



# Community-Led Village Plans Guidance

Babergh and Mid-Suffolk  
District Councils  
November 2015

# Community-Led Village Plans - Guidance

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## 1 INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF GUIDANCE

- 1.1 Central and local government wish to ensure that local communities have inclusive opportunities to get involved in the formal development planning process and are able to influence development in the towns and villages where they live. The planning system has been changed to provide communities with an opportunity to prepare *Neighbourhood Plans*. Babergh and Mid-Suffolk understand however, that these plans may not suit or appeal to all communities due to costs, time and technical expertise, and are keen to provide guidance on a meaningful but manageable alternative. A wide variety of types of document can be community led. A neighbourhood plan is a statutory version of a community-led plan. This guidance deals with non-statutory community-led plans. For the purposes of this guidance these are referred to as Community-Led Village Plans.
- 1.2 This guidance has therefore been prepared to help those communities that would like to produce a Community-Led Village Plan and help influence new development. It explains what they are, why there could be advantages in producing one, who should be involved, and how they can be prepared. As a guide it can only provide a very brief overview of the steps involved and further help and advice is on hand for those communities that would like to proceed (see section 5). Unlike neighbourhood plans a Community-Led Village Plan does not have to go through the formal process of examination or be the subject of a referendum. They can therefore be quicker and require fewer resources to prepare. It is for the local community to decide which approach is appropriate for them.
- 1.3 Given the growth agenda, it becomes even more important that the objective of this process is to enable greater influence over development in your village. The alternative to this is to exert more limited influence on future applications for planning permission.
- 1.4 Ultimately it is for each community (or equally validly, groups of them, working together) to decide on whether they should produce a Community-Led Village Plan and what it should contain. The overall purpose however should be to provide a clear and agreed expression of the local community's stance on planning and development matters and help to deliver development that meets the community's needs now and in the future.
- 1.5 The overall objective of this guidance is to identify and provide an effective and pragmatic approach towards growth planning and delivery through community-led planning initiatives, including a suitable, balanced alternative to the much more formal Neighbourhood Plans option.

## 2 RURAL GROWTH

- 2.1 Both Babergh and Mid-Suffolk have adopted Core Strategies (the central documents of their Local Plans) which set out the growth requirements and key proposals in each district. The majority of this growth will be directed to the towns, but some of the growth is also directed to our villages. The Babergh Core Strategy (February 2014) sets out housing provision for a 20 year plan period which works out at an equivalent of a minimum of 300 houses per annum (in policy CS3) and the Mid-Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (December 2012) sets out the District's future housing provision for a 15 year period which works out to be a minimum of 415 houses per annum (in policy FC2).
- 2.2 In Babergh there are 10 'Core' Villages and 43 'Hinterland' Villages, which are planned to share a minimum of 1,050 new homes over the plan period of 2011 – 2031. In Mid-Suffolk<sup>1</sup> there are 14 "key service centre" villages which together are expected to deliver a minimum of 450 houses on new allocations of greenfield land (average of a minimum of 45 each). Primary Villages are also expected to provide for a minimum of 300 new homes over the plan period. Each village can use this Community-Led Village Plan process to consider how much growth it might deliver.
- 2.3 The majority of these new homes are a result of a housing shortage at the national level due to the rise in single occupancy households and smaller household sizes, longer life expectancy, the take up of second homes, immigration and investment properties in the buy to let market. The consequence of a housing market that has not reacted to these issues has led to a wide range of consequences. These include: rapidly increasing housing prices; insufficient affordable housing for people who cannot afford the 8:1 average house price to average annual salary ratio (MSDC 7:1); increased skills shortages as potential employees move away; over-crowded houses as young people live with their parents for longer; homes that do not meet people's needs; and greater social inequality and exclusion.
- 2.4 In turn, these problems lead to demographically and socially less well balanced and unsustainable communities. In addition the population of Suffolk is ageing and by 2030 31% of Mid-Suffolk's residents will be aged over 65. This older population will have different housing needs from a younger population and preparations need to meet this expected demand.
- 2.5 In recent years there has been an under delivery of new homes in the villages as space within settlement boundaries has been used up or restrictive policies adopted to limit potential growth in the smaller villages. This has put strain on meeting identified housing needs and failure to deliver within the set timeframe (five year land supply requirements) has served to add to vulnerability to potential 'speculative' development across the district, i.e. unforeseen proposals and a greater level of local surprises / potential concerns. For many residents, including young families, this makes owning their own property difficult in the short-to-medium term. The under delivery in villages has also meant the number of new affordable homes built has only been able to solve the housing needs of a minority of these residents. There is a continuing need for housing across all tenures and a

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<sup>1</sup> rural settlements are expected to take 1050 dwellings, comprising 750 on green-field and 300 on brown-field.

growing need for affordable housing across the districts.

The most recent update of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, completed in 2012 confirms a minimum need for MSDC of 229 affordable homes per annum of which 77p.a. are being provided. This is creating problems for people who live and work locally and who often provide essential services in the community.

