank the LCA Chief officers and their respective staff for the work that they have carried out in the last year. Particularly during the pandemic.	N/A	N/A	Completed
			1.2 The Committee are reassured that both LCAs are operating effectively and efficiently and responded well to all questioning from Members.	N/A	N/A	Completed
			1.3 That the Councils take a single view of debt and implement an integrated system for dealing with housing rent, and council tax debt.	VM	<b>06.06.22 and 05.09.22:</b> Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinet resolved "3.1 That Cabinet considers the report from Joint Overview and Scrutiny and agrees its response to the recommendations in the report as detailed in paragraph 4, and in line with the Council's response to the Cost of Living Crisis and the five point plan that will look at a better system of connectivity between partners, including the CAB, the Council and system wide partners".	Completed
			1.4 That contact be made to foodbanks with a request that their clients are referred to the LCA for advice on nutrition and budgeting and cookery skills classes.	VM		
			1.5 Remote virtual operation capability for LCA and other bodies should be provided on an accelerated programme as a matter of urgency defining locations, IT equipment and applications, training and connectivity.	VM		
			1.6 That Cabinets be asked to consider the previous resolution of Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the 3 year rolling funding arrangements review be subject to indexation on an annual review basis.	VM		
			1.7 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the Local Citizens Advice in December 2022	N/A	<b>21.11.22:</b> A review of the Local Citizens Advice Bureaus and their work on the Cost of Living Crisis is coming to Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2022.	Completed
			1.8 Mid Suffolk Cabinet to confirm that funding previously allocated to Thetford and Diss LCA be allocated to Mid Suffolk LCA	N/A	<b>06.06.22:</b> Mid Suffolk Cabinet confirmed at their June cabinet meeting.	Completed
			1.9 Recommendation to Babergh Cabinet that extra funding be provided to Sudbury Citizens Advice to enable greater provision for debt advice across the whole district.	N/A	<b>05.09.22:</b> The Director for Communities confirmed that the Sudbury Citizens Advice has received a 30% uplift in funding.	Completed

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# Agenda Item 11

## BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2022/23:

TOPIC	PURPOSE	LEAD OFFICER	CABINET MEMBER	PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE
<b>21 NOVEMBER 2022</b>				
<b>Draft General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (2023/24) and Four-year Outlook</b>	Scrutiny of the GF Budget and HRA for 2023-24.	Director – Corporate Resources  Corporate Manager – Finance	The Leaders  Cabinet Members for Finance	
<b>19 DECEMBER 2022</b>				
<b>Review of Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and the support they provide to Parishes across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.</b>	To receive an update on the work being undertaken by SALC to support the Parishes in both districts.	Corporate Manager - Communities	Cabinet Members for Communities	
<b>Information Bulletin on is the organisation protected against cyber-attacks?</b>	To provide an update on the measures taken to protect the Council online.	Corporate Manager - ICT		
<b>23 JANUARY 2023</b>				
<b>General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Review of savings proposals and updated position</b>		Director – Corporate Resources  Corporate Manager - Finance	The Leaders  Cabinet Members for Finance	
<b>Review of the Culture, Heritage, and Visitor Economy Strategy</b>		Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change		

<b>Information Bulletin on education, skills, and employment – including apprenticeships – what more can the council do to raise opportunities and attainment?</b>		Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change		
<b>Are planning pre-application advice customers getting a valuable service</b>		Chief Planning Officer		
<b>Information Bulletin updating Members on the Electronic Complaints system</b>		Corporate Manager – Customer Operations		
<b>(BDC) Scrutiny of the Cabinets' Communication and Sharing of Information</b>				
<b>16 FEBRUARY 2023</b>				
<b>20 MARCH 2023</b>				
<b>20 APRIL 2023</b>				
<b>PRE-ELECTION PERIOD</b>				
<b>18 MAY 2023</b>				
<b>JUNE 2023</b>				
<b>Access and availability of services /leisure /education/ employment for residents</b>				



<b>Scrutiny of the delivery of services for Transport for both Town and rural areas</b>				
<b>Crime and Disorder Panel meeting</b>	The Committee conduct a scrutiny review of the WSCSP to fulfil the Councils Statutory requirements	Director – Sustainable Communities  Community Safety Professional Lead - Communities	Cabinet Members for Communities	

### **Topics identified for review but not currently timetabled:**

**Review of Central Suffolk Lettings** - Chairs to discuss the timing for bringing this to Committee

**The Census reports to be scrutinised in 2022**

**Outcome of Residents Survey to be reviewed**

### **Other topics identified:**

- Land Adoptions Policy
- Information Bulletin on the cost of maintenance of tenanted properties.

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# Agenda Item 12

## MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2022/23:

TOPIC	PURPOSE	LEAD OFFICER	CABINET MEMBER	PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE
<b>22 NOVEMBER 2022</b>				
<b>Draft General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (2023/24) and Four-year Outlook</b>	Scrutiny of the GF Budget and HRA for 2023-24	Director – Corporate Resources  Corporate Manager – Finance	The Leaders  Cabinet Members for Finance	
<b>19 DECEMBER 2022</b>				
<b>Review of Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and the support they provide to Parishes across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.</b>	To receive an update on the work being undertaken by SALC to support the Parishes in both districts.	Corporate Manager – Communities	Cabinet Members for Communities	
<b>Information Bulletin on is the organisation protected against cyber-attacks?</b>	To provide an update on the measures taken to protect the Council online.	Corporate Manager - ICT		
<b>19 JANUARY 2023 (Proposed Joint date 23 January 2023)</b>				
<b>General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Review of savings proposals and updated position</b>		Director – Corporate Resources  Corporate Manager - Finance	The Leaders  Cabinet Members for Finance	
<b>Review of the Culture, Heritage, and Visitor Economy Strategy</b>		Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships		

Information Bulletin on education, skills, and employment – including apprenticeships – what more can the council do to raise opportunities and attainment?		Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change		
Are planning pre-application advice customers getting a valuable service		Chief Planning Officer		
Information Bulletin updating Members on the Electronic Complaints system		Corporate Manager – Customer Operations		
<b>16 FEBRUARY 2023</b>				
<b>16 MARCH 2023 (Proposed Joint date 20 March 2023)</b>				
<b>20 APRIL 2023</b>				
<b>PRE-ELECTION PERIOD</b>				
<b>18 MAY 2023</b>				
<b>JUNE 2023</b>				
Access and availability of services /leisure /education/ employment for residents				
Scrutiny of the delivery of services for Transport for both Town and rural areas				

<b>Crime and Disorder Panel meeting</b>	The Committee conduct a scrutiny review of the WSCSP to fulfil the Councils Statutory requirements	Director – Sustainable Communities  Community Safety Professional Lead - Communities	Cabinet Members for Communities	
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### **Topics identified for review but not currently timetabled:**

**Review of Central Suffolk Lettings** - Chairs to discuss the timing for bringing this to Committee

**The Census reports to be scrutinised in 2022**

**Outcome of Residents Survey to be reviewed**

### **Other topics identified:**

- Land Adoptions Policy
- Information Bulletin on the cost of maintenance of tenanted properties.

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