



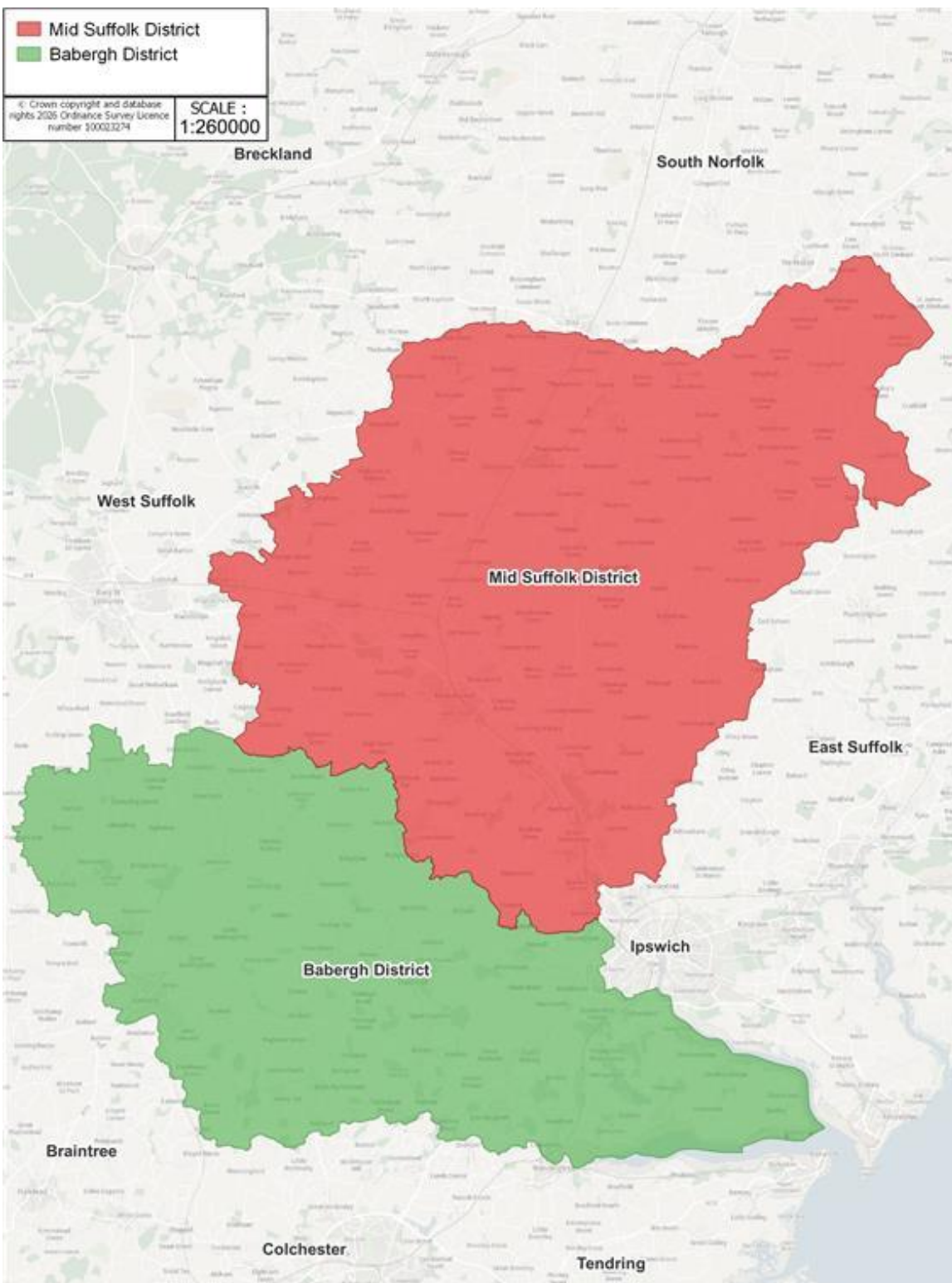
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Baseline Information

June 2026



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Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are two separate councils that have been working together since 2011.

This document provides a baseline of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the areas to inform the preparation of the new Joint Local Plan.

It brings together a wide range of data and evidence to establish a clear understanding of current conditions, key trends and the main opportunities and constraints affecting future development. Overall, this document provides a shared starting point for plan-making, future growth and development of our areas.

Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts are predominantly rural areas characterised by market towns, agricultural landscapes and an ageing population, which is above than the national average.

Babergh covers approximately 230 square miles (596km²) whilst Mid Suffolk extends to around 335 square miles (858km²). This makes up two of the largest local authority areas in Suffolk by land area. Babergh is made up of a total of 76 civil parishes and Mid Suffolk with 123 civil parishes.

The two districts are bordered by a mix of rural and urban local authorities across Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk. Babergh and Mid Suffolk share borders with Breckland Council, South Norfolk Council, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Tendring District Council, Colchester Council, Braintree District Council and West Suffolk Council.

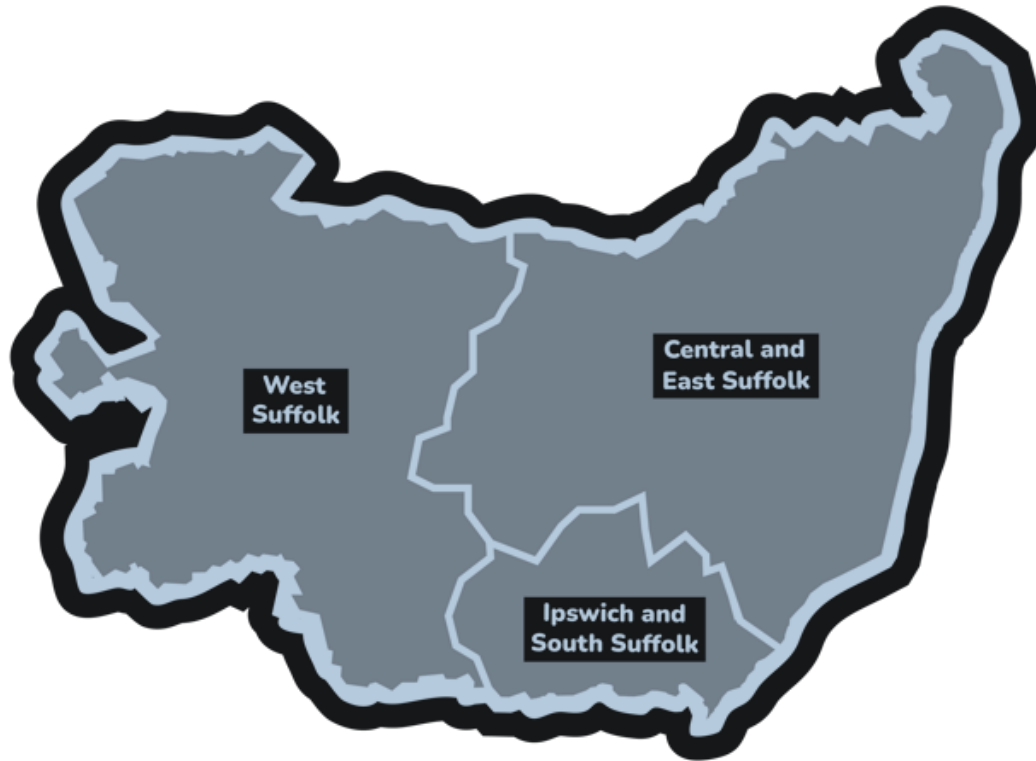
Current position and communication



The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 was formally adopted in November 2023 following examination by Planning Inspectors. It sets out the strategic planning framework for both Districts and guides development up to 2037. The plan currently provides overarching policies for housing, employment, infrastructure, environment and design across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The Part 1 Joint Local Plan replaces much of the content contained within earlier planning documents such as the Babergh Core Strategy and parts of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and creates a single shared policy basis for decision-making in both districts. The list of live policies, including saved policies is available on our websites:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/live-policies-list>
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/live-policies-list>

Originally, the intention had been to prepare a Part 2 Joint Local Plan to provide more detailed policies such as site allocations, settlement boundaries and additional housing distribution. However, following changes to national planning policy and changes to the plan making system, the councils decided to move away from a Part 2 Joint Local Plan and instead commence a new Joint Local Plan for the districts. The review is now being used to revisit evidence, growth requirements and spatial strategy across both districts.



Alongside this planning work, the wider local government structure is changing significantly. In March 2026 the Government confirmed Suffolk will move to three new unitary councils replacing Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, East Suffolk Council, West Suffolk Council and Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils. The new unitary authorities are expected to be established by April 2028, and the current councils will cease to exist in their current form. The proposed boundaries will mean Babergh is covered by two of the new unitary authorities and Mid Suffolk is covered by all three.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will continue to operate as separate councils working together to deliver services and progress the Joint Local Plan until 1st April 2028 at which point the new unitary authorities come into effect. The collection of baseline information to support the Joint Local Plan is important because it provides an up to date evidence base to help shape future planning policies and decisions. This work involves understanding current conditions and future pressures across areas such as housing and employment needs and supply, transport and infrastructure capacity, environmental considerations and the ability of settlements to accommodate growth. By establishing a clear picture of these factors from the outset, the councils can ensure that future policies are realistic, sustainable and aligned with national planning requirements before transitioning into the new unitary authority arrangements.

Although local government boundaries and council structures may change through the move to unitary authorities, the needs, priorities and aspirations of our communities will remain. Gathering this information now will help to establish a clear understanding of what people value about their local area and what they want to see protected, improved and planned for in the future.

Previous communication

You may already be familiar with some of the work previously undertaken by the Councils. This includes the annual **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)** which provides updates on the performance and delivery of planning policies across both Districts. The Councils are currently producing the 2025-2026 AMR and will share in due course.

You can view our most recent publication here:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/b-msdc-amr-2024-25>
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/b-msdc-amr-2024-25>

You may have seen the publication of the **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)** which identifies and assesses land potential for future housing development. As part of this process landowners, developers and other interested parties were previously invited to submit land through the councils' Call for Sites exercises ran between 2024-2026. **However, the inclusion of a site within the SHLAA or submission through the Call for Sites does not mean it will automatically be allocated or developed.**

You may have also heard about the **Neighbourhood Development Plans** which are prepared separately by town and parish councils to reflect local priorities and aspirations of the community. Neighbourhood Development Plans are produced independently from the Joint Local Plan but must align with wider strategic policies set out by the councils.

Further information on Neighbourhood Plans within Babergh and Mid Suffolk can be found here:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

From February to March 2026, the councils invited comments on the **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report**. This was a technical consultation to help us understand the social, environmental and economic impacts of the plan and the different options we could take. This Scoping Report explains how we propose to carry out that assessment.