- 2.6 The (National) [Planning Practice Guidance](#) states: “A thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, public houses and places of worship. Affordable and accessible rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities”.
- The Planning Practice Guidance reiterates this by saying: “All settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas”.
- 2.7 The introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework and the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ has driven this change in growth in order to ensure that the identified development needs are met. To improve matters, policy CS11 of the Babergh [Core Strategy](#) sets out a new and more flexible approach to housing provision (and other development) in rural areas. It provides for proposals for development in ‘Core’ Villages to be approved where they satisfactorily address matters set out in the policy and score positively against criteria set out in Policy CS15. It also provides for development in ‘Hinterland’ villages to be approved where it meets certain criteria.
- 2.8 Mid-Suffolk elected members support sustainable growth for Mid-Suffolk, especially rural growth and this is seen as an urgent priority so now is a good time to prepare and gather the information necessary. A positive and more flexible new rural growth approach is accordingly being developed through the emerging joint Local Plan.

### 3 WHAT IS A COMMUNITY-LED VILLAGE PLAN?

- 3.1 There are various different forms of community-led plans and these may be distinguished by their key purpose or focus, level of formality or complexity and their means of preparation. A common objective of these different formats is that a Community-Led Village Plan ideally looks at all aspects of the community and sets out key objectives and principles to guide local community initiatives and future development in the area. It will be a long-term plan that is written by the community and sets out their principles and priorities for future development.
- 3.2 A Community-Led Village Plan has less formal weight than a 'made' (i.e. formally adopted and statutory) neighbourhood plan but will still become a material consideration (i.e. something that will be considered by decision makers who will then determine the appropriate weight given to it) by the District Council when determining applications for development or considering other planning matters in the area the plan covers. This means that the principles, objectives, and policies of the plan must be taken into account when relevant to an application for planning permission.
- 3.3 The community-led planning process will enable local people to take a lead role in planning the future of their area. It can be used to support the growth of the area by finding ways to achieve:
- A vibrant and safe community that cares for and supports one another;
  - A sustainable community that provides well designed and sufficient housing to meet the needs of a range of local household sizes, ages and incomes;
  - A successful community that has a thriving local economic base and provides a range of job opportunities.
  - Social equality and inclusion leading to demographically and socially well balanced and sustainable communities.
  - A well run community that is supported by important local infrastructure and services;
  - An accessible community that is served well by walking and cycling links and has opportunities for travelling by public and community transport;
  - An environmentally friendly community that promotes efficient use of natural resources and manages and respects a range of high quality open spaces;
- 3.4 There will be no 'one size fits all' approach to Community-Led Village Plans. It will be dependent on the circumstances in the Parish and whether any previous community plans have been produced and the relevance and status of their content. They can be as simple or complex as you like. It could focus on delivering a single scheme to meet an identified need or it could provide a long-term vision and take a holistic view of village life exploring what are the qualities that make the village special, assessing what works well, what does not and identifying areas for improvement and how development could deliver this. As such Community-Led Village Plans provide an opportunity for the community to state its thoughts and allow people to articulate their views on how they feel about where they live. The end result should be a plan that reflects those views and provides an idea of when things will happen and where.

- 3.5 A Community-Led Village Plan could therefore give consideration to the following key matters:
- The plan may choose to deliver a specific scheme (or project or development), the needs for which have been identified through this process
  - How the community view the village, what is valued about it and what you would like to improve or address
  - What the shared vision is, how the community sees itself in the future: what sort of place the community wants it to be
  - The community's views about the benefits of growth, development and change in general
  - The local view on new developments, the type of development needed, new facilities / services or local amenities

### Why do we require a Community-Led Village Plan?

- 3.6 Building new development such as new homes and businesses can prove an emotive subject but simply saying 'no' to new homes or other types of development (in principle) will not be an option. Nationally there is a housing shortage and the Government is relaxing planning considerations to rectify this. New houses need to be built and the challenge is for communities to shape this process. Many of the villages will face pressure as development is likely to be proposed abutting the current settlement boundaries as this will deliver sustainable development by providing well-related development to the village (rather than in the middle of nowhere), but the Government is clear that all villages are potentially appropriate to take further growth. Communities have a choice to either get involved and inform what their needs will be over the next 15 years including housing type and where they should be built, or not to influence these matters. This requires your community to work within the spirit of the Localism Act and influence future proposals sooner rather than later.
- 3.7 The area outside the settlement boundary (or Built-Up Area Boundary) of a village is regarded as the 'countryside' and previously development proposals would not be policy compliant unless there were exceptional circumstances. Under a policy CS11 approach, developers are expected to put forward proposals that provide for sustainable development in these areas. This is a paradigm shift and will require your community to work under the spirit of the localism act and influence proposals before it is too late. In MSDC "exceptional circumstances" still apply to settlement boundaries and it is important such exceptions to constraint are well defined and follow the existing strategy of the plan as far as reasonably possible in order to avoid challenge.
- 3.8 A further consideration is that under the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)<sup>2</sup> system (when adopted for Babergh / Mid-Suffolk), a share of the funds generated for spending on infrastructure by development taking place within a locality will be passed to that local community. Areas preparing a formal Neighbourhood Plan (NP) (when that is made, i.e. adopted) will be entitled to 25% of that revenue and

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<sup>2</sup> See Babergh or Mid-Suffolk websites for explanatory information and further information on the current status of this system for the 2 districts.

