

Cllr Isabelle Reece: General Report to Parishes (August) September 2026

Full Council

There was no Full Council meeting in August. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday 22nd September

Norwich to Tilbury Pylons Project – Objections repeated

In a closing statement to National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury examination, Babergh DC reiterated objections and again called for the plan to be halted for other options – such as an undersea route or underground cabling – to be fully considered and costed.

National Grid's proposed 159km of new overhead lines between Norwich to Tilbury, the route cutting through the Suffolk countryside, includes 21km of underground cabling, some through the Dedham Vale National Landscape, and up to seven new compounds to connect underground sections to overhead lines.

Although negotiations with National Grid secured some improvements to planned construction practice and ecological management, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils jointly asserted that there remain too many unanswered questions regarding the significant and devastating impacts of the scheme on the districts' local communities, businesses, environment, heritage and landscape.

An examining authority appointed by the Planning Inspectorate now has three months to review the evidence, with the final decision over the scheme currently resting with the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Miatta Fahnbulleh, and expected by February 2027.

In the event of the scheme being given the go-ahead despite their opposition, the councils have also requested a final opportunity to 'check and challenge' as required, with the addition of a compliance monitoring, reporting and enforcement strategy within the development consent order – meaning developers working more closely with local authorities and greater transparency for local communities. Whether this is adopted will also be a decision for the examining authority and Secretary of State.

Social Care Consultation

People are urged to have their say in a landmark review which aims to address the country's adult social care challenges and help create a National Care Service.

In Babergh, more than a quarter of our population are over the age of 65, compared to the national average of 18.5%. That proportion will grow, but more of the social care budget is moving away from the elderly to working age adults with long term health conditions. Both groups rely on a patchwork of services and their families. An increasing proportion of council tax will go to pay for social care.

Adult social care impacts everyone at some point in our lives. It is a complex system that is difficult to navigate. This is your chance to tell Government what you need and want to see in the future. We must all take this opportunity."

The Consultation is being undertaken by the [Independent Commission on Adult Social Care, also known as the Casey Commission](#) and led by Baroness Louise Casey. In addition to members of the public submitting their views via an [online platform on the Casey Commission website](#), the campaign will seek the views of people who work in adult social care as well as of those unable to take part online.

Councils' Commitment to Armed Forces Recognised

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have jointly received the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award, which acknowledges outstanding support of the armed forces.

The award is given to organisations that have made tangible changes to their workplace policies and culture, helping to ensure that reservists, veterans, cadet force adult volunteers, and their families feel genuinely valued. It also builds on the councils' previous actions to support the armed forces. In 2025, the councils re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant - reaffirming their commitment to ensuring that members of the armed forces are treated fairly and face no disadvantages as a result of their service.

Overview & Scrutiny & Cabinet (Housing)

On 17th August I 'subbed' for my colleague, Cllr Paul Clover, at the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We interrogated the Housing Solutions Annual Report. My proposed resolution that

the Cabinet Members for Housing explore the viability of introducing a small number of short-term and fixed-term contracts of up to 5-years, as well as house-share tenancy arrangements, was rejected. Resolutions that were carried are as follows:

- That the Cabinet Members for Housing, in partnership with the Director for Housing, cultivates a culture that enables and supports tenants to downsize properties where circumstances are appropriate
- That the Cabinets explore developing a targeted plan designed to increase the supply of one-bedroom properties within Babergh and Mid Suffolk and seek to implement some actions ahead of Local Government Reorganisation
- That the Cabinet Members for Performance and Resilience explore further the risks associated with the decline in landlords engaging with Central Suffolk Lettings as well as the use of B&Bs for temporary accommodation.
- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognises the work undertaken to retain landlords under the Central Suffolk Lettings scheme and requests that the Cabinet Members for Housing continue to prioritise this work going forward.

The week before, Babergh Cabinet had approved new Housing Policies:

[DRAFT Temporary Move Policy](#) , [Draft Good Neighbourhood Management Policy](#) , [Draft Hoarding and Neglect Policy 2026](#) , & [Draft Hate Crime Policy 2026v2](#)

and two days after the meeting the 'workshop' at Copdock and Washbrook looking at improving the 'voids' service – the department that deals with the re-letting of vacated housing to tenants on the waiting list.

Reminder: Dedham Vale National Landscape & Stour Valley Partnership Public Forum 2026

The Dedham Vale National Landscape & Stour Valley team is delighted to invite you to the 2026 Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Forum. The hope is to bring together people who are passionate about the area to learn more about some of the work that is taking place in the National Landscape, with opportunities to engage in discussions and network.

The event will be held on **Thursday 17th September 2026 from 9:45am to 1:00pm at Firstsite, Lewis Gardens, High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1JH.**

There will be four talks:

- 1: Wetland Habitats – Alex Moore da Luz - National Landscape Project Officer
- 2: Dark Skies & International Recognition - William Shearer, Dedham Vale Society
- 3: Engaging Communities With Nature - Emma Black, National Landscape Project Officer
- 4: Bottengoms and Ronald Blythe - Rich Yates, CEO at Essex Wildlife Trust

There will also be opportunities for debate in lively question and answer sessions, plus time for discussion and networking during break periods.

This is a free event to attend and everyone is welcome. Free refreshments will be provided. However, booking online in advance is required. For more information and to book tickets the link is:

<https://dedhamvaleforum.eventbrite.co.uk/>

My next meeting, of the Dedham Vale National Landscape & Stour Valley Project, is Friday 25th September

Reminder: Funding 'Summit'

The Grants & Funding Team are planning a summit for the district, designed to help voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise(VCFSE) organisations access the funding they need, at Lavenham on Wednesday 21st October

The summit will include a series of workshops and talks, delivered by our team as well as our partners at Suffolk Community Foundation, Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and the National Lottery Community Fund. More details about the summits, including how to book a space to attend, will be available in due course.

For Further Information about Babergh District Council link to the Babergh District Council website at:

[Home - Babergh District Council – baberghmidsuffolk.com](https://www.baberghmidsuffolk.com)