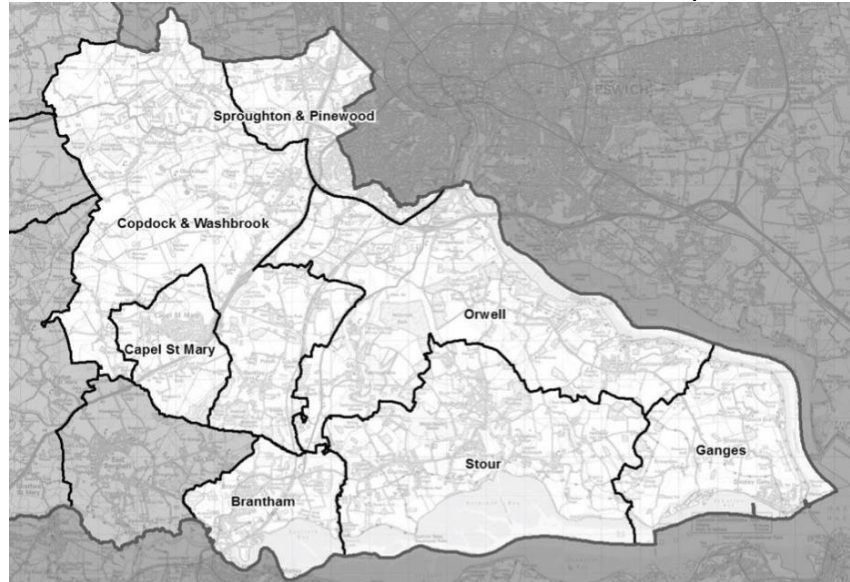


New Look District Wards For Peninsula

The Shotley peninsula will get a new look ward structure after the Boundary Commission released its final recommendations for Babergh District Council.

Newly named Ganges, Stour and Orwell wards will replace the bulk of the current two-member Berners and one member Holbrook wards and overlap into Belstead



and Tattingstone.

The Local Government Boundary Commission For England (LGBCE) had originally looked at making much of the peninsula a three-member ward, but representations by Holbrook councillor David Rose, supported by Shotley councillor Derek Davis and a couple of parish councils, pointed out that would be unworkable and the panel agreed.

Ganges, named after the former Royal Navy Training Establishment, will comprise of Shotley and Erwarton and be looked after by just one district councillor.

Boundary commissioners took into account of development at the former Ganges site, comprising of 285 new homes, a small hotel, residential care home, a café, retail units and a number of community facilities, which would add to the electorate.

Stour ward, named after the mouth of the river, will also be a one-member ward and will now take in Harkstead, Holbrook and Stutton, making it slightly larger than the current ward.

On the other side of the peninsula Orwell ward, will also be a one-member ward but will include Belstead, Wherstead and Tattingstone along with Freston, Woolverstone and Chelmondiston.

Brantham will become a one-member ward as expected growth will also boost the electorate there.

The division of those four wards means the same geographical area will lose one district councillor.

In total Babergh district council will reduce the number of councillors from the current 43 to 32, serving 24 wards, with the changes coming into effect at the next district council election in May 2019.

In its report the Boundary Commission explained how it changed its original recommendation of forming three-member ward to three single member wards after representations were made.

Outdoor Gym Equipment

Congratulations to the Parish Council, and in particular the playing field working group, that has brought the new fitness gym to fruition after consultation with the residents.

Pop Up Customer Support Point For Peninsula

Shotley has been chosen to pilot a new pop up customer support access point dealing with Babergh District Council matters.

Currently residents have to travel to Stowmarket or Sudbury if they want to deal face to face with Babergh officers.

This new service headed up by Babergh's Customer Service Team, who will allow provide support for peninsula residents to access the council's online services.

The pilot scheme, working in partnership with Suffolk Libraries, will run for the next eight weeks starting on August 13 (apart from Bank Holiday Monday, August 27) at Shotley Village Hall from 1pm – 4.30pm.

Babergh exceeds housing land supply target

Babergh District Council has published its Annual Monitoring Report, demonstrating a Housing Land Supply of 6.7 years – meeting the government's requirement of five years.

As of Wednesday 11 July, the Council considers it can demonstrate this land supply, meaning that Babergh can prove that there is enough deliverable land to meet the number of homes that need to be built over that period to meet housing need.

The Council has been unable to demonstrate this land supply since April 2017, but now the updated figure has been made possible as a result of a proactive approach to delivery.

Cabinet

There have been more changes to the Cabinet with fellow ward member Peter Patrick stepping down (as I'm sure he will have mentioned) and being replaced by Independent Conservative Simon Barrett.

Kathryn Grandon (Con) has also joined the Cabinet in a Communications role and someone I will be working closely with on a large project due to be completed in December.

Community toilet scheme to be set up

As well as looking at handing over public toilets to parishes or community groups as we have discussed previously, Babergh wants to ensure that the main town centres, key tourism locations and large parks have an adequate provision of public conveniences. Businesses are being invited to work with the Council to establish the scheme, which will also give town and parish councils the ability to directly manage and maintain facilities in their areas. Babergh District Council will be investing £13,000 to carry out basic repairs and improvements to the existing toilets.

Councils to Pilot Pioneering Developer Contributions Database

As part of my portfolio I'm delighted to introduce a new computer software system where residents and those in the development industry will be able to see how

money collected from developers as part of planning agreements is being spent on providing infrastructure for local communities.

Babergh is working with the software provider Exacom as part of a pilot exercise involving two other local authorities to hone this innovative, new database which will transform the way that information is held for developer contributions paid for by legal agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Babergh's Section 106 and CIL data will be used by the software provider in the launch of the Planning Obligations Public Facing Module across the country. This will be hosted on the Councils' websites later in the summer and will enable people to search for information by district, ward, parish or infrastructure type with details of where monies are collected, allocated and spent. It will also allow people to see legal agreements secured as part of the planning process. The information will be updated daily.

Plans for former council headquarters in Hadleigh

Babergh District Council's Cabinet have voted to draw up a planning application to develop up to 58 new homes on the site of the council's former Hadleigh offices.

At a meeting of Babergh's Cabinet on 12 July, councillors voted to draw up a planning application to develop the former office site as residential properties, while retaining the listed buildings and part of previous extensions to the offices. The application will cover the former offices at Corks Lane as well as the car park south of the Brett, including Bridge House.

Housing Revenue Account

The Government has now announced the regulations on bidding for additional Housing Revenue Account borrowing, which will include the opportunity to use additional borrowing along with Homes England Grant or Right to Buy Receipts.

The question on what a high affordability locality has been answered as follows:

High affordability pressure areas are defined as those where there is a difference of £50 or more per week between average social and private rents at the local authority level.

As a result, Babergh qualifies to bid for additional borrowing and will be submitting one.

CIFCO

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' property investment management company, CIFCO Capital Ltd, has made six acquisitions in its first year which are generating an annual return of £1.4million.

Each of the two councils has invested £25million and has a 50 per cent shareholding in CIFCO, which reports to two holding companies, Babergh District Council (Suffolk Holdings) and Mid Suffolk District Council (Suffolk Holdings).

At the end of the first year's trading, a total of £23,572,000 has been invested by CIFCO in six assets, generating a total of £1,410,466 in annual rental income

Council launches new online payments system for land charges searches

A new online payments system has been introduced for those buying homes in Babergh. The new system allows those requesting a Local Land Charge Search – which carries with it a search fee – to pay quickly and easily online, via credit or debit card. Most Land Charge Service customers are solicitors and agents delivering conveyancing services to those buying a house although anyone can request this service regarding any property.