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those not pursuing a NP will be entitled to 15% of the same. However, in either case the NP or other community led Plan could be used to plan and prioritise those local CIL funds.

### How will Community-Led Village Plans be used?

- 3.9 Community-Led Village Plans can provide both a basis to plan for a village in a proactive way (such as delivering new projects) as well as a locally developed Plan to help shape and influence development proposals as and when they arise (in a reactive way). Accordingly, it is helpful that the District Councils have their own Local Plan policy basis through which to afford them some recognition.
- The Babergh Core Strategy (policy CS2) makes provision to take into account any Community, Parish or Neighbourhood Plans in considering planning and development matters and similarly Mid-Suffolk Core Strategy Paragraphs 2.32, 2.34 and 3.56.
  - Equivalent policy provisions will be developed and used further in future (including for MSDC area) to enable rural growth to be more flexible. This provides a useful way in which those communities who have produced their own parish / community plans to date could gain some recognition and accreditation of their agreed local community stance on planning matters. In MSDC an interim approach to rural growth will look at exceptions that will be a starting point for consideration including a range of policy exceptions.
- 3.10 In Babergh and Mid-Suffolk there is a historical under-supply of new development for homes and accommodation for businesses in rural areas. This has led to demographically and socially less well balanced and unsustainable communities. Community-Led Village Plans could play a valuable role in addressing these issues, with the benefit of a strong local community input that is built on consensus.
- 3.11 Community-led planning can therefore gather information from the local community via surveys (see example in appendix 1), studies and reviews. The Community-Led Village Plan will be delivered through community opinion and factual evidence. This will then be used to inform developers with their proposals and the planning officer when making a decision on future planning applications. The Community-Led Village Plan is thus able to provide a much more finely focused and attuned local planning document than anything else that is available.

### Do you already have an existing Parish Plan?

- 3.12 Parish Plans and Village Design Statements (VDS) are forms of community planning but the former is much broader and the latter much narrower in focus than a Community-Led Village Plan. However, depending on the age, it may contain useful information that could be used as a basis of moving forward. In some cases a parish plan could be revisited to amend the approach, content, objectives, proposed actions and means of preparation more towards a local document that is capable of practical application to the planning processes. This can be done by following the themes in the next section. The village design statement could be referenced to provide a context for new development, based upon an understanding of its local character and sense of place.

### 4 WHAT SHOULD A COMMUNITY-LED VILLAGE PLAN CONTAIN?

4.1 A useful and successful Community-Led Village Plan should:

- reflect the views of all sections of the community;
- identify which features and local characteristics people value; in this way it is valuable to identify 'local distinctiveness' (an articulation of what is special or different about this place);
- identify local issues, problems and opportunities;
- ideally have an understanding of links and relationships with surrounding areas and places. This can help identify inter-dependencies;
- spell out how residents and others want the community to develop, grow or evolve in the future; and
- contain a plan of action to achieve this (ideally with identified timescales, e.g. 5, 10, 15 years, etc.).

4.2 In particular the Community-Led Village plan should respond to the criteria provided by Babergh's Core Strategy policy CS11 and CS15. A similar type of approach is likely to be worked up in Mid-Suffolk with regard to rural growth. Therefore the following areas are appropriate and could include:

- Locally identified housing need (quality, type, density, tenure, size, number);
- Materials and design styles for new development including the quality of the space being created;
- Locally identified community need (assess changing needs of an ageing population including services and support, bus provision, doctors' surgery etc);
- Demonstrate the importance of the character, scale, and shape of the village – (for instance identify character areas);
- Identify landscape considerations and important views;
- Identify Local Community Priorities (Community benefits) – preparing for CIL (with 15% of CIL receipts returned locally);
- Identify infrastructure pressures;
- Assess sites favourability by considering the BDC/ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites. Consideration could be given to distance (using standard 400, 800, or 1200 metres walking distances) away from the village focal point;
- Deliver a scheme (e.g. mixed use development, affordable housing, a new community centre etc);
- Identify design considerations such as orientation and layout of new development
- Timing of new development;
- Assess growth –what is proportionate in generic terms – provide a balanced view when considering housing numbers – for example, approximately 25-50 new houses may help sustain local services/facilities and improve connectivity, but approximately 50-75 new houses may help support or improve public transport and rectify an identified community need issue (i.e. lack of evening bus provision). An assessment of what improvements could be made will need to be made with service providers but the community can be asked for their opinions or priority issues.