The councils invited comments on the draft **five-year housing land supply (5YHLS)** position statements in November 2025 and published these in January 2026. These documents show whether there is enough deliverable land available to meet housing needs over the next five years. These can be viewed below:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-5yhls-2025>
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/mid-suffolk-5yhls-2025>

You may already be signed up to our **mailing list** – if so, thank you for staying connected with us. If not, you're welcome to join now to receive updates focused on the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan.

You can sign up to our mailing list via the link below:
<https://baberghmidsuffolk.oc2.uk/register/process/0>

People and Community

As of June 2024, Babergh had an estimated population of 97,033 people while Mid Suffolk had an estimated population of 110,775 people. Understanding how these populations are changing is an important part of planning for the future. Data and demographic evidence published by sources such as the Office for National Statistics and the Suffolk Observatory indicate that both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have an increasing aging population with older residents and smaller household sizes becoming more common over time. There remains a need to provide homes for younger people, families and local workers to help support balanced and sustainable communities.

Babergh				
Age band	Mid-2011	Mid-2024	Absolute change (2011 to 2024)	Percentage (%) change (2011 to 2024)
0-15	15,925 (18%)	15,434 (16%)	-491	-3.1%
16-24	8,011 (9%)	7,947 (8%)	-64	-0.8%
25-34	7,894 (9%)	9,918 (10%)	+2,024	+25.6%
35-49	18,355 (21%)	16,173 (17%)	-2,182	-11.9%
50-64	18,712 (21%)	21,238 (22%)	+2,526	+13.5%
65-79	13,718 (16%)	18,616 (19%)	+4,898	+35.7%
80 and over	5,286 (6%)	7,707 (8%)	+2,421	+45.8%
Total	87,901	97,033	+9,132	+10.4%

Office for National Statistics (ONS): mid-year population estimates (mid-2024)

Mid Suffolk				
Age band	Mid-2011	Mid-2024	Absolute change (2011 to 2024)	Percentage (%) change (2011 to 2024)
0-15	17,751 (18%)	17,577 (16%)	-174	-1.0%
16-24	9,130 (9%)	9,146 (8%)	+16	+0.2%
25-34	9,443 (10%)	12,535 (11%)	+3,092	+32.7%
35-49	20,204 (21%)	18,854 (17%)	-1,350	-6.7%
50-64	20,861 (21%)	24,315 (22%)	+3,454	+16.6%
65-79	14,475 (15%)	20,756 (19%)	+6,281	+43.4%
80 and over	5,212 (5%)	7,592 (7%)	+2,380	+45.7%
Total	97,076	110,775	+13,699	+14.1%

Office for National Statistics (ONS): mid-year population estimates (mid-2024)

Babergh's population saw an increase of 10.4% (up 9,132 persons from 87,901) and Mid Suffolk saw an increase of 14.1% (up 13,699 persons from 97,076) since mid-2011.

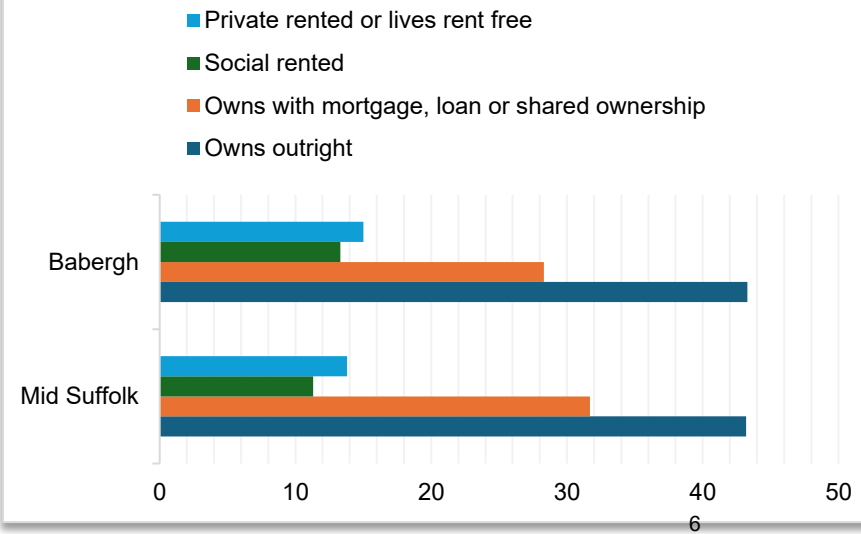


Population
Babergh: 97,033
Mid Suffolk: 110,775

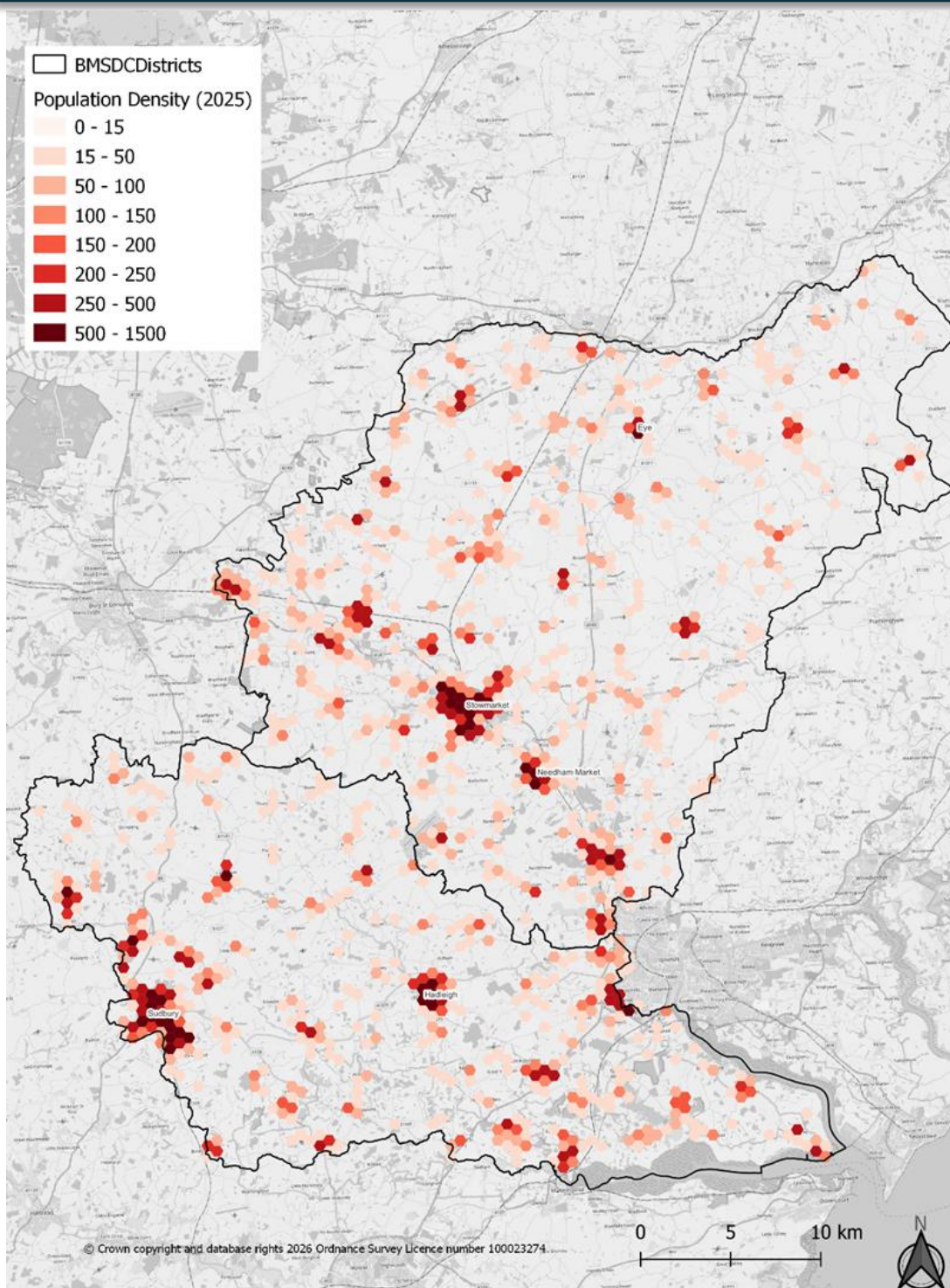


Number of households
Babergh: 40,200
Mid Suffolk: 44,343

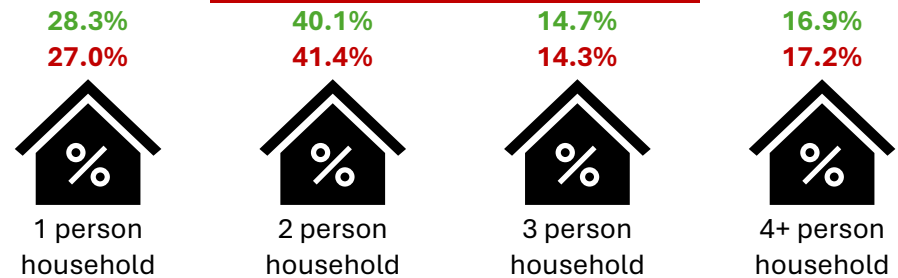
Housing Tenure Types (%)



Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census 2021: Tenure of Households



Babergh Mid Suffolk



Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census 2021: Household and resident

According to Census 2021 household data, Babergh and Mid Suffolk highlights that two-person households are the most common household type across both districts. The district's ageing population profile is a key factor in driving the high proportion of two-person households. Many households are made up of older couples whose children have moved away, often referred to as 'empty nest' households. The growth in smaller households is also influenced by social and economic changes with younger generations reaching traditional life stages later than previous decades. Housing affordability, higher education, career progression and the cost of living can mean more two-person households made up of couples without children temporarily or permanently.

Population Density

The market towns of Sudbury (60 miles northeast of London in Babergh and Stowmarket in Mid Suffolk are the largest centres of population in the districts and both benefit from strong transport connections including rail links to London and towards the midlands. These links alongside access to the A14 corridor may be contributing to population growth and inward migration into the area. In particular, the districts continue to attract people relocating from areas such as London and Essex seeking more affordable housing, access to the countryside and improved quality of life whilst maintaining connectivity to employment centres and regional transport networks.

Deprivation and Health



Deprivation within Babergh

In 2025, Babergh ranked 184 out of 296 local authorities in England on the index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) compared to 212 out of 317 in 2019. The IMD measures deprivation using Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of which Babergh has 27 in 2021. While much of the District is deprived, pockets of deprivation are concentrated around Sudbury and Great Cornard. The most deprived area in Babergh, located on the edge of Sudbury, ranked 6,915 out of 33,755 LSOAs in 2019 making the top 30% most deprived neighbourhood in England.

