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Report to the Hadleigh Town Council 15th June 2017

Madam Mayor,

I am pleased to report that although it has been a busy month I have been attentive to the needs of my constituents and have attended various District Council meetings on their behalf.

All of us who have gardens know that the last few weeks have been ideal grass-growing conditions – plenty of rain and sunshine. As many of you will be aware, there has been a lot of discussion on social media, Suffolk Radio and no doubt elsewhere regarding Babergh’s grass cutting services. The particular resident who had not had his grass cut lives in the bungalows on the corner of Angel Street and Spooners Lane. He called me on Monday morning and I referred him to Councillors Dawson and Campbell, as he lives in their ward. Things were not handled well initially, and matters were referred to me on Monday evening by someone who had seen the Facebook comments. Since which time Councillors and officers have gone to great lengths to put the situation right. Cllr Campbell has done a very good job of managing the situation and so has Peter Garrett. The grass was cut on Tuesday morning – just a few hours after we were informed of the problem. Complaints were also made about the park behind East House (Cox Park?), however I had observed the grass being cut there that very morning. Grass cutting in Babergh is carried out 10 times per growing season, approximately every three weeks. There will be times, like this current period, where we see faster growth than ‘normal’, so we may experience this situation again, but it is a question of balancing this against costs and priorities. I have asked for this to be reviewed, however, and asked whether a more flexible approach could be employed.

Tuesday 13th June marked the start of the nine-week public consultation period by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to consult on the Electoral Review of Babergh: Warding Arrangements. The objective is to achieve electoral equality. The review will propose: The total number of councillors elected to the Council in the future;

the number of wards; the number of councillors representing each ward; ward boundaries; and names of wards. The Commission intends to publish its recommendations in October 2017. The Commission is minded to recommend 31 Councillors should be elected to Babergh District Council. Individuals and organisations can find out more about the review at: www.lgbce.org.uk and email their views to: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

I wish to briefly update you on a few matters regarding planning. First, there have been understandable concerns regarding the planning website. Babergh and Mid Suffolk planning department have been moving to a completely new IT system, involving their website, communications, comment system and internally. Unfortunately, there have been 'teething problems' that have led to not only delaying many matters, but making it difficult for interested parties to communicate with the Planning Department. They are working very hard and long hours to resolve the problems and hope to be in a 'normal' working pattern very soon.

You may recall that I briefed you a few months ago regarding the new call-in procedure. All of us were not happy about it and it was due to be reviewed again. This has been delayed due to the IT problems and the huge workload associated with working on the undetermined CS2/CS11 applications, but it has been agreed that the Babergh call-in procedure will definitely be reviewed as soon as possible and in the meantime, we are hoping that while the existing procedures will still apply, they may be applied a little less stringently.

We have been receiving briefings regarding the 5 years land supply and to summarise, the solution is to update the Local Plan. Hadleigh Councillors have had a meeting with Bill Newman to explain the position and show us the call for land results – not all of these will come to fruition. This summer will see a period of consultation on the Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,

Kathryn Grandon

Babergh Member for Hadleigh South