### 5 WHAT DOES WRITING A COMMUNITY-LED VILLAGE PLAN INVOLVE?

#### Help, Support & Advice

- 5.1 The prospect of producing your own community led may well appear attractive and beneficial. However, it may appear equally daunting and facing challenges will often be anticipated. It will be important to secure local confidence of a successful outcome. Accordingly, it will often be helpful to seek some form of support. Sources of support, advice, guidance, assistance can include the following: Planning Aid (in association with Royal Town Planning Institute); Community Action Suffolk; Suffolk Association of Local Councils; Babergh DC / Mid-Suffolk DC<sup>3</sup>; private planning consultants (generally at financial cost, or where available, volunteers who have relevant planning knowledge / experience); private landowners / developers or entrepreneurs.
- 5.2 Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Councils currently offer a Neighbourhood Development Plans network group, which was established to develop links between different communities, share information, ideas or best practise and for any other mutual benefits. It is also worth considering whether it may be beneficial to produce a Community-Led Village Plan in conjunction with or jointly, for more than one locality (such as two or more neighbouring parishes). This idea could increase the resources and support available to each. Within Babergh there is also the opportunity for Community-Led Village Plans to be developed within the various identified 'functional clusters' of villages (see Babergh Core Strategy), which seek to identify areas with common links and some interdependency.

#### Evidence Research

- 5.3 A key initial step will be to research and understand relevant local information, such as the demographic make-up of the area's population and the characteristics of the local population. Knowledge of the size and make-up of the local housing stock, local business base and local facilities, services and amenities will be very useful too.
- Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Councils have already produced relatively comprehensive parish profiles for all parishes in the 2 districts, which can provide a lot of the type of local information you are likely to require. Other local information / data sources are also often available, for example, some villages already have their own local websites dedicated to the locality. Such information can be supplemented usefully by additional bespoke local research, such as village housing needs surveys (some parishes already have these in place). Local business directories are sometimes available.

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<sup>3</sup> It will be necessary to establish and agree (between local communities and the District Councils) in advance clarity on the nature and extent of the BDC/MSDC support role; e.g. individual bespoke support is likely to be less available than standard guidance / support. This may include work / support available from BDC/MSDC on a chargeable basis. A Service Level Agreement or Protocol approach may also be beneficial

## Consulting and engaging with your community

- 5.4 In order for an informed plan to be written, you also need to fully understand whether there are any issues in the local community and what the community feels is important and needs to be captured in the plan. One of the most effective ways of doing this is by sending out a survey to every home and other premises in the plan area. The purpose of the survey is to gather views about all aspects of the community. An example is provided in Appendix 1. It should be recognised that many local communities include a much wider make up than the local residents, so it is important to ensure that this is understood and the full range of those with a local interest, involvement or connection are identified, acknowledged and included.
- 5.5 You may receive issues about housing needs (housing for meeting identified needs of particular types of occupiers), what is important, and what the village lacks for instance; leisure provision, suitable transport arrangements, protection of important views and green spaces, young people's needs such as skate parks, need for small business units, footpath connectivity in the village, and parking issues etc.
- 5.6 It is also important to gather baseline data (Census, Historic England, Natural England, Suffolk Observatory, etc.)<sup>4</sup> as this will provide you with the main constituents of your evidence base to inform potential actions for subject areas that may be issues in the future. As a simple and useful initial source of local data, Babergh DC / Mid-Suffolk DC have prepared parish profiles for all 200 parish areas and these can be made readily available.
- 5.7 Effective community involvement should embody a number of key principles. These are:
- Adopting an inclusive approach to community and stakeholder involvement, ensuring that anyone who has an interest is given the opportunity to contribute ideas from an early stage, including those groups who may be considered as 'hard to reach'.
  - Demonstrating, by reporting back the results of the community and stakeholder involvement, that all views are listened to and considered.
  - Providing sufficient time for stakeholders and communities to contribute their views on proposals.
  - Providing accessible, clear and relevant information relating to proposals and community involvement opportunities.
  - And lastly, to enable your plan to be given weight, every reasonable effort must be made to reach out to your community and get proportionate representation. The survey(s) should aim to have an overall proportionate level and cross-section of responses (as a very approximate indicator, for example and where locally appropriate, a response rate of 60% could be seen as positive). Otherwise it might not be widely considered to represent a community-led plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Other websites for this purpose include: datashine; NLS; Suffolk Heritage Explorer; ONS population projections (refer to the latter at Output Area level)

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## Engaging with local service providers

- 5.8 The consultation should highlight key areas of concern for improvement in your Parish. At this stage discuss your findings with the service providers to ensure that actions resulting from this information are appropriate and realistic. It will also help to signpost where further assistance is required. Service providers can be statutory, voluntary or private sector agencies.

## Writing an Action Plan

- 5.9 The next stage is to prepare an Action Plan based on the key issues from your consultation and from the discussions with the service providers. Those that are most important to your community should form the core basis of your Action Plan. This is a vital part of the process as it sets out what needs to be done to achieve the community's vision.
- 5.10 For every aim, objective or action, the means of its delivery or realisation needs to be identified clearly, ideally together with anticipated timescales (wherever possible). This is likely to necessitate liaison with those responsible for implementing these actions to ensure that such parties support those actions and are able to deliver them.

## Implementing the plan

- 5.11 Once the Community-Led Village Plan is completed it is time to implement the actions identified by the local community. The Parish Council can monitor and evaluate these actions.

## Who writes the Community-Led Village Plan?

- 5.12 A Community-Led Village Plan is written by the community for the community. However, it is essential to get support and be led by the Parish Council. The process involves setting up a Steering Group which should consist of members of the community and / or the Parish Council. A wide community membership is useful to ensure the views of the whole community are expressed.