Deprivation within Mid Suffolk

In 2025, Mid Suffolk ranked 191 out of 296 local authorities in England, improving from 229 out of 317 in 2019. The District contained 38 LSOAs in 2021 with the highest levels of deprivation focused around Stowmarket. Mid Suffolk's most deprived area ranked 2,930 out of 33,755 in 2019 indicating the area had become relatively more deprived over time. This neighbourhood falls within the top 10% of most deprived areas in England.

Without targeted intervention, some areas within Babergh and Mid Suffolk may continue to experience increasing levels of deprivation over future years where challenges around housing affordability, access to services and facilities, transport connectivity and employment opportunities and health inequalities remain. However, future planning and investment can play an important role in helping reduce these pressures. Measures such as delivering a wider range of accessible and affordable housing, improving public transport, supporting local employment opportunities, investing in town centres and community infrastructure and ensuring new development is located close to services and facilities can all help create more balanced, resilient and sustainable communities over time.

Residents in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk primarily rely on hospital services located outside of the districts with the nearest hospitals typically being Ipswich Hospital or West Suffolk (Bury St Edmunds). Health accessibility remains a challenge across parts of Suffolk particularly in rural communities. The 2025 Health Inequalities profile found the almost one in ten residents registered with Suffolk GP practices (8.7% equivalent to 72,142 people) were unable to reach their nearest GP surgery within a reasonable 30-minute journey by public transport on a weekday morning.

Babergh has no hospital within the district boundary but is served by approximately 15 GP surgeries across its 76 parishes. In March 2024, GP provision varied considerably between practices ranging from one full time equivalent (FTE) GP per 1,094 patients to one per 2,790 patients. Overall, excluding GPs in training, there was one fully qualified GP (FTE) for every 2,083 registered patients in Babergh. This is a better ratio than both the East of England average (1:2,430) and the England average (1:2,295).

Mid Suffolk also has no hospital within the district and is served by around 11 GP surgeries across its 122 parishes. In March 2024, individual surgery ratios ranged from one GP (FTE) per 1,307 patients to one per 2,742 patients. Excluding GPs in training Mid Suffolk had one fully qualified GP (FTE) for every 2,222 registered patients which again compares favourably with both regional and national averages.

Overall, both districts perform relatively well in terms of GP to patient ratios compared with regional and national averages however rurality and limited public transport continue to create challenges in accessing healthcare services, particularly for residents without access to a private vehicle.

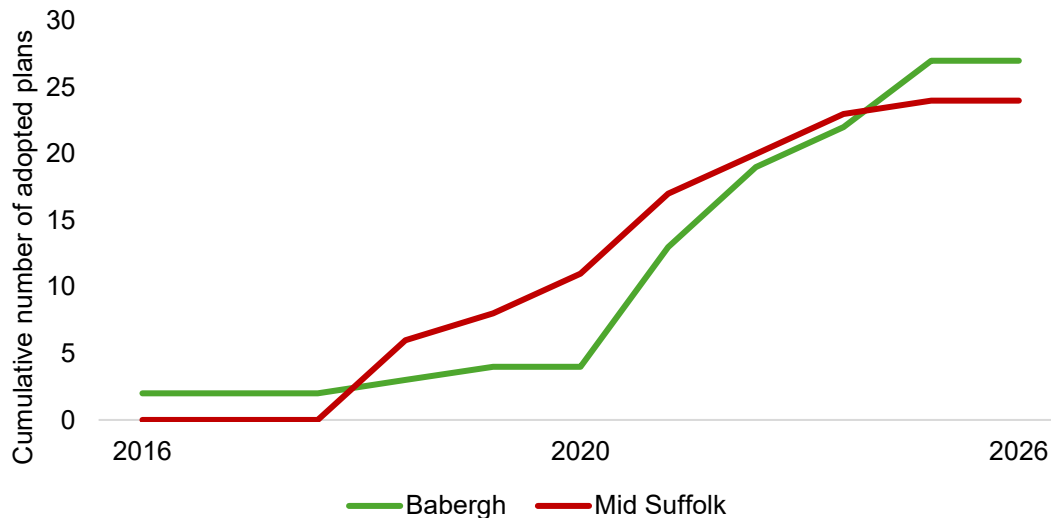
Neighbourhood Development Plans



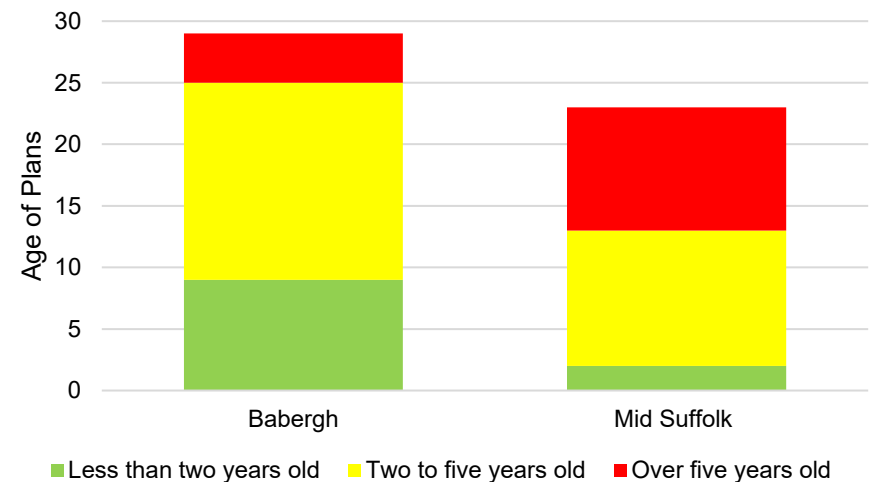
Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) are prepared by local communities to help guide and influence local growth. Following a successful examination and referendum they then become ‘made’ plans that are formally part of the development plan for the districts meaning it carries significant weight in deciding planning applications.

The Babergh district is composed of 76 civil parishes and Mid Suffolk district is composed of 123 civil parishes, each possessing the statutory right to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Adopting such a plan shifts significant influence from the district council to the local community. Key benefits include a substantial increase in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the ability to select where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. By implementing local policies, parishes ensure new developments are architecturally compatible with the existing landscape and contribute more effectively to the local economy. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community’s needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

Neighbourhood Plans adopted over time



Age of current Neighbourhood Plans as of May 2025



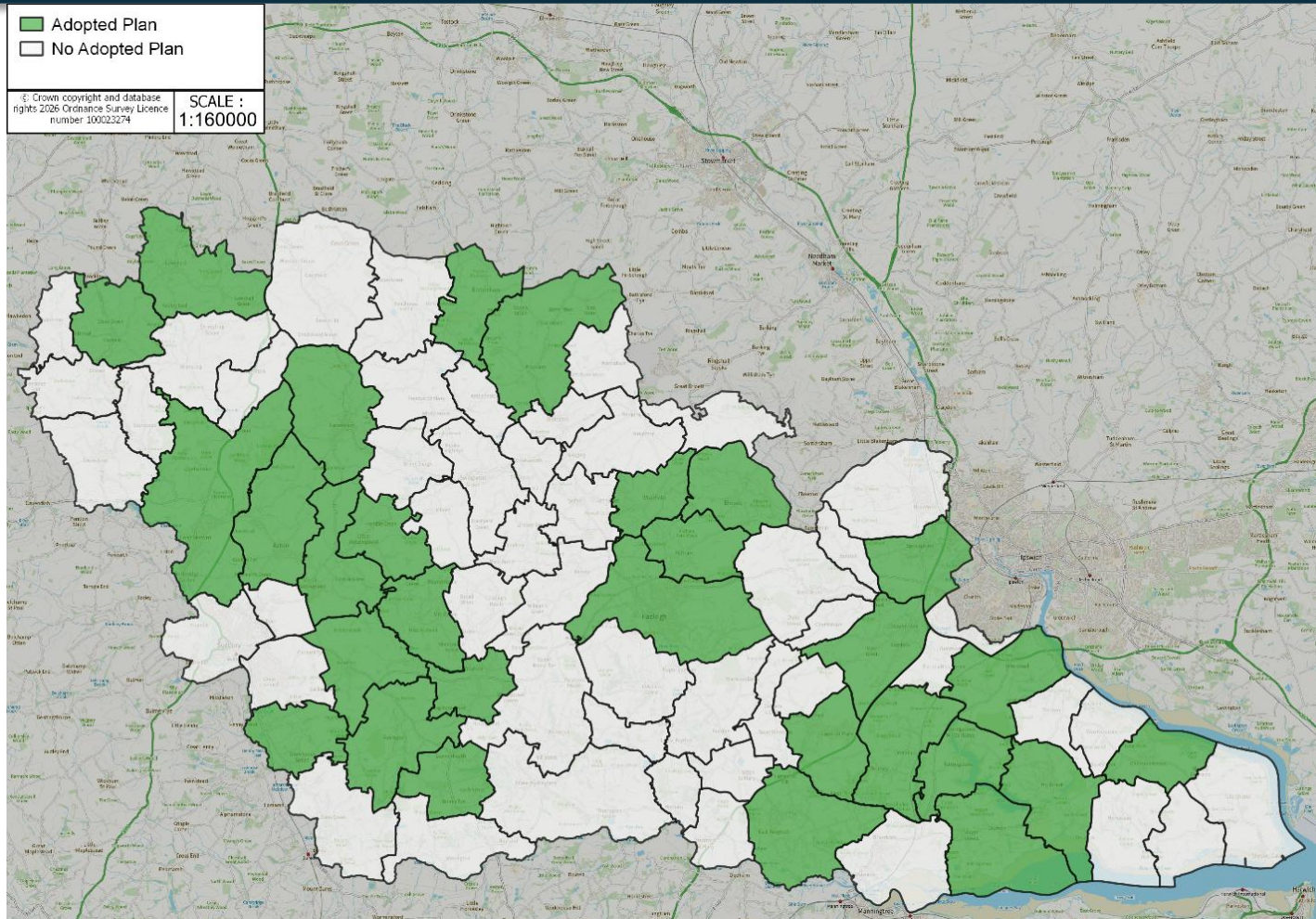
In both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, the preparation and adoption (“making”) of a Neighbourhood Plan is a significant undertaking, typically taking between two and a half to three years to complete. However, changes to national funding arrangements may have an impact on the time taken to produce these plans. In June 2025, government funding for Neighbourhood Plans was withdrawn with the expectation that town and parish councils will increasingly fund their own Neighbourhood Plans, with some potential support from both district councils. Neighbourhood Plans also require periodic review to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Plans that reach over five years old require review to maintain alignment with national planning policy and the Local Plan to ensure their effectiveness in planning decision-making.

