

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils - Working Together

Plans to build new affordable homes

Why are the Councils building new affordable homes?

The cost of buying a home in Suffolk is approximately ten times average salary levels. It is difficult for families and single people on low incomes and first-time buyers to afford a home of their own. In addition, both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have lengthy waiting lists of people who need support to find a home that is not just suitable, but more crucially affordable.

To try and address this pressing need, Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been looking at a number of ways we can use our own resources and also team up with others to free up land and sites which are suitable for redevelopment. This work has now culminated in an agreed affordable housing strategy which sets out an exciting and ambitious programme for building new homes over the next 3 to 5 years.

How do the Councils plan to build new affordable homes?

Both Councils own a range of homes, land, and garage sites and these are reviewed regularly for opportunities to build additional homes. We have also purchased four sites from Suffolk County Council. The sites include two redundant care homes and two middle school sites. All of which are located in the key market towns of Hadleigh, Eye, Needham Market and Stowmarket.

You will know of course, that local authorities no longer have the skills or resources needed to build new homes, so we have appointed a development partner to undertake this work. However, while we are developing plans and waiting to secure planning permission, you will appreciate these sites must be secure to prevent unauthorised access and this security has to comply with the recommended Health & Safety and Insurance advice.

We fully understand that those people living closest to one of these sites, will have a keen interest in these security arrangements and any potential impacts these may have, particularly in terms of their aesthetic impact. As such, once we have finalised these plans, we will ensure that all Ward Councillors and relevant Town/Parish Councils are fully updated.

How will we consult with the communities where new homes are to be built?

Initially, consultation about the proposals for each site will be carried out through Town/Parish Councils and local Ward Councillors.

However, as plans progress, wider consultation will be undertaken on the individual schemes. This will involve:

- The Local Planning Authority as part of the planning pre-application process.
- Further consultation with Town/Parish Councils, Ward Councillors
- A consultation event with residents

Following submission of a planning application, there will be, as with all developments, a statutory consultation period which will make plans publicly available for comment in the usual way.

Once a scheme is approved and development is underway, the contractors will be signed up to the Considerate Constructors Scheme. Regular updates of scheme progress will be provided to Ward Councillors and Town/Parish Councils.