## How will Community-Led Village Plans be taken into account in planning decisions?

- 5.13 Community-Led Village Plans which have been produced taking into account the views of a large number of people and which contain relevant planning information can be used as a material planning consideration in determining planning applications. Where appropriate, the District Councils can endorse a Community-Led Village Plan as informal planning policy. It is recommended that local communities liaise with the District Council before and during the preparation of a Community-Led Village Plan to ensure that they are capable of being endorsed. The key to giving more weight to Community-Led Village Plans is to ensure that they represent the overall community and not a small number of individuals. This will need to be demonstrated through high response rates and consultation events led by the Parish Council.

- 5.14 Community-led Plans can also be used as part of the evidence base to inform the production of (Development Plan) Planning documents that form part of the local planning framework for the Babergh and Mid-Suffolk area.
- 5.15 Provided that they are:
- **Inclusive:** the Plan must engage with all groups of the community to ensure the plan fully represents all of the needs, ideas and interests of the community. Every effort should be made to engage with all households and all engagement opportunities should be recorded and outcomes summarised throughout the process.
  - **Well publicised:** making the whole community aware of the Plan and providing opportunities to be involved.
  - **Well informed:** the use of a reliable and proportionate evidence base will prove invaluable to underpin the community plan
  - **Contribute to achieving sustainable development:** the Plan should think positively about what is needed to support the community in the future and define what is, and is not, considered to be sustainable for the area.
  - **Robust:** the Plan should follow a robust and recognised process that captures all elements of what makes a sustainable community, taking account of the seven themes as shown in Figure 1.
  - **Objective:** the Plan should be led by community members able to give balanced, rational and objective consideration to planning issues in the area. Any interests must be declared. Based on evidence: collected through surveys, studies and reviews. This will include undertaking a Parish Housing Needs Survey in any areas where an up-to-date survey is not available.
  - **Long-term:** the plan should cover a time period that reflects plans prepared by the District Council.
  - **Regularly reviewed and monitored:** the plan should set out ways for reviewing and checking the plan to make sure that it is being effective and delivering the priorities of the community.

### How will a Community-Led Village Plan be endorsed as informal planning policy?

- 5.16 Once produced a Community-Led Village Plan should be submitted to the District Council. Where a Community-Led Village Plan has been subject to considerable consultation and is proven to represent the whole community (in overall terms) and is in accordance with local planning policies, officers will recommend via the appropriate committee that the Community-Led Village Plan be endorsed as informal planning policy. District Councillors will make the final decision on whether the Community-Led Village Plan is endorsed. In this respect, the involvement or participation of your district ward councillor(s) is strongly recommended.

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## Assessment criteria

Criteria	
A	The Plan has been undertaken by the Parish or Town Council, which is committed to representing the issues and needs of the whole community
B	The Plan has sought to involve all groups in the community to ensure it fully represents the needs, ideas and interests of the community
C	The Plan contributes to achieving sustainable development taking into consideration local housing, employment and environmental needs
D	The Plan is based on a thorough assessment of evidence and makes every effort to meet identified needs. Evidence should be wide-ranging and robust and include statistical profiles of the plan area, a Parish Housing Needs Survey and primary research data
E	Preparation of the plan has followed a robust, inclusive and transparent process
F	The Plan contains a vision of the aspirations of the community in the long term with clearly stated objectives and goals
G	Where required, the plan contains an action plan to deliver local projects and initiatives
h	The plan conforms to any legislative requirements and any higher tier plans and policies (in particular the Local Plans produced by the District Council)
I	The plan has been through a minimum four-week consultation period in which people living, working and carrying out business in the local area were invited (and encouraged) to comment
j	The plan has local legitimacy and accountability, through formal adoption by an appropriate accountable body i.e. Parish/Town Council
K	It has been identified how the implementation of the plan is to be monitored and demonstrates a commitment to review and update the plan on a regular basis (on a planned timescale and / or when circumstances dictate)

Subject to having met the above criteria, the Council will:

- Formally recognise / endorse and respond to community-led plans as material planning considerations on applications for development and other local planning matters / issues.

## Can a Community-Led Village Plan be created and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document?

5.17 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) introduced a number of procedural changes to the way supplementary planning documents need to be produced. Under this Act Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) replace Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). In the past it was possible to adopt a wide range of documents as SPG; however the regulations for producing SPD initially were much more onerous. Under the new amended regulations SPD's are no longer required to be:

- Produced in accordance with the Local Development Scheme
- Subject to Sustainability Appraisal

5.18 But they are required to be:

- Subject to consultation in accordance with Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement;
- Directly related to adopted planning policies;
- In accord with the National Planning Policy Framework.

