

Chapter 3

Settlement Policy and Housing

Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter deals with Settlement Policy and provides specific guidance on the provision and location of housing in the Plan period. It covers, among other things, the allocation of sites for new housing development; housing for local and special needs; affordable housing; and design and environmental good practice in housing developments. The chapter refers to related issues of recreation, transportation and the built environment, which are dealt with in detail under the appropriate chapter headings.

1. To meet the housing requirements of the Babergh District, including the provision of sufficient affordable and special needs housing.
2. To provide for wider housing opportunities, choice and a better mix in the size, tenure, type and location of housing, and to create mixed communities.
3. To provide sufficient housing land (in line with the Suffolk Structure Plan requirements) in terms of scale and location by giving priority to recycling previously developed land in urban areas; providing for a major mixed-use development on the northern edge of Sudbury; and an appropriate level of new housing in sustainable villages.
4. To create sustainable patterns of new housing development by locating the bulk of new housing in areas served by good public transport and are accessible to jobs, schools and community and leisure facilities.
5. To promote good design in new housing developments, including increasing densities where appropriate, to create attractive, high quality environments in which people will want to live.

Objectives

Policy Context

- 3.2 PPG3: Housing sets out current Government guidance on housing issues. This guidance is concerned primarily with promoting more sustainable patterns of development and making better use of previously developed land and buildings. The focus for additional housing should be in existing towns and cities. New housing and residential environments should be well designed and make a significant contribution to promoting an 'urban renaissance', and improving the quality of life of these areas. In addition, the Government is committed to the conservation of the urban environment and built heritage, as well as the green spaces that all towns and cities need for recreation and amenity.
- 3.3 PPG3 encourages local planning authorities to work with housing providers to assess the range of needs for different types and sizes of housing across all tenures in their area. These needs include affordable housing and housing to help specific groups such as the elderly; the disabled; young single people; the homeless; and those needing hostel accommodation.
- 3.4 Through the 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' approach to development plans, local authorities will be better placed to take account of changes in housing needs in their areas and, therefore, widen the range of housing opportunities to allow these needs to be met.
- 3.5 PPG3 also stresses the need for local planning authorities to adopt a sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing development. This approach requires local planning authorities to follow a search sequence when identifying suitable sites, starting with the reuse of previously developed land and buildings in built-up areas and ending with greenfield sites.
- 3.6 Circular 6/98 on Planning and Affordable Housing supplements PPG3 and gives practical advice to local planning authorities on how to increase the supply of affordable housing in appropriate circumstances through negotiations with developers.
- 3.7 Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6) November 2000 recognises that the region has enjoyed above average economic performance in recent decades, and that Plans should provide for sustained economic growth. It promotes residential development in sustainable locations to minimise commuting, and to promote a closer relationship between new housing, and existing and proposed jobs and services.

- 3.8 RPG6 sets out an initial target for a minimum of 50% of all new dwellings to be built on previously developed land or through the reuse of existing buildings (compared with the Government’s published target of 60%). This target takes into account the rural nature of much of the region and the lack of opportunities for “brownfield” development in some urban areas.
- 3.9 The Structure Plan focuses on the potential for desirable and acceptable levels of development in the Suffolk Districts, taking into account key sustainable policy objectives and including the potential for development on previously developed land. The overall approach is to strengthen market towns and villages, protect the open countryside, sustain local services and achieve a better balance between employment and housing in rural communities, thereby minimising the need to travel. It is made clear that new housing in villages is not intended to play a major part in meeting Suffolk’s housing requirements.
- 3.10 The population of Suffolk is projected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to increase by 57,100 from 661,000 in 1996 to 718,000 in 2016. This means that the equivalent of 52,500 new homes are needed for Suffolk in addition to the current stock of 285,400 (as at 1996). Taking into account this household projection, the Structure Plan provides for 53,000 dwellings. ONS assumes net migration into Suffolk of 69,000 between 1996 and 2016. It does not prepare separate projections for natural change (births and deaths). However, since the total change over the Plan period is less than the assumed levels of net migration, it must be assumed that there will be more deaths than births in Suffolk during this period.
- 3.11 The main features of the household projections are that there is expected to be a decrease in the proportion of married couple households and an increase in the number of one person households and people sharing. Of the increase in new households in Suffolk between 1996 and 2016, 54% is forecast to comprise one person households, 25% cohabiting couples and 19% people sharing. These statistics emphasise the need to work with house builders to ensure that new properties meet the projected household needs.
- 3.12 The 2001 Census showed that the number of homes in the Babergh District was made up as follows:

owner occupied	26,525
local authority or housing association (rented and shared ownership)	4,564
privately rented	3,774
Total	34,863

Population

Existing Housing in Babergh

3.13 Using this total, the tenure type is divided as follows:

owner-occupied	76.1%
privately rented or employment tied	10.8%
rented from local authority or through a Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	13.1%
Total	100%

3.14 The average price for all dwellings in the Babergh District in the last quarter of 2006 was around £229,276, which is 6% higher than the East of England's standardised average house price of £215,794 (Source: Suffolk Observatory). In the Babergh District low-income households have difficulty buying a dwelling. The housing market excludes many families and single person households who are currently seeking access to local housing. This concealed demand requiring affordable housing is in addition to waiting list numbers and the future formation of new housing.

Babergh Housing Needs Survey

3.15 During 2000, consultants undertook a detailed District-wide assessment and projection of housing need on behalf of the Council. Its objectives can be summarised as follows:

- to assist in the further development of the Housing Strategy and Housing Investment Programme;
- to form the basis of Supplementary Planning Guidance to complement and support the affordable housing policies in the Local Plan;
- to assess the current need for additional and improved housing in the District;
- to identify the housing aspirations and preferences of households and the extent to which they can be afforded;
- to identify the need for new, affordable housing in the District;
- to help assess the housing needs and preferences of households with special needs;
- to consider the impact of housing growth, as indicated by national and regional projections; and
- to consider the impact on affordable rural housing of regional and Structure Plan policies, which concentrate housing developments in towns and along transport corridors.

Structure Plan Housing Provision

3.16 The Housing Need Survey (2000) has been used to help influence two affordable housing policies HS08 and HS09 which seek to achieve a percentage of affordable housing in both the smaller and larger settlements across the District. Policy CS8 of the Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 sets out a requirement for the Babergh District of 6,900 homes between 1996 and 2016, which equates to an average annual build rate of 345 homes a year:

Structure Plan Housing Provision 1996-2016 (Table 1)

Completions 1996-1999	1020
Commitments 1999 less 5%	3160
Small Windfall Brownfield 1990-2016	1530
Large sites (10 units/ >0.4ha)	1190
Total Housing Requirements	6900

3.17 The Structure Plan makes clear that it is necessary to ensure careful monitoring of the contributions made by the various components of housing supply.

