

Our Plan for Babergh:

***A more resilient and
sustainable future for
Babergh***

(2023-2027)

Our Vision

“To help to create a resilient, more sustainable future, with and for, all the residents and communities of Babergh”

We believe it is our role to help create a more sustainable future in Babergh. We are driven by doing what is right for our residents, communities, parishes and towns now and for the future.

Babergh District Council has a long tradition of political collaboration. Our commitment to partnership and cooperation, is exemplified by the make-up of our political administration¹ and the way we work together with our communities, our towns and parishes, the voluntary sector, and local businesses, to grasp the opportunities and respond to the challenges that confront us all.

In developing this plan, we have listened carefully to all your views, and we promise to continue to do so. We want to have continuous engagement and conversation with our communities.

We are extremely ambitious for all our communities and all our residents. **We believe that a sustainable society must be built on the strong foundations of its communities, economy and environment.** As described in this plan, we will further strengthen these foundations to develop more resilient communities, and even greater pride and aspiration in the towns and villages where you live.

We are committed to being open and honest with you. Councils across the land are struggling with the same challenges. Their financial position has been eroded each year since 2010 as they try to contend with the twin pressures of cuts in funding from central government and over the last two years by inflation which increases costs dramatically. Babergh District Council is not immune from these pressures. Whilst the Council's income from fees and charges for services and council tax has remained well below the rate of inflation, the cost of almost everything else from energy to materials has risen, together with interest rate rises. This means we will have to find extra income and / or savings of over £10m over the next four years just to continue delivering the services we currently do.

¹ A political coalition of the Green Party, Independents and Liberal Democrats

While this national economic crisis is not of our making, we must respond to it nevertheless – and must do so in a responsible way. In light of the serious financial challenges facing us we have difficult decisions to make.

We have already made significant savings year on year and have a absolute focus on running our services as efficiently as we can. But much more must be done, and some tough choices lie ahead. We remain committed to doing all we can to protect the essential services that local and vulnerable people rely on.

We will remain positive and ambitious; and we will continue to deliver good quality core district council services. However, we do need to reduce our costs as an organisation and increase some of the fees we charge for some services to balance our books. But we cannot keep doing this year after year. Yes, the backdrop is challenging but it demands that we use our expertise and ingenuity to develop new approaches to service design and delivery that meet your aspirations for the place where you live and creates a more sustainable future for all our residents and communities. Testing times call for imagination and innovation but also collaboration, listening to you about what you think is important and together we can develop sustainable local solutions to local issues.

Dave Busby

Deborah Saw

John Ward

Leader of the Council

Deputy Leader

Deputy Leader

(Liberal Democrat)

(Green)

(Independent)

(‘Working Together’ with Mid Suffolk District Council)

Babergh district at a glance

 **92,300**

residents and
40,200 households
(Census 2021)

26.6%



of residents aged 65 and over vs 18.4% across England. By 2043, the 65-plus population is expected to account for a third (33.8%) of all residents

Top 3 employment sectors:



- Wholesale and retail
- Manufacturing
- Education



31.9%

of 16 to 64-year-olds hold a level 4 (degree-level) qualification or above vs 37.1% in England

Better than average levels of health but challenges remain



Life expectancy at birth:

Females - 85.2 years vs 83.1 in England
Males - 81.6 years vs 79.4 in England

26.1% of adults classed as physically inactive (25.8% across England)



85%

of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live



Median house prices are 10.60 times median annual resident earnings



Rollout of gigabit-capable broadband

Gigabit-capable broadband coverage: 38.1% vs 77.1% across England (June 2023)

10.3% average tree canopy cover for wards in Babergh



Our Approach

We need to create a more sustainable future for all our residents and communities in Babergh. We will achieve this by:

- Delivering good quality core council services;
- Ensuring Babergh District Council is a financially viable organisation now and for the future;
- Providing open & honest leadership;
- Putting sustainability at the heart of everything we do;
- Continuing to listen to you and work in partnership on the things that matter most to you;
- Supporting and empowering you to design and deliver community-based solutions to local issues;
- Working in partnership and cooperation with all our communities, the local voluntary sector, our partners across the public sector and our local businesses to tackle the challenges we all face; and
- Influencing others to ensure you have local access to all the services and facilities that you need to be able to live well.

What we will focus on to create a more sustainable future, with and for, all the residents and communities of Babergh

These are the opportunities and challenges that we will focus on. Some of these are things we can directly deliver but many can only be achieved in partnership with others or through influencing others to change. We will work in whatever way necessary to create a more sustainable future for the residents and communities of Babergh:

Revitalised and improved environment

- Tackling and mitigating the impacts of climate change
- Reducing council and district carbon emissions
- Protecting and enhancing our natural landscape and our wildlife habitats; increasing biodiversity and nature recovery
- Increasing tree planting and habitat restoration
- More insulated and energy efficient buildings
- Supporting delivery of local community energy projects
- Zero tolerance to fly-tipping
- Enabling greater re-use and recycling
- Promoting greener and healthier forms of travel

Thriving economy

- Prioritising and promoting the green economy
- Championing solutions to retrofitting & renewable energy
- Promoting higher paid, higher skilled, sustainable jobs for all
- Increasing opportunities to learn new skills, particularly those in green technology sectors
- Creating the conditions for start-ups & social enterprises to flourish
- Supporting local businesses
- Attracting inward investment and responsible tourism to our towns and villages
- Ensuring access to the infrastructure your communities need to thrive

Resilient communities

- Championing market towns and villages
- Engaging, empowering and enabling communities to find local solutions to local issues
- Ensuring every part of Babergh is clean and tidy
- Securing the right quality homes, in the right places
- Securing more affordable housing
- Enabling older people to live independently in their own homes for longer
- Improving access to the services and facilities that support thriving communities & the health and wellbeing of our residents
- Helping those struggling with the high cost of living
- Supporting the development of more neighbourhood plans
- Helping improve the energy efficiency of listed buildings
- Reaffirming our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant

Our next steps

We will develop an annual delivery plan to target activity in relation to each of the three areas of focus. This will include a combination of outcomes, outputs, performance indicators and targets that will form part of the quarterly performance reports and progress will be reported annually through the State of the District report. We will also utilise other external metrics for benchmarking such as the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the [Thriving Places Index](#).