Neighbourhood Development Plans – Babergh

■ Adopted Plan
 No Adopted Plan

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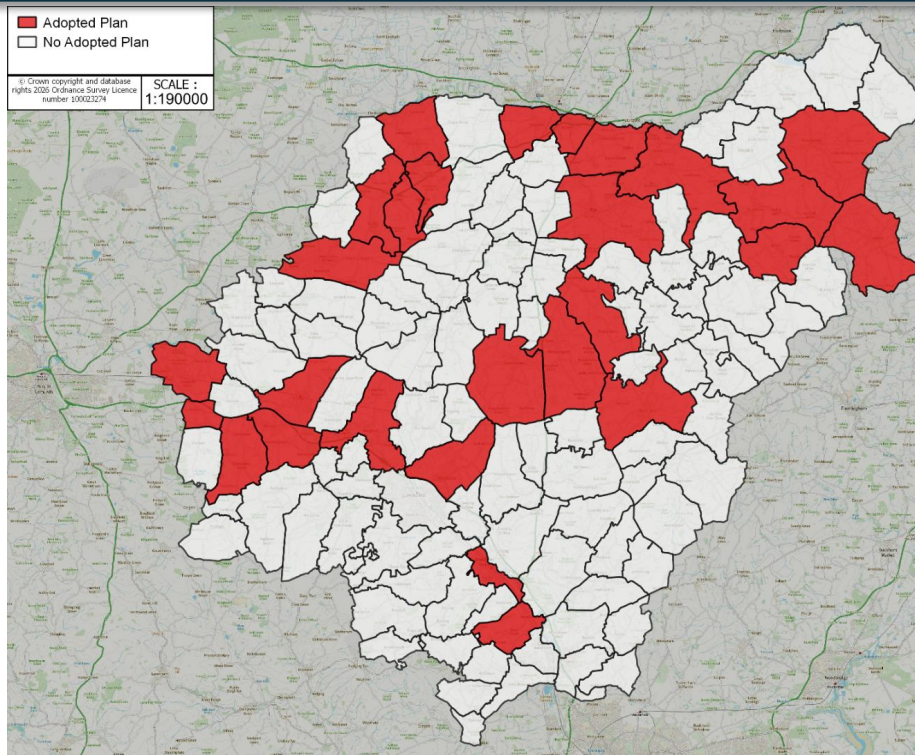
Those highlighted include housing allocations within their NP.

Over the last 10 years Babergh has adopted 27 Neighbourhood Development Plans and have a number of new plans emerging

Adopted Neighbourhood Plans:

- Acton NDP (23 July 2024)
- Aldham NDP (21 Jan 2020)
- Assington NDP (2 March 2022)
- Bentley NDP (12 Dec 2022)
- Boxford NDP (31 Oct 2022)
- Brettenham NDP (27 Feb 2025)
- Capel St Mary (7 Nov 2025)
- Chelmondiston NDP (2 March 2022)
- Copdock & Washbrook (5 Aug 2025)
- East Bergholt NDP (20 Sept 2016)
- Edwardstone NDP (18 Nov 2024)
- Elmsett NDP (10 Dec 2019)
- Great Waldingfield NDP (28 Nov 2023)
- Hadleigh NDP (25 Feb 2025)
- Hartest NDP (21 May 2026)
- Hitcham NDP (7 Nov 2025)
- Holbrook NDP (28 Nov 2023)
- Lavenham NDP (20 Sept 2016)
- Lawshall NDP Review (19 Apr 2024)
- Leavenheath NDP (27 July 2023)
- Little Cornard NDP (20 July 2022)
- Little Waldingfield NDP (2 March 2022)
- Long Melford NDP (31 Oct 2022)
- Newton NDP (2 March 2022)
- Sproughton NDP (28 Nov 2023)
- Stutton NDP (27 July 2023)
- Tattingstone NDP (21 May 2026)
- Whatfield NDP (2 Mar 2022)
- Wherstead NDP (27 July 2023)

Babergh's network of 76 civil parishes includes a mixture of historic market towns, rural villages and smaller countryside communities, many of which contain important heritage and landscape designations. The district includes 29 conservation areas (designated locations recognised for their special architectural or historic interest with additional planning measures to help preserve local character and appearance) and eight registered historic parks and gardens. Parts of Babergh also fall within the Dedham Vale National Landscape and the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding National Beauty AONBs and are nationally designated areas of scenic quality and cultural significance). Planning priorities within Babergh often focus on protecting these valued historic and natural environments while managing growth in a way that supports the vitality of settlements such as Sudbury and Hadleigh and ensures development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and services.



Mid Suffolk’s network of 123 civil parishes contains a range of villages and market towns set within a predominantly rural landscape. The district includes 31 conservation areas (designated locations recognised for their special architectural or historic interest with additional planning measures to help preserve local character and appearance) and four registered historic parks and gardens. Whilst Mid Suffolk does not contain a National Landscape, the district includes a wide range of attractive countryside, historic environments and valued greenspaces which contribute strongly to local identity. Due to its strategic transport connections, including the A14 corridor and regional rail links, Mid Suffolk has experienced continued development pressures in recent years. Planning priorities therefore often centre around accommodation housing and employment growth in a sustainable way while protecting landscape character, supporting local services and maintaining the distinct identity of settlements such as Stowmarket, Eye and Needham Market.

The Diss & District Neighbourhood Development Plan which covers part of Mid Suffolk, adopted in Oct 2023, is an example of multiple neighbouring parishes working together to reflect their shared infrastructure, services and landscapes. This type of collaboration is beneficial because it helps ensure development is planned more consistently across parish boundaries and avoids conflicting policies and fragmented growth. It also strengthens cross-boundary relationships and improves community engagement by bringing together a wider range of local views and priorities. In addition, a joint approach allows resources, expertise and costs to be shared making the plan more efficient and robust to prepare.

Those highlighted include housing allocations within their NP.

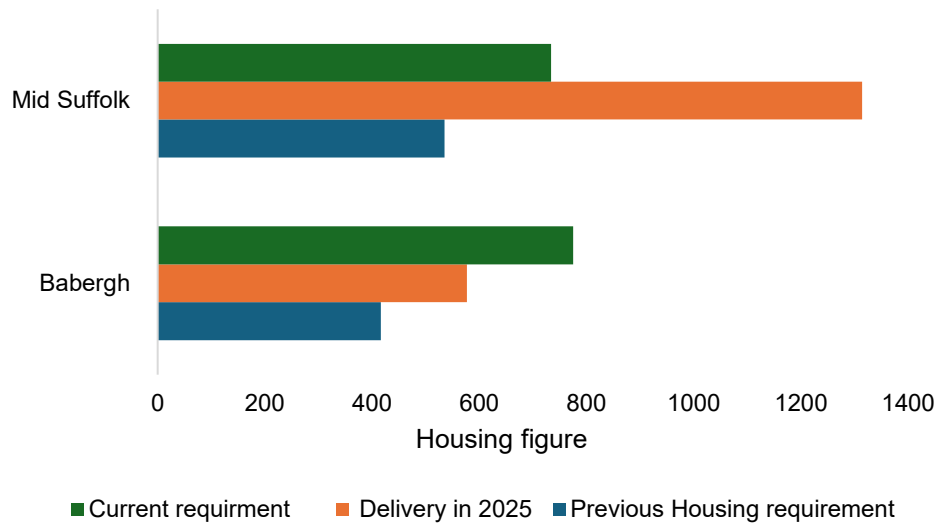
Over the last 10 years Mid Suffolk has adopted 25 Neighbourhood Development Plans and have a number of new plans emerging.

Adopted Neighbourhood Plans:

- Baylham NDP (2 Sept 2025)
- Beyton NDP (11 Apr 2024)**
- Botesdale & Rickinghall NDP (23 Jan 2020)**
- Debenham NDP (18 March 2019)**
- Diss & District NDP (16 Oct 2023)**
- Drinkstone NDP (19 May 2021)**
- Elmswell NDP (24 Nov 2023)
- Eye NDP (19 May 2021)**
- Fressingfield NDP (27 Mar 2020)**
- Haughley NDP (24 Oct 2019)**
- Hoxne NDP (11 Apr 2024)**
- Laxfield NDP (14 Apr 2022)**
- Mendlesham NDP (24 Nov 2022)**
- Needham Market NDP (2 March 2022)**
- Redgrave NDP (20 July 2022)**
- Stowupland NDP (27 June 2019)**
- Stradbroke NDP (18 March 2019)**
- Thorndon NDP (2 March 2022)
- Thurston NDP (24 Oct 2019)**
- Walsham Le Willows NDP (24 Nov 2023)
- Wetheringsett Cum Brockford NDP (27 Nov 2024)
- Wilby NDP (19 May 2021)
- Woolpit NDP (31 Oct 2022)**



Housing requirements in comparison to 2025 delivery



Housing delivery and land allocation across Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are central to managing growth and meeting housing need. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to significantly boost housing supply, maintain a deliverable housing land supply and plan positively for affordable and specialist housing needs.

Recent focus has centred on the delivery of sites, build-out rates on existing permissions and whether housing, affordable housing and specialist housing delivery are keeping pace with identified needs and adopted requirements. Together these factors help measure how effectively the councils are delivering sustainable growth in line with national policy.

The adopted Part 1 Joint Local Plan does not contain housing site allocations, although it does identify strategic employment land designations through Policy SP05. Additional employment land allocations are likely to be required as part of the new Local Plan. In support of this process, the councils published a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in September 2025.

Babergh
775
Dwellings per year

Babergh has a requirement of 416 dwellings per year for decision-making purposes. However for the new Local Plan this rose to 775 following updated housing requirements in 2024. As of January 2026, this has further increased to 779.

Mid Suffolk
734
Dwellings per year

Mid Suffolk has a requirement of 535 dwellings per year for decision-making purposes. However, for the new Local Plan this rose to 734 following updated housing requirements in 2024. As of January 2026, this has further increased to 748.

Policy SP01 of the adopted Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan is the overarching strategic housing policy relating to housing need and delivery. It establishes the minimum housing requirement the councils are expected to deliver over the plan period to 2037 and provides a strategic basis for subsequent site allocations and housing policies. A key issue affecting Policy SP01 is that the housing requirement was prepared using the government's previous standard method and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and updated national housing requirements in 2024 mean a new Local Plan is required.

Housing Overview

The current housing figures for 2025 – 2026 indicate that housing figures within Babergh are notably low across all categories, whereas Mid Suffolk is experiencing a higher level of housing development activity and delivery.



Current Housing figures 2025-2026	
Approvals	
BDC	164
MSDC	634
Completions	
BDC	520
MSDC	1,317
Affordable Approvals	
BDC	0
MSDC	164
Affordable Completions	
BDC	79
MSDC	339

Affordable Housing

In Babergh, there were 152 affordable dwellings built between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. This represented 25% of completions that year.