3.18 Since the Structure Plan was adopted in 2001 it has come to light that a level of double counting of completions is included in that Plan, which over estimated the 1996 - 1999 completion rates. In addition, consultants were appointed in June 2002 to undertake an Urban Capacity Study (UCS)(November 2002). This provided a detailed assessment of both the small windfall and larger windfall sites available within Babergh. Further work has been undertaken since taking receipt of the Urban Capacity Study to refine the information provided. This study reveals that more larger sites are needed to be allocated than originally envisaged when the First Deposit Draft was published in September 2001.

A revised 2006 figure for Housing Provision 1996-2016 is shown (Table 2)

Completions 1996-2006	2804
Commitments 2006 less 5%	1160
Windfall Brownfield	540
Allocations	1821
Other sites where the principle of Development has been accepted	581
Total	6906

3.19 PPG3 advises that in order to establish how much additional housing land can be accommodated in urban areas, and therefore how much “greenfield” land may be needed for development, all local planning authorities should undertake urban capacity studies. These studies should consider various options in relation to density of development; levels of parking provision; different residential layouts; the mix of house types; and other sources for increasing housing capacity.

Urban Capacity

- 3.20 The District Council's UCS was based on the adopted Suffolk Authorities method for undertaking an Urban Capacity Study which itself was based on Central Government's Best Practice advice set out in "Tapping the Potential" (December 2000). The consultants report was published in November 2002; later, the House Builders Federation was consulted on this report. It has considered the document and generally feels that it is a comprehensive study that will positively contribute to the assessment of urban housing capacity in Babergh.
- 3.21 The method used was based on a nine stage process:
1. Identifying capacity sources;
 2. Surveying the capacity;
 3. Assessing the yield;
 4. Discounting;
 5. Phasing options;
 6. Assumptions of windfalls;
 7. Assumptions of conversions;
 8. Design options; and
 9. Monitoring phasing and subsequent review.
- 3.22 Based on an assumed density of 40 dwellings per hectare this work revealed a total theoretical capacity of 1142 dwellings which comprises both small windfall brownfield as well as larger windfall brownfield sites. The report concludes at paragraph 7.13 that "it is clear that the Council will need to allocate a significant amount (1650 dwellings) of greenfield land to meet housing requirements set out in the Structure Plan".
- 3.23 On receipt of the Urban Capacity Study report, it has been necessary to evaluate in detail the larger sites put forward in relation to the overall Plan process. There is a difference between the thresholds specified in the DLTR Good Practice Guide (0.3 hectares) and the Suffolk Structure Plan (0.4 hectares). For the purpose of this Plan the 0.4 hectare threshold prevails. Sites below this identified in the UCS have been counted as small windfall brownfield sites.
- 3.24 In addition, in relation to both the Retail Capacity Study (September 2002) and Employment Land Study (November 2002) it has been necessary to take a balanced view on the most appropriate land use for any given site. As a consequence of this additional sieving process, a number of sites identified in the UCS have been discounted, which has reduced the total capacity figure to 600.

- 3.25 PPG3 states that local planning authorities, in preparing development plans, should adopt a systematic approach to assessing the development potential of sites, and the redevelopment potential of existing buildings, deciding which are most suitable for housing development and the sequence in which development should take place. The RPG target of total housing on previously developed land and buildings is at least 50%, while the Structure Plan suggests that nearly 50% may be achievable across Suffolk as a whole.
- 3.26 The search sequence set out in PPG3 starts with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings in urban areas (identified by an Urban Capacity Study), then urban extensions, and finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors.
- 3.27 The policy emphasis in the Structure Plan is directed towards the redevelopment of previously developed land to meet housing need. Structure Plan Policy CS7 formally sets out a sequential approach to site selection, giving preference to redevelopment of previously developed land and urban extensions over the release of “greenfield” sites.
- 3.28 The District Council endorses this sequential approach, and has carried this forward through the allocation of sites for housing development set out in the Plan. However, the Babergh District is very rural in character and the supply of previously developed sites as found by the Urban Capacity Study is very small. This has also been confirmed through the returns to the ODPM for the National Land Use Database (NLUD) in 1998 and 2002 and in dealing with the potential of previously developed land to accommodate new housing. In addition, as confirmed by the Employment Land Study (November 2002) there is a need to retain urban employment opportunities unless there are particular reasons for not doing so. The District Council’s research reveals few obvious, large-scale opportunities for housing redevelopment on previously developed sites. Where brownfield sites have been identified in both the Issues Report (1999) and First Deposit Draft (2001) these have been taken up very quickly.
- 3.29 The Structure Plan specifically identifies Sudbury as a location for substantial housing growth. Given the limited opportunities for the residential redevelopment of previously developed land, the District Council has looked to an urban edge extension to Sudbury as the next most sustainable option in the search sequence. A mixed-use development is proposed on the northern edge of Sudbury. This will comprise approximately 700 dwellings, and take a significant area of land for new employment. The “Chilton Mixed-Use Development Package” is the subject of Chapter 12 of the Plan.

Settlement Policy

3.30 The Settlement Policy is the basis for making provision for new housing in the Babergh District through the classification of settlements into Towns, Villages and the Countryside. In the Plan the following definitions will apply:

‘Estate’:

A number of dwellings related to a new estate road linked to the existing road system. The specific size of the estate must be carefully related to the size and form of the town or village so that new development is kept in scale.

‘Group’:

A small number of dwellings, up to four or five related one with another, and in the existing form of the settlement utilising existing road frontages or a short cul-de-sac or court, but not on a new road; the number of groups must also be related to the existing form and scale of the town or village.

‘Infill’:

The filling of a small undeveloped plot in an otherwise built-up frontage. A ‘small undeveloped plot’ is one which would be filled by one or two dwellings. In some instances a small terrace of three dwellings could be appropriate where it is compatible with the surroundings, bearing in mind that this will better meet housing for local needs. If the plot could accommodate more than this scale, its development is not infilling. Even where a gap is small it must not be assumed that permission will be given because it may be desirable to leave that gap as an essential feature in the village scene.

