

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b><u>FROM:</u> Joint Member Implementation Board</b>	<b><u>REPORT NUMBER:</u> L27</b>
<b><u>TO:</u> STRATEGY COMMITTEE (BDC)/ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (MSDC)</b>	<b><u>DATE OF MEETING:</u> 20 June 2011</b>

**LOCAL POLL OUTCOME AND THE NEXT STEPS**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To formally advise the Strategy/Executive Committees of the outcome of the Local Poll.
- 1.2 The Strategy/Executive Committees are asked to endorse the next steps set out in this report at paragraph 9.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the outcome of the Poll and endorse the next steps set out in paragraph 9 of this report.

To consider the above and any other recommendation(s) from the Joint Member Implementation Board, which meets on the 14 June. To be reported orally to the Strategy and Executive Committees.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The estimated savings from merger will now have to be achieved in other ways. This will be assessed as part of the process of planning ahead for the next 3 years and considering the Budget options.
- 3.2 Discussions are taking place with RIEP on their funding although this money was largely related to integration and achieving the maximum efficiency/other savings. It is hoped, therefore, that there will be no impact of not proceeding to merger.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 This report is most closely linked with the Babergh District Council's Significant Business Risks Nos. 2: Savings & Efficiencies and 3a: Shared Services – Integration and Merger with Mid Suffolk District; and with Mid Suffolk District Council's Corporate Risk G3: Integration/merger talks with Babergh District Council fail resulting in wasted resources and large savings still to be made. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
More savings have to be found from staff/service integration and transformation	Certain	Critical	Refresh business case and revisit/accelerate approach to integration and transformation

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Increased pressure on Council Tax and other income sources as well as increased prospects of service cuts	High	Critical	Understanding of financial position and Budget options through an agreed process with clear Member steer on the key issues.
Loss of RIEP funding	Very Low	Critical	Discussions taking place with RIEP. Continued commitment to maximising integration and transformation efficiencies.

## 5. **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 The report sets out the result of the Local Public Advisory Poll.

## 6. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT**

6.1 No adverse impacts have been identified from the proposals in this paper.

## 7. **SUSTAINABILITY**

7.1 There are no specific social economic or environmental impacts to consider arising from this paper.

## 8. **POLL RESULT**

8.1 Appendix A is the letter dated 7 June 2011 from Electoral Reform Services which sets out the results of the Poll.

8.2 In summary, and in round terms:

- 45% of Babergh residents voted.
- 43% of Mid Suffolk residents voted.
- Across the two districts as a whole 49.7% voted yes, 50.3% voted no.
- Babergh residents who voted, voted against the merger by a ratio of approximately 60 : 40.
- Mid Suffolk residents who voted, voted for the merger by a ratio of approximately 60 : 40.

## 9. **THE NEXT STEPS**

### **Merger**

9.1 No further work to be undertaken on merger at this stage. In view of the outcome of the Poll, and as agreed by both Councils in February, there will be no request for a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. In addition, no further work will be required on the financial aspects and impacts of the merger e.g. debt, Council Tax equalisation.

## **Review Business Case and Accelerate Service Integration and Service Transformation**

- 9.2 The Business Case will be revisited to review the savings that both councils need to deliver. The focus will be on how we can achieve the maximum savings from integration and transformation and the approach to this. Given the poll result, immediate thought will be given to the need to accelerate service transformation and review the savings that could be achieved through integration. In undertaking this review the role of JMIB will be to provide a steer to officers on the pace and scale of service integration and service transformation. The points made at the joint Member event on 3 June, including the clear message that we need to build on what is 'the best of the best' of both councils, will be very helpful in shaping this.

## **Develop Budget Options to address the tough financial challenge we face over the next three years**

- 9.3 The joint Member meeting (to be held in late June/early July) to consider the budget options for dealing with the tough financial challenges ahead. This will involve Babergh's PLG and SFP Task Group Members and Mid Suffolk's Portfolio Holders. The main aim will be to consider the approach and options for finding the required savings or additional income in each of the next 3 years including proposals for consultation with partners and residents.

The outcomes of this and further work by officers will be reported to the Strategy and Executive Committees in August/September. All Members will be kept in the picture through further Members seminars/events/briefings.

## **10. APPENDICES**

Title	Location
(a) LOCAL POLL ON THE FUTURE OF BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS	Attached

## **11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 11.1 None.

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7<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Dear Mr Amesbury

**LOCAL POLL ON THE FUTURE OF BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS**

Our report of voting for the above referendum which closed at Noon on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011 is as follows:

**Question**

*At the moment, Babergh and Mid Suffolk are separate district councils. Should these councils be replaced by one district council?*

**Babergh**

Number of eligible voters:		69,723
Votes cast by post:	27,440	
Votes cast online:	2,867	
Votes cast by text:	464	
Votes cast by telephone:	769	
Total number of votes cast:		31,540
Turnout:		45.2%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		72
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		31,468

Result

Number voting YES .....	12,318	(39.1% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO .....	19,150	(60.9% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	31,468	(100% of the valid vote)



**Mid Suffolk**

Number of eligible voters:		75,586
Votes cast by post:	29,350	
Votes cast online:	2,329	
Votes cast by text:	470	
Votes cast by telephone:	506	
Total number of votes cast:		32,655
Turnout:		43.2%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		54
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		32,601

Result

Number voting YES .....	19,537	(59.9% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO .....	13,064	(40.1% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	32,601	(100% of the valid vote)

Electoral Reform Services can confirm that, as far as reasonably practicable, every person whose name appeared on the electoral roll supplied to us for the purpose of the ballot:-

- a) was sent the details of the ballot and
- b) if they chose to participate in the ballot, had their vote fairly and accurately recorded.

All voting material will be stored for six months.

Yours sincerely

**Barnaby Ho**  
Consultant

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