In Mid Suffolk, there were 300 affordable dwellings built between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. This represented 24% of completions that year.

Our 2025-2026 current monitoring figures indicate there has been a decrease in number of affordable dwellings completed within Babergh but an increase of number of affordable dwellings completed within Mid Suffolk.

Specialist Housing

The table to the right lists the number of specialist housing approvals within the Districts from 2024-2025. Figures for Housing of multiple occupation (HMOs), Annexes and Holiday Lets are similar across both Districts with on Mid Suffolk having received approvals for a Mobile Home and Occupational restricted dwelling.

	Approvals	
	Babergh	Mid Suffolk
HMOs	1	1
Annexes	18	17
Holiday Lets	5	6
Mobile Homes	0	1
Occupational restricted dwelling	0	5

Gypsy and Traveller

The Gypsy and Traveller five-year land supply position statement published in April 2026 indicates there is a current unmet need for **three** additional pitches in Babergh within the next five years (2026 – 2031). However, the ability to bring back previously permitted pitches back into the supply means Mid Suffolk’s need is **zero**.

In the 2024-2025 monitoring year there were **zero** Gypsy and Traveller plots delivered within the districts.

Economy and Employment

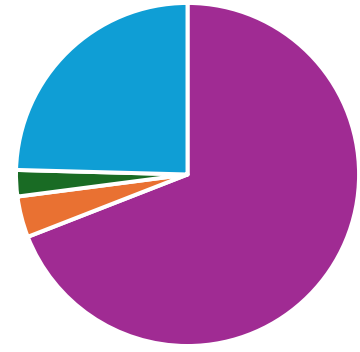
In 2025, Babergh supported around 38,300 jobs making it one of the smaller economies within Suffolk. As of June 2025, 79.5% of residents (40,900 people) were economically active – slightly above the regional average of 79.1% but below the regional average of 81.6%. The District has a notably entrepreneurial workforce with 16.9% of economically active residents self-employed. This is a clear increase in comparison to the census 2021 figures displayed to the right.

Mid Suffolk supports a slightly larger employment base of approximately 42,600 jobs. In June 2025, 79.3% of residents (50,600 people) were economically active, closely aligned with the national average. Self-employment is similarly significant, accounting for 17.1% of economically active residents, highlighting the importance of small businesses, rural enterprise and independent trades across the districts.

A major driver of future employment growth is the expanding Gateway 14 business, innovation and logistics park near Stowmarket. The development is part of Freeport East and is becoming one of the most significant employment sites in East Anglia and is helping reshape Mid Suffolk's economic profile.

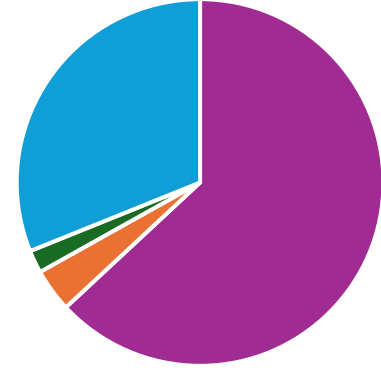
Although Gateway 14 site is within Mid Suffolk, its economic impacts extend to Babergh as many residents commute between the two districts and businesses operate across district boundaries.

Economic Activity in Babergh (2023)



Employment rate 69.7%
Unemployment rate 3.9%
Claimant Count 2.5%
Economic inactivity 24.8%

Economic Activity in Mid Suffolk (2023)

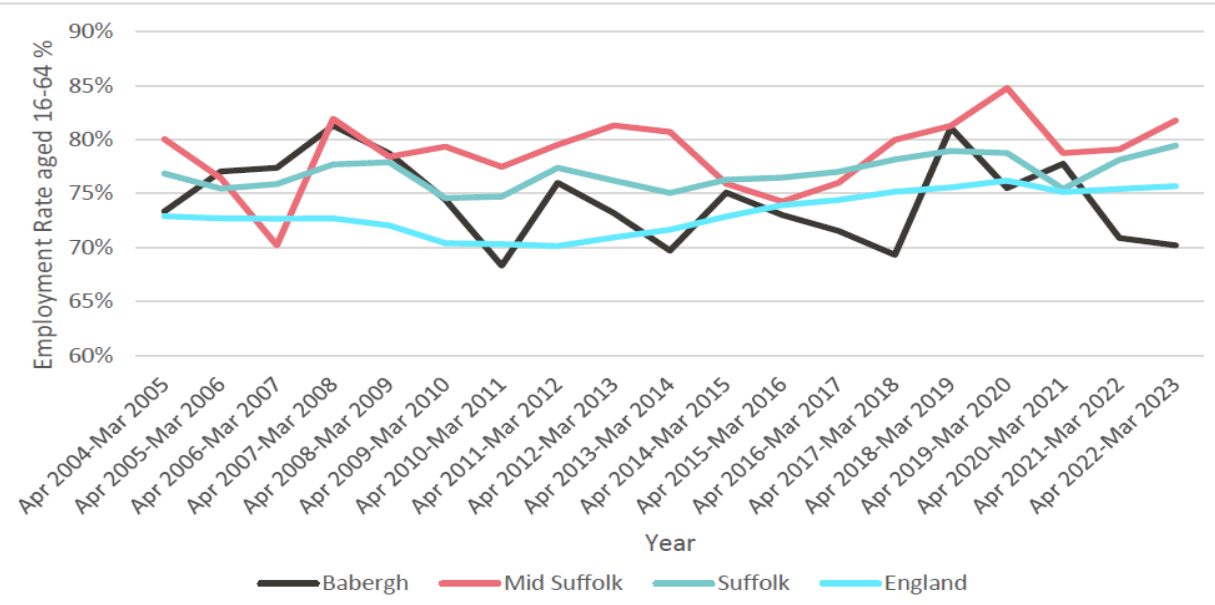


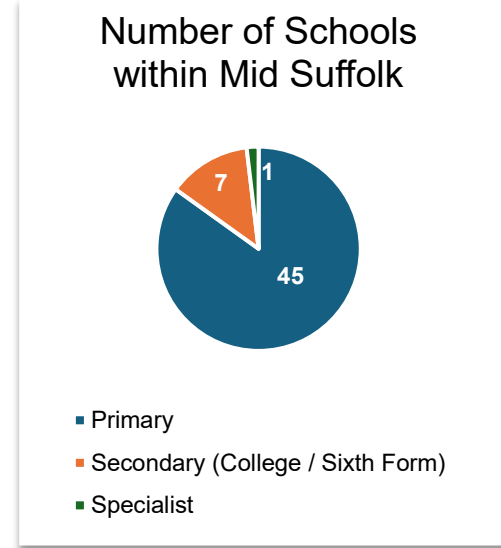
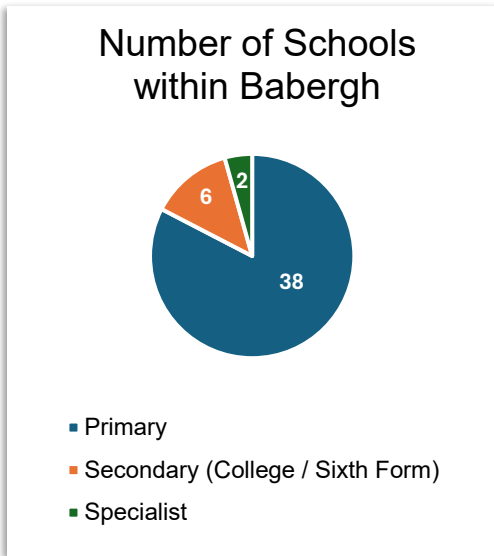
Employment rate 66.1%
Unemployment rate 4.0%
Claimant Count 2.1%
Economic inactivity 32.6%

Office for National Statistics (ONS): Employment rates of areas in the East of England (2023)

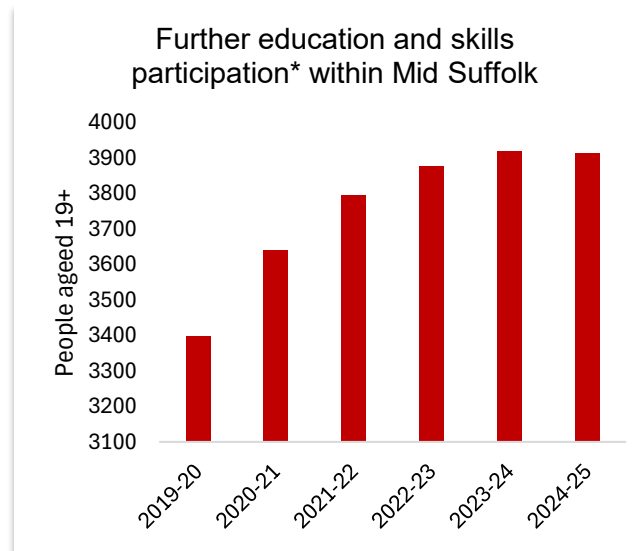
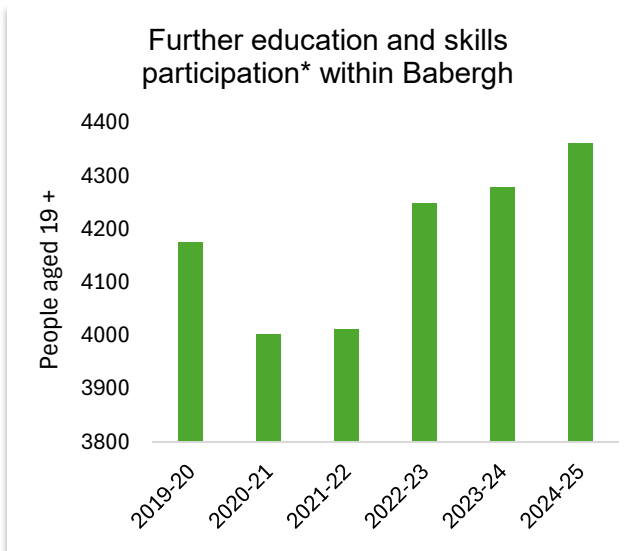
The graph above shows percentage of inactivity, which is inclusive of those who are retired, looking after home or family, long term sick or disabled, student or other.

The graph to the left shows the trend of employment rates (aged 16-64) in Mid Suffolk, Babergh, Suffolk, and England between 2004-2023. This shows greater volatility at local authority level as expected from smaller populations. It shows that Mid Suffolk has consistently tracked above the national and county levels while Babergh has tracked below county levels more in line with national trends.





The graphs above show that Primary school make up a majority of the educational setting within both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, secondary schools within Babergh make up 13% of the total number of schools with Babergh, while 13% of schools are secondary schools within Mid Suffolk.