Towns/ Urban Areas

3.31 To promote sustainable patterns of development and to satisfy the County Strategy, most housing development will be located in or adjoining towns. The Structure Plan identifies those towns in the County where major housing and employment will take place. It also acknowledges that other towns and villages have potential for housing development primarily to meet the needs of their surrounding areas.

3.32 The following are classified as Towns:

- Hadleigh;
- Sudbury with parts of Chilton and Great Cornard; and
- Ipswich (built-up part in the Babergh District) including Wherstead Bourne Hill and The Strand.

HS01 In Towns, housing developments will be granted planning permission, provided they have no material adverse effects on residential amenity, the environment or traffic generation, or result in the loss of a viable employment site. Where an undeveloped site makes a positive contribution to the quality of the townscape or is a playing field or other important recreational asset, its development will not be permitted.

- 3.33 Towns rather than villages provide the most sustainable option, and they are most likely to be able to absorb major housing development without adversely affecting the environment. However, it is important to ensure that only sufficient land is allocated to meet the housing requirement identified in the Suffolk Structure Plan.
- 3.34 The Built-Up Area as defined represents the physical limit of the town. It does not imply that all sites in it may be suitable for housing development as other criteria may apply, for example, the definition of infilling and groups as set out in 3.30 above and the need to retain employment sites as set out later in Policy EM24. In considering proposals in the Built-Up Area, the District Council will have regard to other policies in the Plan.
- 3.35 Villages normally comprise upwards of 25 to 30 dwellings grouped together and normally offer at least one facility, such as a post office, food shop or public house. Some are sizeable settlements consisting of up to several hundred houses. Many will have a better range of facilities, including daily public transport. Villages are not individually identified in the Suffolk Structure Plan.
- 3.36 Policy HS02 seeks to provide guidance on small windfall sites that come forward during the Plan period. In addition a number of proposed allocations have been put forward for residential development which are covered by Policy HS10.

Villages

HS02 New housing development in Non-Sustainable Villages(*) will take the form of infilling (up to a maximum of 3 dwellings) within the Built-Up Area Boundary. Larger groups of dwellings may also be appropriate within the Built-Up Area Boundary of Sustainable Villages(*). New development will be acceptable in Non-Sustainable and Sustainable Villages providing that there is no adverse impact on:

- the scale and character of the village;
- residential amenity;
- landscape characteristics, particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Areas;
- the availability of services and facilities;
- highway safety;
- the natural and built environment, particularly conservation areas, listed buildings, biodiversity and archaeological remains;
- space which is important to the village scene or an important recreational asset for the locality.

*Non-Sustainable and Sustainable Villages are listed in Policy HS03.

3.37 In 1995 the District Council adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for all villages in the Babergh District. This defined the Built-Up Area Boundaries (BUABs) for Villages. Following representations from Go-East at the First Deposit Draft consultation stage, the BUABs have been incorporated in this Plan. A consultation exercise with Town/Parish Councils/Meetings in 2002 has enabled some minor revisions and updating to the boundaries. Policy HS03 identifies those settlements which are classified as Villages, while their defined BUABs are shown on the Proposals Map. For clarity, the defined BUAB is the inside edge of the line shown on that Proposals Map.

3.38 In addition to identifying the extent to which a settlement can be developed, other considerations need to be taken into account. The purpose of BUABs is to :

- protect the open countryside, and in particular areas of high landscape value;
- strengthen and complement Conservation Area boundaries and policies;
- protect important trees, vegetation and biodiversity;
- protect important archaeological features;
- protect important open spaces and recreational areas within and immediately without the defined boundary;
- avoid coalescence of adjoining settlements;
- accommodate changes in development within settlements; and
- identify a logical and defensible boundary that retains a relatively compact settlement form.

3.39 Important open spaces, and areas of visual or recreational value are identified in Villages in the context of the Built-Up Area Boundaries. These locations are referred to as Areas of Visual and/or Recreational Amenity (AVRA) and are found on the Proposals Map for Villages listed in Policy HS03. Like the BUABs, AVRAs were introduced in the 1995 Supplementary Planning Guidance for villages in the District and have been incorporated in this Plan. Policy CN03, (see Chapter 7: The Built Environment and Conservation), seeks to protect important open spaces in settlements, and refers to the protection of AVRAs. However, there are other locations not identified as AVRA, and which are also protected by the policy.

3.40 AVRAs complement and strengthen policies that protect open spaces and the setting of buildings from development, including those relating to BUABs. They can protect and/or retain:

- trees, woodlands and other natural areas or features;
- sports facilities, playing fields, play areas, allotments and open spaces or other recreational facilities;
- important visual gaps in the street scene;
- views into and out of the settlement;
- visually important flood plains or other areas surrounding rivers or water features;
- the historic form of a settlement;
- the setting of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas;
- visual quality of a settlement;
- the Countryside within and without the BUAB;
- the historic setting of agricultural buildings;
- the setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites; and
- visually important approaches to settlements.

HS03 The following settlements are classified as Non-Sustainable and Sustainable Villages:

Non-Sustainable

Aldham, Assington, Belstead, Bentley, Brent Eleigh, Brettenham, Burstall, Chelsworth, Cockfield (Cross Green), Cockfield (Great Green), Cockfield (Crowbrook/MacKenzie Place), Cockfield (Windsor Green), Copdock and Washbrook, Copdock and Washbrook (South), East Bergholt (East End), Edwardstone, Elmsett, Harkstead, Hartest, Hintlesham, Hitcham, Holton St Mary, Kersey, Lawshall (Street), Lawshall (Bury Road), Lawshall (Lambs Lane), Layham (Upper), Leavenheath (High Road),

Leavenheath (Harrow Street), Little Waldingfield, Monks Eleigh, Nedging, Newton, Polstead (Church), Polstead (Heath), Polstead (Whitestreet Green), Preston St. Mary, Raydon, Shimpling Street, Shotley (Gate), Shotley (Street), Stanstead (Upper & Lower Street), Stoke by Nayland, Stutton, Tattingstone (Church), Tattingstone (White Horse), Tattingstone (Heath), Wattisham, Whatfield, Woolverstone.

Sustainable

Acton, Bildeston, Boxford, Brantham, Bures St Mary, *Capel St Mary, Chelmondiston, East Bergholt, Glemsford, Great Waldingfield, Holbrook, Lavenham, Long Melford, Nayland, Sproughton, Stratford St Mary

*Capel St Mary will, once the employment allocation EM16 has been substantially developed, become a sustainable village.

Note: For the purposes of this Policy a village is defined as a parish that contains a built-up area boundary. All other settlements are classified as being within the open countryside and thus why they are not listed as villages within HS03.