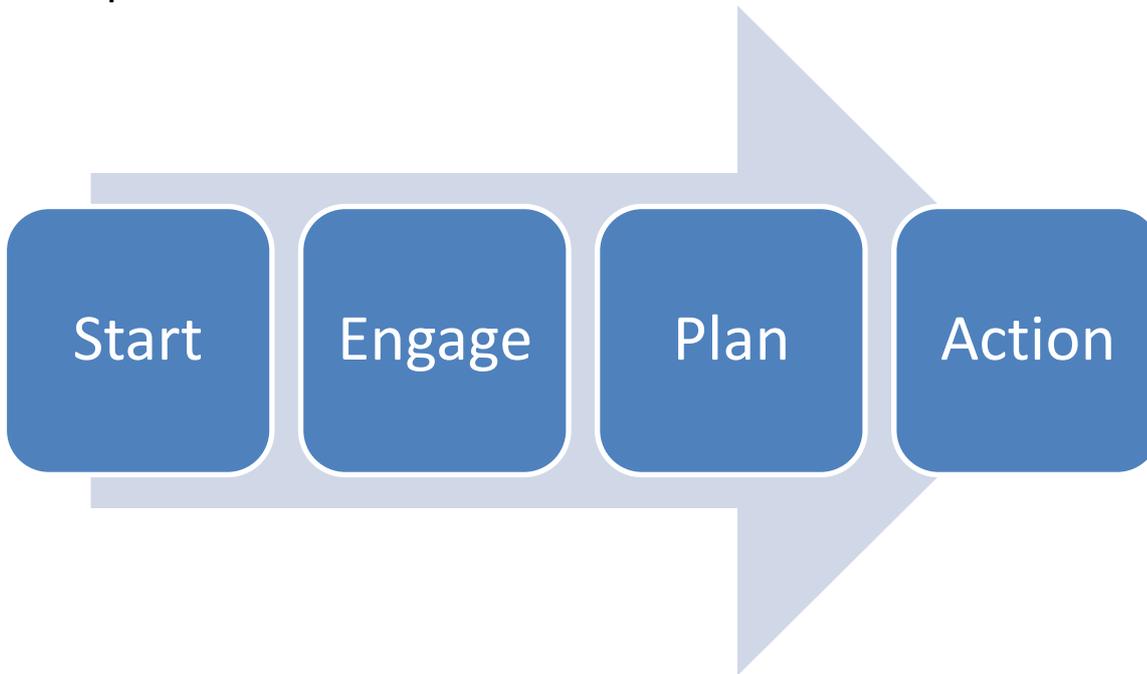
5.19 These requirements mean that it is technically possible for a Community-Led Village Plan to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document; although this puts restrictions on what the documents can contain and how they are produced. A decision on the adoption process will be decided on the basis of each plan's contents and this question will require careful consideration. Whilst there may be some advantages in taking up a formal SPD approach, there are also some substantial potential pitfalls and drawbacks too. Seeking advice on this matter is therefore recommended.

5.20 In considering the question of whether to pursue the option of producing a formal SPD document, it is likely to be of greater importance that the Community-Led Village Plan has been produced in line with the good plan-making practice and principles provided here.

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## 6 COMMUNITY-LED VILLAGE PLANNING PROCESS

The simplified version



### Start

- Parish Council to set up a Group to lead the Plan development project in the community.

### Engage

- Collect evidence and information about the community.
- Talk to the community about options and ideas for future development and local initiatives. Conduct a survey.

### Plan

- Write a draft plan and publish it for consultation to get feedback from the community.
- BDC/MSDC endorse if necessary.

### Action - Implement (and review)

- Implementation over the course of the plan's lifetime will need some form of monitoring to assess success, potential changes in direction or a need to trigger a review.
- It will in this way be important to keep the plan up-to-date and as far as possible, responsive to changing circumstances.

## The longer process



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

Babergh and Mid-Suffolk both have strategic level planning policy frameworks in place, including several Local Plan documents that are relevant to the preparation of Community-Led Village Plans. The relevant links are provided below.

#### **Babergh Planning Policies**

Babergh Planning Policy Context – summary

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Uploads-BDC/Economy/Strategic-Planning-Policy/Neighbourhood-Planning/PolicyContextBDC.pdf>

Babergh Core Strategy & Policies (2011-2031) – adopted 2014:

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-babergh-development-framework/core-strategy-and-policies-dpd/> The Babergh Core Strategy policy CS2 includes provision to take into account any Community, Parish or Neighbourhood Plans in considering planning and development matters

Babergh Local Plan 2006 (saved policies):

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Uploads-BDC/Economy/Strategic-Planning-Policy/Local-Plan/Local-Plan-Babergh/scheduleofsavedpoliciesBaberghLP.pdf>

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Uploads-BDC/Economy/Strategic-Planning-Policy/Local-Plan/Local-Plan-Babergh/SavedPoliciesandCoreStrategyreplacements.pdf>

#### **Mid-Suffolk Planning Policies**

Mid-Suffolk Planning Policy Context – summary

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/UploadsMSDC/Economy/Strategic-Planning-Policy/Neighbourhood-Planning/PolicyContextMSDC.pdf>

Mid-Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 and Focused Review 2012:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/core-strategy-dpd/>

The Mid-Suffolk Core Strategy Para 3.56 includes provision to take into account any Community, Parish or Neighbourhood Plans in considering planning and development matters

Stowmarket Area Action Plan 2013:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/stowmarket-area-action-plan/>

Mid-Suffolk Local Plan 1998 (saved policies):