Since 2019 the number of people within further education and skills participation within Babergh has fluctuated, we know that the decrease between 2020 – 2022 was due to Covid, as we know that the Covid lockdown commenced in March 2020 and was lifted in February 2022, since the lockdown was lifted people have returned to further education, which is reflected in the rise in numbers of people within further education and skills participation has fluctuated.

Further education and skills participation within Mid Suffolk have increased by 15% between 2019 and 2025.

*People aged 19 and above participating in further education and skills learning (including apprenticeships), per 100,000 people
 Source: Department for Education - Data download generated by ONS Explore Local Statistics on 15 May 2026
<https://ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/further-education-and-skills-participation>

Transport Trends

Babergh

Residents rely heavily on cars to get around and access employment, education, amenities and services, partly as a result of the rural nature of the districts. Around 9,086 individuals commute into Babergh district, whilst 12,243 commute out of the district. A diagram of how this might look is illustrated in the image to the right. (Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2026)

According to the 2021 Census, 30.7% (13,171) of the resident population in employment in Babergh work mainly from home, although the most common method used to travel to work was driving a car or a van, at 54.8% (23,542).

A lower proportion of residents in Babergh travel less than 10km (25.3%) than the proportion at the English level (35.4%) demonstrating the rural nature of the district and potential need for out commuting among the resident population.

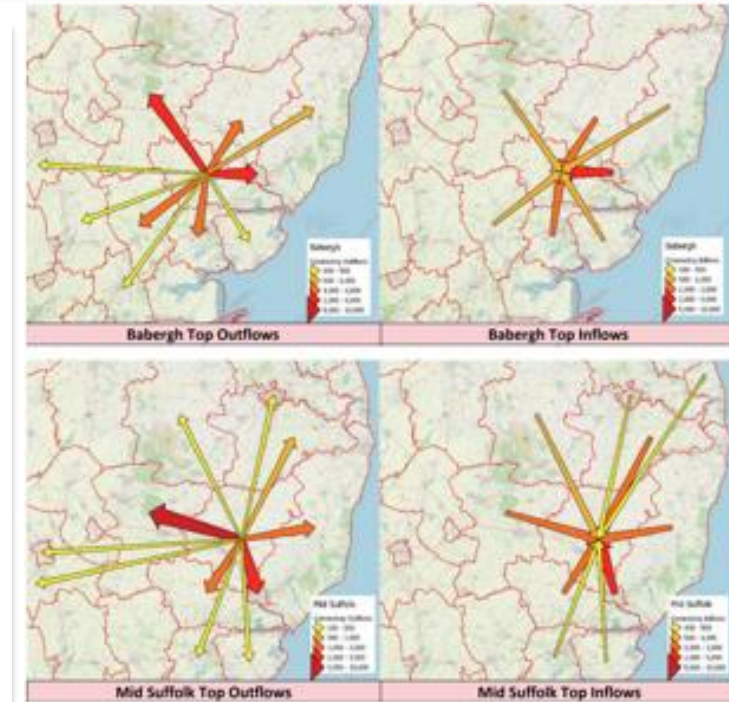
Mid Suffolk

Levels of car ownership in Mid Suffolk are above the regional and national averages, with 90.2% of households having access to a car or van, with more than half (53.6%) having access to two or more cars or vans at Census 2021. As to be expected, lower levels of car ownership are seen in the district's towns.

Mid Suffolk is similar to Babergh with 11,192 individuals commuting into the district and 15,156 commuting out of the district. A diagram of how this might look is illustrated in the image to the right. (Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2026). Many residents that live in Mid Suffolk commute into Ipswich. Residents from all over Babergh and Mid Suffolk also commute into London.

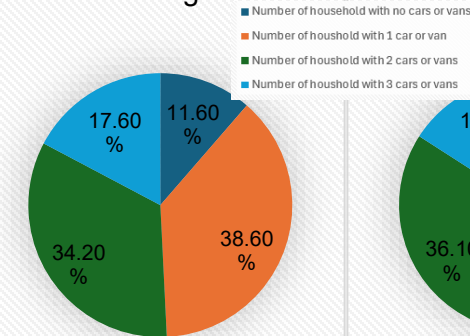
Based on the 2021 Census, Mid Suffolk also displays a trend towards working from home, with 31% of the working population (15,527) reported working mainly at or from home. Similar to Babergh, a lower proportion of residents in Mid Suffolk travel less than 10km (22.4%) than the proportion at the English level (35.4%).

This demonstrates the nature of the district and the likelihood of residents needing to commute out of the district. Whilst there is commuting between Babergh and Mid Suffolk, the overall numbers of journeys are not as high as they are between the two districts and Ipswich and West Suffolk.

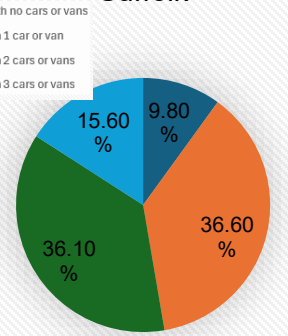


LUC: Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2026)

Number of Cars or Vans owned or available for use by a household in Babergh



Number of Cars or Vans owned or available for use by a household in Mid Suffolk



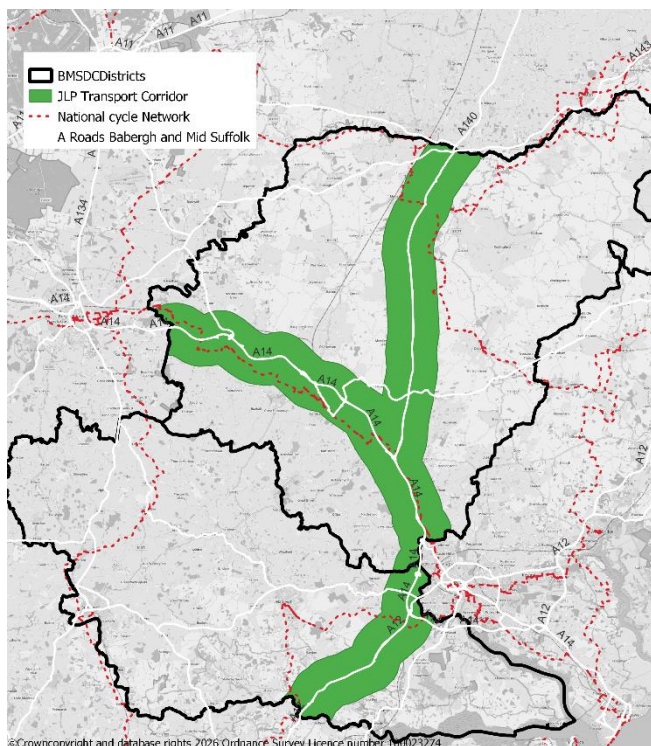
Office for National Statistics (ONS): Number of Cars or Vans owned or available for use by a household (2021)

Babergh

The A12 plays a major role in connecting London to the East of England. The A12 runs from London to Lowestoft, while passing a total of 14 parishes within Babergh.

While public transport is limited within the district, trains operate from Sudbury out of the district to Marks Tey, in Essex. At Marks Tey station, passengers have the option to change to go in the direction of either London or Norwich.

In terms of cycle routes, Babergh is served by National Cycle Route 1, which connects Ipswich with Colchester and continues north through Suffolk to Woodbridge, Framlingham, Beccles and Norwich, and by National Cycle Route 13, which connects Bury St Edmunds to Colchester, via Sudbury.



Mid Suffolk

A14 plays a major role in connecting the East of England to the Midlands. The A14 runs from Felixstowe to Leicestershire, while passing a total of 60 parishes within Mid Suffolk.

Mid Suffolk is not so limited on public transport options and trains operate from four different stations within Mid Suffolk. These stations are located in Needham Market, Stowmarket, Elmswell and Thurston, which allows for passengers to travel either towards Cambridge or London.

In terms of cycle routes, Mid Suffolk is served principally by National Cycle Route 51, connecting Felixstowe and Ipswich through to Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds, before continuing west to Cambridge. National Cycle Route 40 also runs between Framlingham and Eye, and National Cycle Route 30 links Bungay and Knettishall, via Hoxne, Eye, Yaxley and Mellis.

In order to understand more about the issues and opportunities relating to active travel within Babergh and Mid Suffolk, a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been created, which sets out a list of schemes and priorities while highlighting the medium to long term ambitions. The LCWIP, includes baseline information relating to existing walking/cycling conditions, key desire lines, barriers to active travel and the types of infrastructure improvements that would support future modal shift and connectivity.

District level plans are also now reflected within Suffolk County Council's wider transport planning framework, including the new Local Transport Plan and associated Town Centre / Area Transport Plans, which build upon and help to prioritise many of the themes and corridors identified through the LCWIP.

Further details on this can be found via the links below: The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-methodology-report-1> <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-methodology-report-1>

The Local Transport Plan 2025 – 2040 - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/suffolk-local-transport-plan-2025-2040.pdf>
Area transport plans - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-planning/implementation-plans>

The Natural Environment & Access to Green Space

Babergh and Mid Suffolk both have important identifiable habitats which are made up of calcareous grassland, lowland meadows, ancient woodland, traditional orchards, ponds, wetlands (including fens and reedbeds) and rivers to be key habitats for both districts, with coastal habitats relevant to Babergh only. In order to assist in the restoration of some of these important habitats the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been implemented <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs>

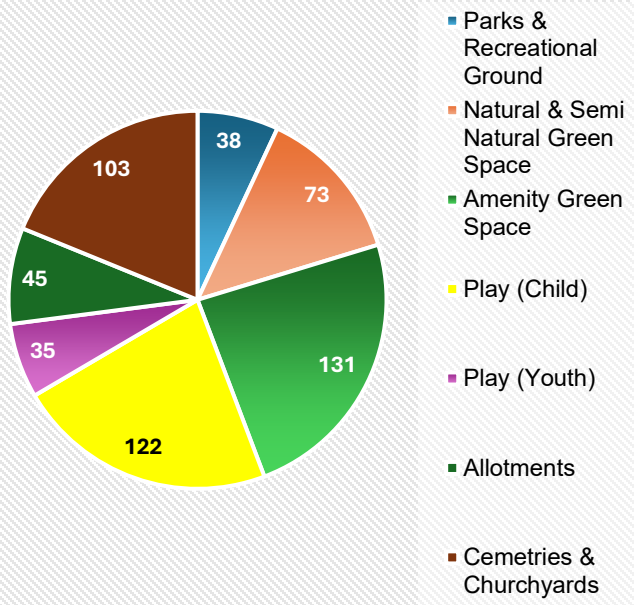
In 2019, Mid Suffolk District Council declared a biodiversity emergency, in recognition of the threats to our wildlife and ecosystems. In 2021 Babergh District Council also declared a biodiversity emergency. In response to this, Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) were published which set out actions to be taken to benefit biodiversity.