Countryside General

- 3.41 Outside of Towns and Villages, the District is classified as Countryside. This includes dispersed groups of dwellings and settlements not classified as Villages.
- 3.42 In the Countryside, new houses will not normally be permitted, except to house an agricultural worker living on an agricultural holding. In other circumstances regard will be given to Policy HS04 and PPPS7: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development.

HS04 In the interests of agriculture, rural amenity, road safety and the economy of services, new housing will be integrated into the defined areas of Towns and Villages. In the Countryside outside Towns and Villages it is intended that existing land uses will remain for the most part undisturbed.

Conversions

- 3.43 See Chapter 6: Countryside and the Rural Economy.

- 3.44 The policy is intended to allow the replacement of a dwelling on or very close to the existing dwelling which has either reached the end of its useful life or which has some other problem attached to it. The policy is not intended to allow small houses (especially those that may be available to first time buyers or those on low incomes) to be replaced by much larger properties.
- 3.45 The District Council will only consider a significant enlargement in the overall floor area of a replacement dwelling when the existing property is very small or where the extent of the site would enable a larger dwelling to be in proportion. Generally increases in the overall floor area of 30-35% (which includes the Permitted Development allowance) will be considered to be significant.

HS05 Outside the built-up areas of Towns and Villages, planning permission may be granted to replace a dwelling and ancillary outbuildings on or very close to the same site if:

- the size and massing of the replacement is not significantly different to those of the original dwelling to be replaced;
- the new dwelling is of a design which is sympathetic in scale, mass, materials and architectural details to the character of the surrounding development;
- the proposals would not cause the felling or prejudice the retention of any significant trees that contribute to the environmental quality of the area;
- the new dwelling has a safe vehicular access;
- the new dwelling is no more visually intrusive than the original dwelling;
- the existing dwelling is not a listed building; and
- there is no increase in the number of dwellings on the site.

The replacement of two or more small dwellings with one larger one will not be permitted, even if all the above criteria have been met, except when it can be demonstrated that the dwellings to be replaced would not meet any identified local housing need.

Rural Exception – Local Needs Housing

3.46 PPG3 makes it clear that local authorities should assess the range of needs for different types and sizes of housing across all tenures in their area. This should include affordable housing and housing to meet the needs of specific groups. It recognises that rural affordable housing provision may be supported by an ‘exception’ policy. This enables local planning authorities to grant planning permission for land in, or adjoining, existing villages that would not normally be released for housing, in order to provide affordable housing to meet future local needs.

3.47 Policies based on local need and affordable housing in rural areas, as contained in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.1, have served the Council well over the past few years and have helped secure a number of small-scale local needs housing schemes. However, those policies need modifying to take account of current Government advice and circumstances.

3.48 In the context of the Plan “Local Need” refers to people or families in the following categories who cannot afford to purchase a low-cost dwelling at the prevailing market value:

- first time buyers;
- retired or disabled people who have lived or worked in the area specified below for at least five of the last ten years;
- households living in substandard accommodation;
- households not having separate accommodation;
- people or households on the District Council’s housing waiting list; and
- immediate descendants of people currently resident who have themselves been a past resident in the area specified below for at least five of the last ten years; and who, in the case of housing provision in the following larger centres:

Bildeston	East Bergholt
Boxford	Glemsford
Brantham	Holbrook
Bures St. Mary	Lavenham
Capel St. Mary	Long Melford
Chelmondiston	Nayland

- already live in that settlement, the adjoining parishes or parishes in its normal catchment area as determined by the local planning authority, whichever is the greater, and who, in all other cases, already live in the particular settlement or the parishes immediately adjoining it only.

Where units are being offered for sale at below market value, provision will have to be made to ensure that the percentage discount on the market value is retained for the benefit of subsequent owners. Similarly, where units are being offered for rent, provision will have to be made for them to be retained for rent save for any statutory right to buy provision for local authority tenants which may apply. These assurances and provisions will have to be given by way of a legally binding agreement (normally a Section 106 Planning Obligation).

- 3.49 If an application comes forward for 1 or 2 dwellings under the rural exceptions Policy HS06, and which clearly complies with the criteria set out in paragraph 3.48, the District Council would not normally require a detailed housing need survey.
- 3.50 In assessing local need, the District Council will consider the housing waiting list and the views of the local parish council. Those providing such housing will have to substantiate the local need including, if required by the District Council, carrying out household surveys.

HS06 Should a registered social housing landlord or other provider compliant with Circular 6/98 be able to offer the assurances and provisions required in Policy HS07 to meet a defined local housing need, as defined in either the Council's Local Housing Needs Survey or similar reliable survey, concluded to the satisfaction of the District Council, then exceptionally planning permission for local needs housing will be granted in the following circumstances:

- in those Villages listed in Policy HS03, development in or abutting the Built-Up Area of the village, where the number of units will be determined by the identified housing need, and in relation to the size and character of the village;
- in 'clusters' of dwellings in the Countryside when the level of provision will be restricted to one unit.

In all these circumstances the following criteria will need to be met:

- the local housing need cannot be adequately met by other planning policies including social housing provision associated with Local Plan housing allocations;
- the proposed development, by virtue of its size, scale and type, will not exceed the identified local need;
- the type of dwellings to be provided are consistent with the needs identified by the housing needs survey and agreed in advance by the District Council.

And when, in the case of 'clusters' the additional criteria will have to be met:

- a cluster will comprise a tightly-knit group of dwellings clearly definable from the surrounding Countryside;
- dwellings must be located in gaps in the confines of the cluster or about it.

HS07 Before planning permission can be granted, those organisations seeking to provide local need housing under the terms of Policy HS06 must be able to demonstrate that the proposed scheme will be economically viable, can be properly managed and controlled and will only be occupied both immediately and in the long-term by those meeting the definition of local need. Furthermore, in order to retain the supply of these small units and prevent subsequent extensions, the District Council when granting planning permission, will remove any permitted development rights which would otherwise allow such extensions.

Affordable Housing

3.51 Government guidance treats low cost market housing as "affordable" but it is clear that in Babergh even the cheapest housing on the open market is beyond the means of many. For instance, of the 365 concealed households forming annually as identified in the Housing Needs Survey of 2000, 43% have an income below £17,500. The Halifax Price Survey 2000 reveals that anyone in this group would struggle to buy a dwelling in Babergh. For this reason and to avoid confusion, the Plan uses the term "subsidised affordable housing". For the purpose of the Plan, affordable and social needs housing is defined as "*housing that is provided, with a subsidy for people who are unable to resolve their housing needs in the local private sector market because of the relationship between housing, costs and income*". In practice this will usually be housing for rent or shared-ownership, managed by a registered social landlord or other provider compliant with Circular 6/98 such as a housing association.