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-1998/>

### Example Survey Questions

#### General Information

*To avoid data protection issues – rather than ask for personal details such as addresses when you hand deliver the questionnaire you could mark the questionnaires (A, B, C or D) to certain areas (divide the village into four quadrants) to give you a rough idea of whereabouts in the village the household is located. The accommodation and households questions below will provide a representative sample which can be compared against the census statistics to ensure that one section of the community isn't over represented.*

#### 1. Relationship (of other household members) to you? (please tick)

	You	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
Person completing this form							
Partner/Spouse/Civil partner							
Son or daughter							
Other relative							
Friend							
Lodger							
House mate							
Other unrelated							

#### 2. Are you/they? (please tick)

	You	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
Male							
Female							

#### 3. What age group are you in? (please tick)

	You	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
0-15							
16 – 24							
25 – 34							
35 – 49							
50 – 64							
65 – 74							
75 – 84							
85 and over							

**Please indicate** (you may tick more than one if appropriate)

## Community-Led Village Plans - Guidance

### 4. What is your employment or education situation? (please tick)

	You	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
Employed full-time							
Employed part-time							
Work from home							
Self-employed							
In a Government training scheme							
In full-time education							
In part-time education							
Retired							
Unable to work through illness / disability							
Un-waged							

### 5. How far do you travel to your main place of work or study? (please tick)

	You	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
Stay in Parish							
Up to 15 miles							
15 – 30 miles							
Over 30 miles							

### 6. How do you travel to your main place of work or study? (please tick)

	You	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
Walk							
Cycle							
Bus							
Train							
Employer provides transport							
Car share							
My own car/van							
Combination of above (e.g. drive own car to railway station then board train). Please explain in more detail:							

The following questions are to be answered on behalf of the household.

### 7. Household members who work but not from home, what prevents you from working from home? (please tick)

Poor Broadband speed		Social isolation	
Poor access to postal services		Lack of resources or equipment	
Poor access to banking		Don't want to work from home	
Lack of space		Employer doesn't allow it	
Lack of childcare		not practical due to nature of job	

## 8. Characteristics of the Parish

What do you like about living in the Parish?
Is there anything about the Parish that you dislike?
What improvements would you like to see to deal with these dislikes?
How would you like to see the Parish evolve? a. What would you like to see in the short term? Say over the next 5-10 years?  b. And in the long term – say over 20 years?
What improvement or benefits would you like future developments and changes to bring to the community?

## 9. Parish Vision Statement

**This is an example** – Our Village will strive to celebrate its proud heritage whilst *keeping the village a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside, which is dependent on retaining our local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, public houses and places of worship. Affordable and accessible rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities. We will welcome new housing to ensure that our community continues to thrive.*

**AGREE**

**NOT SURE**

**DISAGREE**

(Delete as appropriate)

Please explain your answer

## 10. Housing

Since 20XX our village has grown by X new houses which equates to Y houses per year. XYXYX will be a focus of further growth over the next XY years as the District Council is required to oversee new homes across the district and is one of a number of villages (Key Service Centres) where higher growth is more appropriate.

New homes are a result of a housing shortage at the national level due to the rise in single occupancy households, longer life expectancy, the take up of second homes, inward migration and investment properties in the buy to let market. The consequence of a housing market that hasn't reacted to these issues has led to rapidly increasing housing prices, insufficient affordable housing for people who cannot afford the **7.1 (MSDC)/ 8.1 (BDC)** average house price to average annual salary ratio, increased skills shortages as potential employees move away, over-crowded houses as young people live with their parents for longer, homes that do not meet people's needs, and greater social inequality and exclusion leading to demographically and socially less well balanced and unsustainable communities. In addition the population of Suffolk is ageing and by 2030 XY% of **Mid-Suffolk's/ Babergh's** residents will be aged over 65. This older population will have different housing needs to a younger population and preparations need to meet this expected demand.

**What do you think about the existing housing in the Parish?** (please tick)

	About right	Need more	Too many
<b>Flats/apartments</b>			
<b>Bungalows</b>			
<b>Small Houses</b> (1-2 bed)			
<b>Medium Houses</b> (3-4 bed)			
<b>Large houses</b> (5+ bed)			

**10. Do you intend to stay in the Parish in the near future? If not, why are you intending to leave?**

**11. If you do want to move house, what is preventing you from moving?** (please tick)

a) Suitable rented housing is not available in the parish	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Suitable housing to buy is not available in the parish	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Suitable rented housing is available in the parish but I/we cannot afford it	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Suitable housing to buy is available in the parish but I/we cannot afford to buy it	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Other, please explain below:	

**12. What type of housing are you in now and what type(s) of housing will your household need in the future, between now and 2030?** If the household need requires more than one dwelling, please complete a separate form.

**Is your home** (please tick)

Open market (i.e. owner-occupied) or;	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable Housing (provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market)	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Now		Future	
	Owned	Rented	Owned	Rented
Flat				
Bungalow				
House Detached				
House Semi-detached				
House Terraced				
Warden assisted or retirement housing				
Affordable housing				
Eco friendly housing				
Self-build				
Other, please specify...				