Detail on this can be found via the links below:
<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-biodiversity-action-plan-2026-28>
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/msdc-biodiversity-action-plan-2025-2030>

Babergh Babergh district is located within the Dedham Vale National Landscape and the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape. The district is also made up of two sites of environmental designation, these are the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar site and the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA), these sites are protected due to their environmental importance.

Mid Suffolk Mid Suffolk has two sites of environmental designation, these are the Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar site and Waveney & Lt Ouse Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC), these sites are protected due to their environmental importance.

Babergh - Access to Open Space

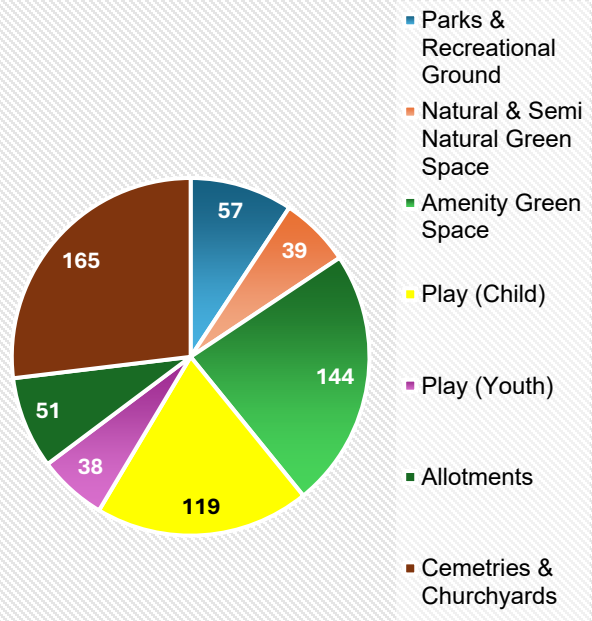


In terms of access to open space, within Babergh is the Arger Fen & Spouse's Grove Nature Reserve, which is the largest open space, totalling to 110 hectares in size, and the largest open space in Mid Suffolk, is Redgrave and Lopham Fen Nature Reserve, which is 163 hectares in size.

The largest council-owned and managed land within Babergh is Friars Meadow in Sudbury and within Mid Suffolk is Needham Lake, in Needham Market.

Amenity Green space accounts of the overall largest typology of open green space within Babergh accounting for 24%, while in Mid Suffolk Parks and Recreational grounds account for the largest open green space accounting for 27%. These percentages are indicative from the councils' Open Space Assessment and more information can be found at: <https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/ee10-bmsdc-open-space-study-may-2019>

Mid Suffolk - Access to Open Space



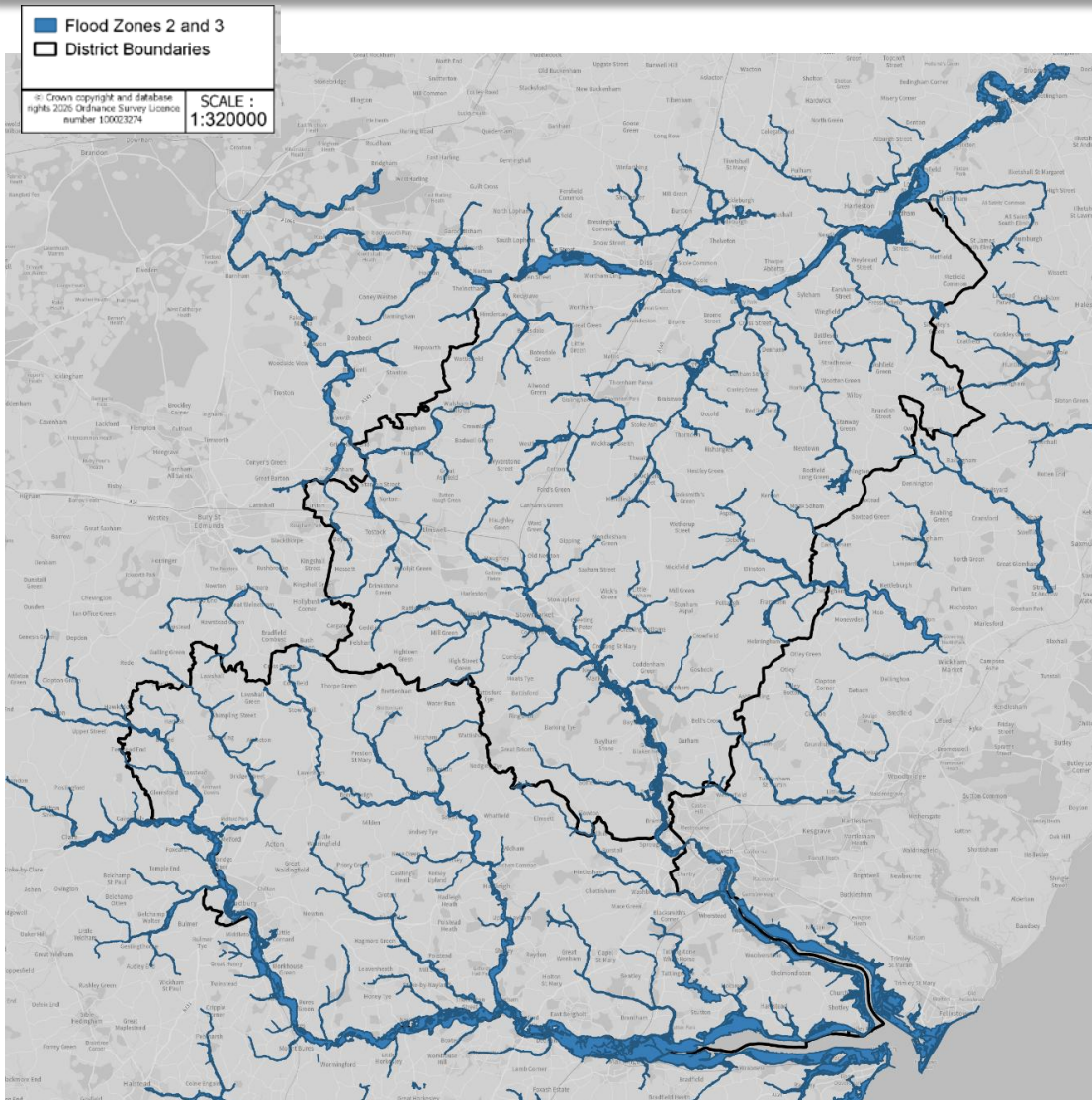
Flood Risk

Fluvial and surface water flooding is significant within Babergh and Mid Suffolk and is prevalent across both districts.

Tidal flooding should be considered for the present as well as the future, due to predictions in the increase in sea level. There are extensive low-lying areas of coastline at high risk of tidal flooding and expected future sea level rise will have significant implications for new and existing development situated in these areas.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are actively working to assist with flood risk management in Suffolk and are part of a partnership with the Environment Agency to address fluvial and pluvial flood risks.

Detail on this can be found via: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/flood-management-in-suffolk>



Babergh

Within Babergh there are several significant rivers and tributaries that contribute towards flood risk within the district.

The River Stour which starts in Cambridge and flows to Manningtree where it becomes tidal and joins with the River Orwell, there are several tributaries from the River Stour including, The River Brett, The River Box and The River Glem.

Mid Suffolk

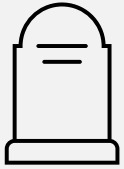
Within Mid Suffolk there are several significant rivers and tributaries that contribute towards flood risk within the district.

The River Gipping begins in Mendlesham Green and flow to Ipswich where it becomes tidal and joins with the River Orwell, there are several tributaries from the River Gipping including, The River Rattlesden and The River Combs Beck.

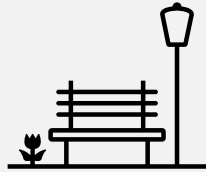
The River Waveney begins near Bacton and flows to Berney Arms where it becomes tidal and joins with the River Yare, there are several tributaries from the River Waveney including, The River Dove.

The River Deben begins in Debenham and flows to Woodbridge where it becomes tidal and joins with the North Sea at Felixstowe.

Babergh



35 Scheduled Monuments



8 Registered Parks & Gardens



89 Grade I Listed Buildings
2,732 Grade II Listed Buildings
185 Grade II* Listed Buildings



Babergh has 29 adopted Conservation Area Appraisals, although most of these are now out of date and require a review. Two new Appraisals are being undertaken and are likely to be adopted in 2026



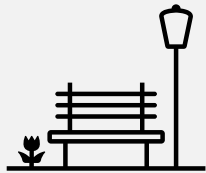
Listed Buildings that are at risk

- 2 Grade I Listed Buildings
- 3 Scheduled Monuments

Mid Suffolk



37 Scheduled Monuments



4 Registered Parks & Gardens



88 Grade I Listed Buildings
3,189 Grade II Listed Buildings
372 Grade II* Listed Buildings



Mid Suffolk has 31 adopted Conservation Area Appraisals, although most of these are now out of date and require a review



Listed Buildings that are at risk

- 5 Grade I Listed Buildings
- 13 Grade II* Listed Buildings
- 1 Scheduled Monument

The councils oversee a range of important and historic assets within Babergh and Mid Suffolk, and it is important to note that the Councils are actively monitoring the assets at risk and are working with owners to repair and conserve these buildings.

Climate Change & Air Quality

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils declared a Climate Emergency in 2019; An Environment and Climate Change Task Force have since been established to address the climate challenge the districts face. We have been given a target of 2030 to meet the Government's Clean Growth Strategy, which sets an ambition to upgrade all Social Housing to an energy performance rating of at least C. The Government has also set a target for all new homes to be "net zero" in relation to carbon emissions by 2030.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Carbon Reduction Management Plan highlights the steps the councils are taking to combat climate change and reports on the councils' progress towards achieving net zero carbon emissions. In addition to this the councils together have an Air Quality Annual Status report, which monitors air quality across the two districts, which highlights areas of high or low air pollution.

Detail on this can be found via the link:

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/carbon-reduction-management-plan>

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/2025-air-quality-annual-status-report>

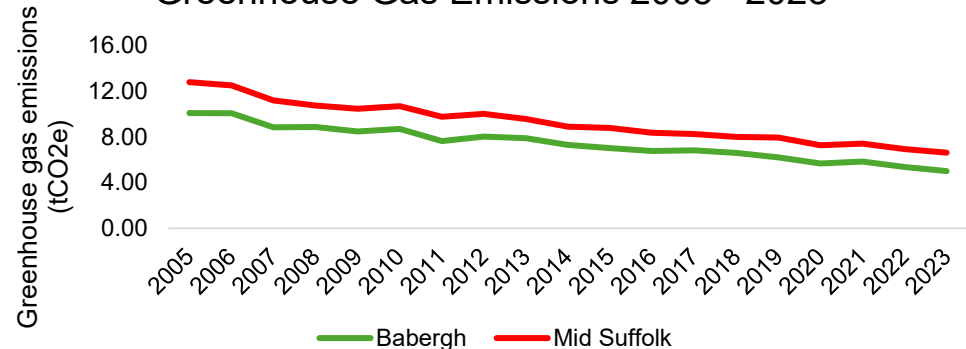
Babergh

In 2023, Babergh accounted for 11.9% of greenhouse gas emissions in Suffolk. Per capita emissions were slightly below the county and regional averages at 5.0 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per person (compared with 5.2 tonnes per person across Suffolk and 5.4 tonnes across the East of England) but above the England average of 4.8 tonnes per person.