3.52 PPG3 indicates that a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration and that planning authorities can seek to negotiate with developers for the inclusion of an element of affordable housing in substantial new housing developments. Circular 6/98 on Planning and Affordable Housing stresses the importance of securing a mix of dwelling types and sizes to cater for a range of housing needs, thereby encouraging balanced communities and avoiding areas of social exclusion. Wherever practical, the starting point will always be that affordable housing should be integrated within the proposed development, rather than be a separate block of housing at one end of the site.

3.53 Babergh's Housing Needs Survey assessed the supply and demand for subsidised affordable housing over the period 2000 to 2005. It showed that the housing market in Babergh excludes many local households on lower incomes forcing them to leave the district or live with other households, often in inadequate accommodation. At that time the survey also found that households with a combined income below £17,500 could be excluded from buying a house on the open market. Over the past three years, house prices have risen significantly. The high price of housing is an economic as well as a social problem since many local employers may have difficulty attracting and retaining a workforce. The main parts of the Babergh District Housing Needs Survey (2004) are as follows:-

Demand for Subsidised Affordable Housing 2004 - 2011

Total households in unsuitable housing (2004)	1744
Annual need to reduce backlog	117
Annual newly arising need	445
Total annual affordable need	562

Annual supply of subsidised affordable housing from re-lets in existing stock and new affordable supply	350
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Annual unmet demand for subsidised affordable housing	212
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3.54 Meeting this demand for subsidised affordable housing in full would require 212 additional new dwellings to be provided every year from 2004 to 2009. This cannot be achieved since neither the housing land nor the necessary public resources are available.

- 3.55 A more attainable policy objective would be to seek to retain the same proportion of subsidised affordable housing as at 2000 and slowly increase this proportion over the Plan period 2001-2016.
- 3.56 As a housing authority, the District Council will continue to explore alternative means of delivering affordable housing, including changes in tenure within the existing stock. Despite this, PPG3 stresses that planning mechanisms are an essential part of the District Council's strategy for meeting local housing needs. Policies HS08 and HS09 set out the approach that the District Council will follow in negotiating the inclusion of subsidised affordable housing in private developments. The objective is to secure at least 30% of the dwellings as subsidised affordable housing on new residential sites and on renewed planning applications in Sudbury, Great Cornard and Hadleigh where there is a clear identified housing need at this level. On all other allocated sites in Babergh, Local Plan Policy HSO8 will seek to secure up to 35% of all housing on developments where they are over the prescribed threshold for subsidised affordable housing. In contrast, on small-scale residential development that comes forward as windfall development in settlements with a population below 3,000, the District Council will require one in three dwellings to be subsidised affordable housing.
- 3.57 Circular 6/98 indicates that plans should take account of site size, suitability and the economics of provision. It goes on to state that, in settlements with a population of more than 3000, developments of fewer than 25 dwellings or less than one hectare should not normally be required to include affordable housing unless there are exceptional local constraints. Even then, the threshold should be no smaller than developments of 15 or more dwellings, or sites of 0.5 or more hectares. For villages with fewer than 3000 population Circular 6/98 allows an appropriate threshold to be adopted, based on assessments of local need and the available supply of land for housing.
- 3.58 In Babergh, the use of the standard threshold advocated in Circular 6/98 would severely restrict the contribution of any Local Plan Policy towards meeting the community's need for affordable housing. This is because the majority of housing sites in Babergh, apart from the Chilton package, are small. Of new planning permissions for residential development over the lifetime of the two previous Local Plans, a large proportion of new houses built have come forward on sites below 15 or more dwellings. In the rural areas development in villages is mainly on small sites below 15 dwellings. So, in areas where a need exists, the thresholds in Circular 6/98 would create few opportunities to negotiate an element of subsidised affordable housing during the Plan period up to 2016.

3.59 The District Council has had regard to the guidance in Circular 6/98 as to matters that justify setting lower thresholds. In particular:

- the number and type of household in need of affordable housing;
- the size and amount of suitable sites that are likely to be available for affordable housing and how these relate to levels of need;
- the supply and suitability of existing affordable housing; and
- the relationship between the objectives of the District Council's Housing Strategy, and the Local Plan.

3.60 To achieve a significant contribution to the community's need for affordable housing, the District Council has concluded that Babergh's exceptional local circumstances warrant the lowest thresholds advocated in Circular 6/98. The precise number, size and type of affordable housing units and appropriate tenure arrangements to be provided on any site should be negotiated with the District Council before a planning application is submitted.

HS08 On those allocated sites listed below, and others which come forward for residential development in a settlement with a population of 3,000 or more and which are 0.5 hectares or more in size, capable of accommodating at least 15 dwellings, or on sites of similar size and capacity on which a renewal of planning permission is sought, the District Council will require up to 35% of dwellings to be provided in the form of affordable housing to meet identified local needs. Such properties will be required to be owned or managed by a registered social housing landlord, (or other providers compliant with Circular 6/98) in perpetuity.

- Walnuttree Hospital, Sudbury
- Cornard Road, Sudbury
- People's Park, Sudbury
- Head Lane , Great Cornard
- Church Lane, Sproughton
- Folly Road, Great Waldingfield
- The Chilton Mixed-Use Development Package
- Grays Close, Hadleigh
- Rotheram Road, Bildeston
- Friends Field, Bures St. Mary
- Church Farm, Whatfield
- Bures Road, Great Cornard
- Goodlands Farm, Boxford
- High Bank, Melford Road, Sudbury
- Crownfield Road, Glemsford and
- Land east of Carsons Drive, Great Cornard

The precise number, size and type of affordable housing units and appropriate tenure arrangements to be provided on any site will relate to contemporary demands, as indicated in the most recent Housing Needs Survey, site location and other factors.

HS09 On windfall sites in settlements in rural areas with a population of 3,000 or fewer, the Council will seek to negotiate on a site to site basis an element of affordable housing of up to 35% of the total provision, having regard to the up to date Housing Needs Survey, market and site considerations and the sustainability of the proposed development.

If a developer cannot provide the affordable housing on site, a commuted payment will be required in line with the prevailing charges set out by the District Council in order to provide subsidised affordable housing on an alternative site.

