

HADLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 20th July, 2017

Report by District Cllr Dr Siân Dawson Hadleigh North Ward

Merger of Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council

This has now become the hot topic following a “Call In” to the Scrutiny Committee by opposition Members. Half of Conservative Councillors do not agree with Cabinet's decision or the CEO advice to dissolve both District Councils. The proposal was signed off by the Babergh Cabinet to agree in principle to merge subject to consultation. A large number of members were uncomfortable about the Cabinet's decision in light of the “no” referendum 6 years ago 60% to 40% against merger and all options had not been discussed in detail.

This decision was called into the Scrutiny Committee who voted to support the “Call In” by 6 votes to 1, advising ‘*That the principles of decision making were breached and that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration with additional information. The following additional information should be considered by the Cabinet:-*

- a) *The comments raised during the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 October 2017;*
- b) *A more detailed Financial Case;*
- c) *Further information about the consultation activities, particularly the telephone poll.*

(ii) That Cabinet be requested to refer these decisions to a meeting of the full Council for debate, before Cabinet makes its final determination.

The decision has been referred back to the Cabinet who are required to either challenge the Scrutiny decision or provide additional information. The Report will then be considered by the full Babergh Council but the Cabinet, not the full Council, has the authority to take the final decision.

Disposal of Corks Lane Buildings Purcell Architects have given Councillors a number of options for the disposal of the Corks Lane Buildings. These will be examined and a public consultation will take place in due course and a pre-application has already been submitted

I welcomed the new Strategic Director Jonathan Stephenson who has replaced our Deputy chief Executive. We spent the morning touring Hadleigh and I have made my feelings very clear regarding retaining the Chamber at Corks Lane for Hadleigh community and the delayed development of Angel Court. We do not want more redundant buildings!. I hope to revert in the next couple of months with plans for providing more affordable housing for our community.

Public Access The move of Babergh/Mid Suffolk Council staff was planned to be completed by the end of September. However, changes to staff T&Cs (mainly parking in Ipswich) required further negotiation with the Unions. That has now been completed and employees have been given an additional one off payment of £500pp to accept the new terms and conditions. Corks Lane is now vacated and all Council business will be done from Ipswich, Stowmarket or Sudbury.

Boundary Commission The Boundary Commission has issued its initial findings and recommendations. In our case, Hadleigh has been reduced from 4 to 3 District Councillors who will represent 1 Ward rather than 2. The total number of Babergh District Councillors is to be reduced from 43 to 32.

Housing – Private Sector

The Babergh Planning Committee has approved applications for some 2000 houses in the last few months. Our target for **houses built** rather than just approved is 335 per annum. Some of these approvals have been as a direct result of Babergh no longer having a 5 supply of land bank of potential building sites.

Cllr Dr Siân Dawson
13th November, 2017