**How many bedrooms?** (please tick)

	Now	Future
1 bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 bedrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-4 bedrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5+ bedrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If the property you are occupying in the Parish is a second home please tick this box:**

# Community-Led Village Plans - Guidance

**13. Who needs housing?** (please tick)

Are any existing members of your own household looking to move into their own accommodation over the next 3 years? (e.g. son or daughter, older relative)

**In Your Parish**

Yes

No

**Elsewhere**

Yes

No

**14. Who is looking/likely to look for accommodation in the next 3 years?**

(please tick)

**Parent/Grandparent**

**Child who will be over 16**

**Partner/spouse/civil partner**

**Lodger**

**Friend**

**Other relative**

Person 1	Person 2

## Business

### 15. Please indicate how often you use the following

For example 2 x per week, 5 x per week, or 1 x month, 2 x month or 1 x year, 2 x year. If there are businesses that are missing please add them to the bottom of the list.

<b>Business/Service</b>	<b>Your Parish</b>	<b>Elsewhere (please state where)</b>
Example - Post Office	2 x per week	
Example - Pharmacy		1 x month at xxxxx
Post Office		
Pharmacy		
Food Shops		
Newsagents		
Clothing Shops		
Arts and Craft Shops		
Greengrocers		
Bakery		
Butchers		
Pubs		
Restaurants		
Cafes		
Florists		
Sports / Leisure centre		
Antique Shops		
Health and Beauty Shops		
Hardware Shops		
Hairdressers		
Estate Agents		
Vets		
Light Industry		
Local Trade Persons		
Garage repairs (Automobile?)		
Other(s) (please state which)		

# Community-Led Village Plans - Guidance

16. Please comment on local services and facilities. (please tick)

<b>Environment</b> (countryside, cleanliness, pollution, watercourses...)	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
How do you think it could be improved?					
<b>Education</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
<b>Transportation</b> (e.g. bus services, footpaths)	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
How could they be improved?					

## Community-Led Village Plans - Guidance

<b>Roads and traffic</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
Please explain the nature of any particular problems:					
<b>Medical, dental and care services</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>

<b>Business</b> (e.g. tourism, agriculture, working from home, office space, live/work space)	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
<b>Facilities</b> (e.g. community venues, shops, sports/leisure, places to eat/drink)	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>

## Community-Led Village Plans - Guidance

Housing and development (private, rented, affordable, shared equity, business premises)	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Societies and local organisations	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
What activities are not catered for? Please state...					

17. **Should the new community plan provide more parking spaces?** – if yes, mark how many and where by annotating the map in appendix 1.

Yes


No

--

Number:

18. **What are your top three priorities for the Parish over the next 5-15 years?**

1:

2:

3:

19. **Are you supportive of:** (tick as appropriate)

- **High rate of new housing and businesses to support the development of numerous additional services + keep existing services viable**
- **Modest rate of new housing and businesses to support the development of one or two additional services + keep existing services viable**

20. When development does take place, please broadly indicate on the attached plan in appendix 1 where you consider that it would best take place.
21. Are there areas where development should not take place? Again, please show those areas on the map in appendix 1.

Please explain why you think these areas should/not be developed

22. Do you think that new development should follow any particular architecture or style? Should development follow the “traditional” styles, materials, colours, or should we encourage new styles that recognise that it is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Or perhaps something in between?

23. Please list examples of design features that are important to you from buildings in Your Parish (for example red brick, slate roofs, brick nogging):

### Local Green Space

25. If you would like to, please use the map to identify small areas of special green space (not extensive tracts of land) that hold local significance. For example because of their beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness in wildlife in close proximity to the community, these spaces should be protected from development. Please explain your reasons to justify each area.

## Infrastructure

**26. There will be new housing in Your Parish. How do you think this will impact on local infrastructure?** Please provide your comments below:

## Scale of growth

**27. How would you like the future development in the parish to be?** Before you answer please read the following:

### Small –

Small developments will fit in with the village better and avoid estate style development, but we will get less community benefits as there will be multiple servicing/access costs for each development separately and there can be disruption across the whole village.

### Large -

In most cases large developments support more contributions and community benefits including a higher amount of affordable housing delivery. The development is completed quicker and there is less impact on the whole village, however it may not necessarily fit in as well with the rest of the village.

**Please tick only one option:**

**Small  
scale and  
dispersed**

**One or two  
larger  
developments**

**Contact Details – Your Parish Council Community Plan group?**

**Telephone**

**E-mail**

**website**

## Becoming Involved

If you would like us to keep you updated about how we plan to address what you have identified, or would like to become more involved in the process, please tick the relevant box below and leave your contact details. Your information will not be used for any other purpose, and will not be connected to the answers you have given to the questionnaire.

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**Yes**, I would like to learn more about planning in the Parish; my contact details are as follows:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes**, I have some time to offer to help. I have skills in.....

If other members of your household would like an extra copy of this questionnaire to complete, you can either download it from the parish council web site or ask the Parish Clerk for a printed copy. Anyone running a business in the Parish but living elsewhere is also eligible to contribute to the Plan. Please contact the Parish Clerk if interested:

**Clerk:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your completed questionnaire to:

**Xxxx**