- 3.61 The nature and scale of subsidised affordable housing on individual sites will be for negotiation between the District Council and developers. This will enable the provision of shared-ownership housing or, affordable housing for rent. The District Council will give priority to subsidised affordable housing on site, but where this is not practical or desirable, a commuted payment may be acceptable to fund affordable housing on another site through new build or the purchase of open market housing by a registered social landlord. The District Council will take account of a range of factors including extraordinary costs associated with the development of the site; the availability of a site on which the appropriate amount of affordable housing can be secured; the proximity of local services and facilities and access to public transport; and any other planning objectives for the site that need to be given priority. The District Council will produce a Supplementary Planning Document to assist and expand policies HS08 and HS09 and also provide clarity as to the level of commuted sum expected where affordable housing cannot be provided on the site in question.

Housing Allocations

- 3.62 In line with the advice set out in PPG3: Housing, the District Council has applied the sequential test in allocating land for new housing development. Each allocated site has been assessed against a range of sustainable development criteria.

- 3.63 The following approach was adopted in relation to site selection. Where available and, taking account of future employment needs, suitable urban, previously developed (brownfield) sites were identified through the returns to the DETR for Phase 1 of the National Land Use Database. This revealed a relatively small number of brownfield sites.
- 3.64 This was followed by reassessing all the outstanding housing allocations in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 1 to consider whether it was desirable to increase their housing densities.
- 3.65 Alternative edge-of-town (urban extension) locations were then evaluated in the form of an integrated mixed-use development comprising housing, employment, recreation and education development.
- 3.66 A significant number of possible housing sites in villages were evaluated. Some housing provision has been made in the more sustainable villages where services and facilities already exist.
- 3.67 In considering the most appropriate location for new housing sites, each potential housing site has been carefully assessed against a robust sustainability appraisal process. This has ensured that each site has been evaluated against a range of 19 sustainable development criteria. This process ensures that only the most sustainable sites come forward, so creating sustainable patterns of development in line with Government and Regional guidance and strategic planning policy.
- 3.68 The process has favoured those sites which are served by public transport, have local employment opportunities, access to services such as a school, food store and community or leisure facilities.

HS10 The locations where new housing allocations are proposed are:

Brownfield Sites

Hospital site, Walnuttree Lane, Sudbury	SD13 (Chapter 10: Sudbury Town)
Head Lane, Great Cornard	HS11
William Armes Factory, Cornard Road, Sudbury	HS12

Edge-of-Town Sites

Chilton	Chapter 12
High Bank, Melford Road, Sudbury	HS13
People's Park, Sudbury	HS14
Grays Close, Hadleigh	HS15
Gallows Hill, Hadleigh	HS16
Carsons Drive, Great Cornard	HS17
Bures Road, Great Cornard	HS18

Village Sites

Rotheram Road, Bildeston	HS19
Friends Field/Tawneys Ride, Bures St. Mary	HS20
Goodlands Farm, Daking Avenue, Boxford	HS21
Folly Road, Great Waldingfield	HS22
Church Farm, Whatfield	HS23
Land off Church Lane, Sproughton	HS24
Land at Crownfield Road, Glemsford	HS25

3.69 **Hospital site, Walnuttree Lane, Sudbury** - The site of the current Sudbury hospital on Walnuttree Lane will become surplus to requirements on completion of the new hospital that has a valid planning permission for a site to the north of the town. Many of the existing buildings on the present site are worthy of retention. The District Council will be looking for a residential scheme that seeks to provide for conversion of existing as well as newly built residential development. The site area is 0.96 hectares and the District Council seeks a residential scheme of up to 50 dwellings. The relevant policy covering this site is SD13, located in Chapter 10: Sudbury Town.

3.70 **Head Lane, Great Cornard**

HS11 Approximately 0.6 hectares of land off Head Lane, Great Cornard are allocated for 50 dwellings. Proposals for development will be required to provide for vehicular access to the site from Head Lane.

3.71 **William Armes Factory, Cornard Road, Sudbury** - This site of about 3.0 hectares was identified in the Urban Capacity Study. The net developable area is 2.0 hectares, which could provide for at least 80 dwellings. The site comprises mainly outdated industrial buildings that need to be substantially improved. The rest of the site, to the rear, comprises about 1.0 hectare of woodland, which has high biodiversity value. It is known to provide a habitat for deer as well as a wide variety of birds and reptiles. For this reason, the District Council will require this part of the site to be protected from development and seek its management in perpetuity.

3.72 Release of this site for residential use is an exception to the prevailing planning policy, due to the severe shortage of employment land available within the district. However, the District Council accepts the exceptional circumstances surrounding this site and is prepared to entertain the change of land use provided the business is retained within Sudbury or Great Cornard and that a prior legal agreement has been entered into to ensure there is no loss of employment opportunities from the town. The Yellow Dot Sports centre which provides a valuable asset to the town will also need to be retained either within the redevelopment of the site or on a suitable alternative site or premises provided for within close proximity to the town centre.

HS12 Approximately 3.0 hectares (2.0 hectares net) of land at Cornard Road, Sudbury are allocated for 80 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- prior legal agreement to secure relocation of the business within Sudbury or Great Cornard;
- the continued protection of the biodiversity area of the site ;
- contribution to sports provision in the town;
- vehicular access to be served from Cornard Road;
- a biodiversity assessment to identify the extent of value and mitigation measures agreed in advance of applying for planning permission.

A planning obligation will be sought to secure:

- 1) the management of the biodiversity area,
- 2) a contribution towards additional sports facilities in the town, and
- 3) the relocation of the business within Sudbury or Great Cornard.

A Tree Preservation Order has been made to protect the important trees to the north of the site.

3.73 **Chilton** - The largest of the edge-of-town allocations is the integrated Mixed-Use Development Package at Chilton, on the northern edge of Sudbury. This comprises 700 houses, together with employment, educational and recreational provision. Details are set out in Chapter 12.

Edge-of-Town Sites

- 3.74 **High Bank, Melford Road, Sudbury** - This site forms part of a large residential garden that abuts an allocated site identified in the 1995 Local Plan. The Transport Authority has made clear that vehicular access to the site must be from the adjoining residential land to the east and that it would not permit vehicular access onto Melford Road. However, the adjoining land will serve many houses off a single access, so the District Council has imposed an upper limit on the numbers of houses unless a second access is found.
- 3.75 This site has several important mature trees, which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Due to this and the restriction of a single access point a density of 28 dwellings per hectare is proposed.