Transport accounts for 43% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Babergh, with the majority of road transport emissions (146.5 Kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) (kt CO₂e) of 201.9 kt CO₂e) from A road traffic. In this respect, it is noted that a quantity of Babergh's greenhouse gas emissions will be the result of traffic passing through the district on roads such as the A12, as opposed to within-district travel.

In terms of air quality Babergh has an Air Quality Action Plan, which covers part of Cross Street in Sudbury, which was designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2008. However, since March 2026, Cross Street has now been revoked due to management and improvement of traffic flow and reduce emissions in the area. and now there are no areas of Air Quality Management within Babergh. Additional development within the Districts has the potential to exacerbate air quality issues at these AQMAs. Similarly, there is potential for a cumulative impact of development in neighbouring authorities alongside development within the districts in terms of air quality.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2005 - 2023



Office for National Statistics (ONS): Greenhouse gas emissions (2005-2023)

Mid Suffolk

Mid Suffolk achieved a 36% overall reduction in carbon emissions between 2005 and 2021, this reduction mostly due to progress in reducing emissions from industrial and commercial sectors, closely followed by domestic sources, with minimal progress on transport emissions.

Transport accounts for 36% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Mid Suffolk, with the majority of road transport emissions (167.9 kt CO₂e of 245.4 kt CO₂e) from A road traffic. In this respect, it is noted that a quantity of Mid Suffolk's greenhouse gas emissions will be the result of traffic passing through the district on roads such as the A14, as opposed to within-district travel.

In terms of air quality within Mid Suffolk, there are no areas of Air Quality Management within Mid Suffolk.

In 2022/23, 347.5kg of household waste was collected (by the local authority) per person across Mid Suffolk and Babergh (both districts combined). This compared with 402.4kg per person across the East of England and 386.3kg per person across England.



Waste Service summary as of 1st June 2026:

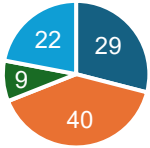
Mid Suffolk – Circa 50,000 households

- 12 collection rounds emptying Refuse / Mixed Recycling / Paper & Card on a 3 weekly collection cycle. 50,000 households / week
- 8 Food Waste collection rounds – 50,000 households weekly (2 EV's)
- 3 garden waste collection rounds – subscription service 20,000 households on a 2 weekly cycle e.g. 10,000 households / week

Babergh – Circa 45,000 households

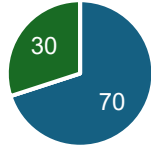
- 11 collection rounds emptying Refuse / Mixed Recycling / Paper & Card on a 3 weekly collection cycle. 45,000 households / week
- 8 Food Waste collection rounds – 45,000 households weekly
- 3 garden waste collection rounds – subscription service 20,000 households on a 2 weekly cycle e.g. 10,000 households / week

Energy Generation in Mid Suffolk (2024)



- Photovoltaics
- Onshore Wind
- Anaerobic Digestion
- Landfill Gas

Energy Generation in Babergh (2024)



- Photovoltaics
- Onshore Wind
- Anaerobic Digestion
- Landfill Gas

Gov.uk: Renewable electricity by local authority (2014 – 2024)



The Department of Energy Security and Net Zero have illustrated that the main source of renewable energy generation for Babergh comes from Photovoltaics, so, in terms of energy generation from solar, panels are installed on our properties, which captures energy and is used within the same property the panels are installed on, which means that we reduce our reliance on the National Grid and help reduce our CO2 emissions, in addition to reducing our bills. The excess energy that had been generated but not used, goes back into the National Grid and contributes to the wider reduced reliance on electricity generated by fossil fuels.

While The Department of Energy Security and Net Zero have illustrated that the main source of renewable energy generation for Mid Suffolk comes from Onshore Wind, this energy generation is highlighted within private sector investment.

The Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury and the Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket both have some of their parking spaces covered by solar panels which provide energy for use in the leisure centres while also keeping cars cool in the summer and dry in the winter.

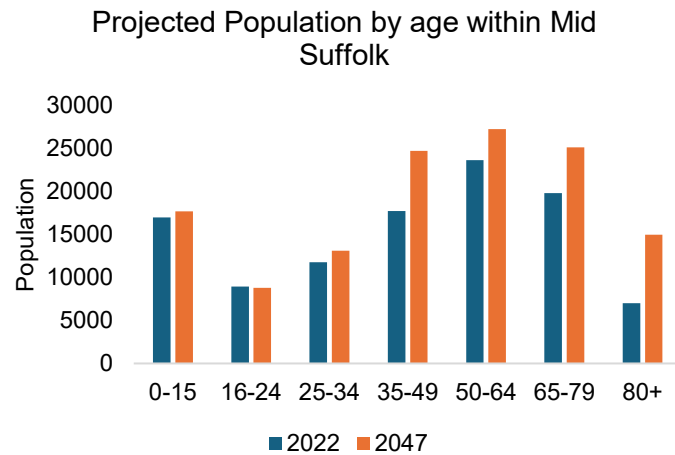
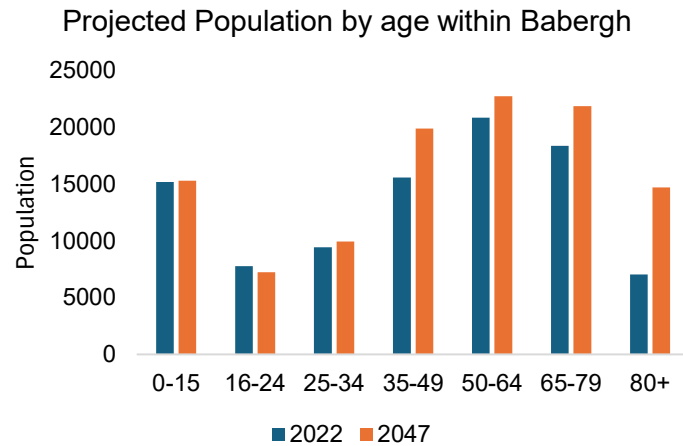
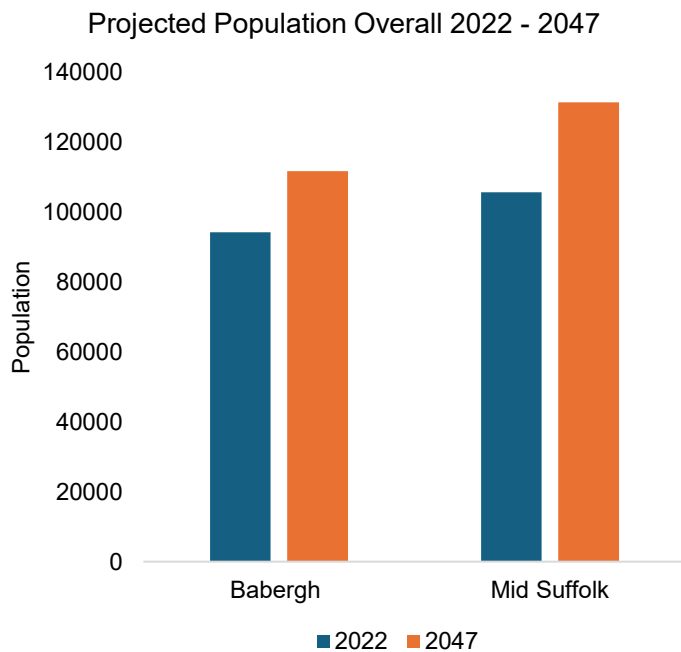
Electricity produced - calendar year (megawatt hours)

- Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket in 2024 (137 MWh)
- The Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury in 2024 (63 MWh)

Energy Projects within Babergh and Mid Suffolk, in relation to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP), at the moment the focus is on the Norwich to Tilbury Project, which is led by National Grid electricity Transmission, which aims to construct a transmission connection between the Norwich Substation and the Tilbury Substation, which spans across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, this can be seen in the image below.

The network sources energy from renewable sources, such as various offshore wind farms and aims to be operational by 2031. As this network evolves it is expected that more households across Babergh and mid Suffolk will be connected to this power network.

The potential future picture of your area



2022 – 2047 a percentage increase of 18.45% growth for Babergh, this can be reflected in that the change in population between 2022 and 2047 will be a 108% increase in the 80+ age category, which will be the largest increase between the age categories, this demonstrates that the population in Babergh is aging.

2022 -2047 a percentage increase of 24.28% growth for Mid Suffolk, this can be reflected in that the change in population between 2022 and 2047, similar to Babergh, are an 114% increase in the 80+ age category, which will be the largest increase between the age categories, this demonstrates that the population in Mid Suffolk is aging.

By understanding the population in detail, such as by age, this helps for the Councils to understand how planning through the districts can be adapted to support communities and in particular the aging communities.

Office for National Statistics (ONS): 2022-based subnational population projections

This baseline information document aims to inform the preparation of the New Joint Local Plan. This information, alongside feedback from consultations and extensive evidence studies will be used to create the new Local Plan.

References

Babergh State of the District Report 2025:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/babergh-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf-1>

Mid Suffolk State of the District Report 2025:

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/mid-suffolk-state-of-the-district-2025-pdf>

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2026:

<https://baberghmidsuffolk.oc2.uk/docfiles/95/Babergh%20and%20Mid%20Suffolk%20Sustainability%20Appraisal%20Scoping%20Report%20-%20January%202026.pdf>

Office of National Statistics 2021 census data:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/housing/number-of-cars-or-vans/number-of-cars-3a/no-cars-or-vans-in-household>

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment 2019: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-open-space-assessment-may-2019->

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Annual Monitoring Report 2025: <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/b-msdc-amr-2024-25>

Office of National Statistics 2021 census data: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/housing/tenure-of-household/hh-tenure-5a/owned-owns-outright?!ad=E07000203>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/householdandresidentcharacteristicsenglandandwales/census2021>

Office of National Statistics Local Statistics 2026: <https://ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/further-education-and-skills-participation>

Office of National Statistics Subnational population projections for England 2025:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2022based>

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Regional Renewable Statistics 2025:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>