HS13 Approximately 0.9 hectares of land at High Bank, Melford Road, Sudbury, are allocated for 25 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- retaining important perimeter trees and significant trees in the site*, as well as enhanced landscaping on the perimeter of the;
- vehicular access into the site to be served from the adjacent allocated housing land to the east. Vehicular access from Melford Road will not be permitted;
- pedestrian access from the eastern boundary of the site along the “green lane” to Melford Road;
- vehicular access to be provided to the edge of the southern perimeter of the site to allow for future access to the adjacent land; and
- no adverse impact on the groundwater to be permitted as the site is in a Groundwater Protection Zone.

*A Tree Preservation Order has been made on trees on the site.

Prospective developers are advised to consider the adopted Development Brief for the adjacent site, which provides access details.

- 3.76 **People’s Park, Sudbury** - The site at People’s Park was put forward as an alternative housing site in response to publication of the Local Plan First Deposit Draft 2001. It is one of two sites in Sudbury that have a valid planning permission for a new hospital. The Health Authority’s preference is to progress the other site, making this site surplus to requirements.

- 3.77 Historically People's Park has been used by the local community as an informal recreation area, which is borne out by the large number of footpaths crossing the site. The District Council wishes to retain a large part of the site for formal and informal open space to serve the community. It is also looking for half of the site to provide for new houses.
- 3.78 The District Council is aware from research that a range of formal recreational facilities is needed in this area of Sudbury.

HS14 Approximately 4.5 hectares of land at Waldingfield Road, Sudbury are allocated for a minimum of 100 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide:

- the undertaking of flood risk, groundwater and land contamination assessments and the implementation of any resulting mitigating measures required prior to development;
- not less than 1.8 hectares of open space which incorporates one NEAP and one LEAP facility;
- a commuted sum to upgrade and integrate the adjacent open space areas to the north and north-east of this site;
- the retention of the hedgerow to the west of the entire site, including providing for a 1 metre service strip on the development boundary side of the hedgerow;
- two pedestrian/cycle routes linking Acton Lane with Waldingfield Road;
- a safe pedestrian crossing on Waldingfield Road, to the specification of the Transport Authority; and
- appropriate landscaping along Waldingfield Road.

A Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be sought to secure amongst other things the management of the informal and formal play areas, improvement and integration of the adjacent open space areas and the western boundary hedge should the developers wish the District Council to take on this responsibility.

- 3.79 **Grays Close, Hadleigh** - Since publishing the First Deposit Draft in September 2001, three important issues relating to this site have come forward:
- the Transport Authority along with many local people has expressed concerns about the adequacy of the proposed vehicular access from Grays Close;

- the adjacent landowner has put forward a “brownfield” site for residential development;
- the Employment Land Study (2002) identifies the need to provide additional employment land in Hadleigh over the Plan period to 2016.

3.80 To address these important considerations, the District Council has substantially revised this allocation. Policy HS15 needs to be considered alongside employment policy EM03. This site is to be considered as a comprehensive allocation that addresses both the residential and employment allocation at the same time. The District Council will not permit more than 20 dwellings off existing roads, namely Grays Close (up to 5 dwellings) and Lady Lane (up to 15 dwellings) in advance of the building of the new roundabout access from the bypass.

HS15 Approximately 16.73 hectares of land at Grays Close, Hadleigh, are allocated for a mixed-use development comprising housing, employment and open space. Approximately 4.73 hectares (excluding green/amenity/wildlife corridors) are allocated for 145 houses. Proposals for development will incorporate:

- retention and enhancement of the existing trees and hedgerows on the southern boundary of the site;
- an area of 3.5 hectares of open space to be located at the south western end of the site including a sustainable drainage system for the development;
- provision for substantial landscaping measures to create a new eastern boundary to the site, and green/amenity and wildlife corridors within the development, particularly along the route of footpath 24;
- a linked network of pedestrian and cycle ways through the site linking to Grays Close, Lady Lane and Tower Mill Lane;

providing that:

- no more than 5 dwellings are to be served off Grays Close. The remainder of the site is to be served off a new access road from Lady Lane and a new roundabout off the Lady Lane/ Hadleigh by-pass junction ; and
- no more than 20 dwellings shall be completed and occupied in advance of the new roundabout access off the Hadleigh by-pass being built.

3.81 **Gallows Hill, Hadleigh** - In response to publishing the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 First Deposit Draft (2001) the issue of visual impact of this site upon the adjacent Brett Valley Special Landscape Area has come to the fore. The District Council accepts the need to mitigate any adverse impact, which is why a substantial embankment is now required, together with enhanced structural landscaping on the north-eastern corner of the site. Likewise, the notation of structural landscaping on the Proposals Map has been amended to coincide with the perimeter of the allocated site in order to minimise any adverse visual impact. The consequence of both of these changes has led to the overall reduction in the site area.

3.82 The Transport Authority has indicated it will require a footpath along the entire Gallows Hill frontage.

HS16 Approximately 0.9 hectares (0.6 hectares net) of land at Gallows Hill, Hadleigh, are allocated for 10 dwellings. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- 0.4 hectares of structural landscaping including earth mounding on the northern and eastern boundaries;
- vehicular access into the site at the point shown on the Proposals Map; and
- the site layout to have houses that front on to Gallows Hill.

3.83 **Carsons Drive, Great Cornard**

HS17 Approximately 4.4hectares of land east of Carsons Drive, Great Cornard to be allocated forabout 170 dwellings. Proposals for the development will be required to provide for:

- woodland planting along the ridgeline and general ecological enhancement together with its future management;
- public open space and its future management;
- deletion of the proposed expansion of the Special Landscape Area designation for the housing site;
- archaeological investigation;
- highway improvements including provision of a footpath; and
- adequate and appropriate sewage treatment

Note: Satisfactory detailed proposals for transport measures to serve this site will need to be agreed before any development scheme is implemented. Therefore, planning permission will not be granted until these matters are resolved. The transport proposals should be based on sustainable development principles and adequate for the detailed residential scheme. Accordingly, road widening of the C732, throughout its length, will not be considered acceptable. Consequently, it is possible that the development of this site might not come forward in the earliest part of the Local Plan's lifespan.

3.84 **Bures Road, Great Cornard** - The site at Bures Road, Great Cornard is the only remaining allocation in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.1 (1995) that has neither been granted planning permission nor has been built. But it is the subject of a current planning application that is being considered by the District Council. Since the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 First Deposit Draft was published, and to comply with the revised residential density policy, the District Council needs to increase the number of houses allocated from 220 specified in the 1995 Plan to 270 dwellings, thereby giving a density of around 38 dwellings per hectare. The Suffolk Archaeological Unit has investigated the archaeological ring ditches found on the site and said that they do not need to be preserved in situ. As this point no longer needs to be referred to in the policy, it has been removed. On the current planning application, several important issues need to be resolved to the satisfaction of both the District Council and its advisors. These include:-

- Flood Risk Assessment and appropriate mitigation measures - the Environment Agency; and
- a suitable access off Bures Road into the site and appropriate traffic calming measures to deter through traffic on to Head Lane – the Transport Authority.

HS18 Approximately 7.2 hectares of land at and adjoining the rugby ground, Bures Road, Great Cornard are proposed for 270 houses. Proposals for development are expected to provide that:

- there is a binding agreement prior to the relocation of Sudbury Rugby Club;
- a roundabout to all current highway standards is provided on Bures Road as the main access;

- roads within the site should provide the following:
 - access to the business use allocation (Policy EM07);
 - a new access linking reasonably directly to the new roundabout should be provided and the existing access closed, if the existing rugby clubhouse continues in recreation or community use;
 - a connection to Rugby Road laid out and designed so that access for the majority of houses in the area will be to the new roundabout and that the connected roads should not form an attractive alternative to the use of Bures Road and Head Lane;
- public open space is provided around the sewage pumping station and any other measures used to make it acceptable close to housing;
- a substantial landscaping strip and public open space to the north of Blackhouse Lane is provided to form a firm “green edge” to Great Cornard, and appropriate arrangements made for its long-term management;
- existing rights of way within the site are integrated within the development; and
- appropriate measures are taken to control water quality of all surface water discharges to the aquifer.

Note: Since the adoption of the Plan planning permission was granted for the development on 5th December 2006 and construction on the site is now underway.

3.85 Rotheram Road, Bildeston

Village Sites

HS19 Approximately 1.0 hectares of land at Rotheram Road, Bildeston, are allocated for 40 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- retaining and enhancing the existing trees and hedgerows on the southern and eastern boundaries of the site;
- public open space in the north-western corner of the site together with specific proposals for its long-term maintenance; and
- the upgrading of an off-site public footpath connecting the site to the High Street.

- 3.86 **Friends Field/Tawneys Ride, Bures St. Mary** - The Suffolk Wildlife Trust has said that the site may have biodiversity value. Prospective developers will be required to undertake an ecological appraisal at the appropriate time of year to quantify the value of the site and put in place appropriate mitigation measures.

HS20 Approximately 1.5 hectares of land (1.3 hectares net) at Friends Field, Bures St. Mary, are allocated for 40 houses. Proposals will be required to provide for:

- an off-site public footpath and cycleway connecting the site to Nayland Road and the centre of the village, as shown on the Proposals Map;
- a public footpath/cycleway across the site linking Friend's Field and Tawneys Ride;
- retention and enhancement of the existing trees* and hedgerows along the northern boundary of the site;
- retained trees to be incorporated into an extended area of public open space (0.2 hectares) in the north-eastern corner of the site together with specific details for its long-term maintenance;
- vehicular access from Friends Field and Tawneys Ride (relocate garage court), but with no vehicular link between them. No vehicular access will be permitted from Eves Orchard; and
- an ecological appraisal of the site, together with details of any measures necessary to mitigate identified ecological damage resulting from the development, to be submitted with the planning application.

*A Tree Preservation Order has been made on trees in the site.

- 3.87 **Goodlands Farm, Daking Avenue, Boxford** - Several roads in Boxford suffer traffic congestion. Swan Street, the feeder road into Daking Avenue is recognised as being congested by Suffolk County Council which, for transport reasons, stipulates an upper limit of 20 dwellings which is below the standard density range. A higher number would be unacceptable. The District Council accepts the restriction on the number of dwellings, and considers this a valid reason for not complying with its density policy. The Transport Authority has also specified that the cul-de-sac on Daking Avenue will need extending. Several local people have raised concerns about the need to provide land for off-street parking behind properties on Swan Street. The District Council would support this initiative if it was self financing as a residents shared car park or one owned and managed by the local community. A potential site has been marked on the Proposal Map.

HS21 Approximately 0.7 hectares of land at Goodlands Farm, Boxford, are allocated for 20 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- vehicular access from Daking Avenue;
- a footpath and cycleway connecting the site to Swan Street;
- 2.4 hectares of land to the south and west of the site, to be conveyed into public ownership for recreational use, and surrounded by extensive tree landscaping to mitigate the impact of development and to provide adequate public open space for the development;
- the adjacent barn (which is a listed building), to be retained and refurbished, and incorporated into the overall redevelopment; and
- a small informal car park for visitors to the recreational area and overspill car parking for residents of Daking Avenue.

Note: The District Council will seek a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure, amongst other things, the provision and long term maintenance of the public open space.

3.88 **Folly Road, Great Waldingfield** - The Suffolk Wildlife Trust has requested an ecological appraisal at the appropriate time of year to quantify the value of the site and put in place appropriate mitigation measures. Little Owls are probably using the derelict buildings for roosting and nesting. This will need to be taken into account when planning the demolition of any buildings. The Transport Authority has requested visibility improvements at the junction of Folly Road and the B1115 and traffic calming measures along Folly Road particularly near the school.

HS22 Approximately 3.8 hectares (2.8 hectares net) of land on part of the former pig farm at Folly Road, Great Waldingfield, are allocated for 40 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- retention of the existing hedgerow and trees* on the site fronting Folly Road and structural landscaping on the northern and eastern boundaries of the;
- traffic calming of Folly Road, and pedestrian and cycle access into the site at the point shown on the Proposals Map;
- retention of important "field boundary" trees in the site;

- upgrading of the existing right of way to the west of the site to become a cycleway;
- a 1.1 hectare village green with pedestrian access from Folly Road to be conveyed into public ownership; and
- submission of an ecological appraisal of the site with the planning application, together with details of any measures necessary to mitigate any identified ecological damage resulting from the development.

*A Tree Preservation Order has been made on trees on the site.

3.89 In considering development proposals for this site regard will be paid both to the need to make the most efficient use of land and to the most suitable development density for this particular site. Some constraints on the site are known, including the need to retain important landscape features, to incorporate further landscaping and the site's location where the village edge and open countryside meet. Other constraints are not yet known, including potential contamination. As a result, factors including the exact net developable area and the most appropriate development density cannot be identified precisely yet. The figures quoted in the policy are therefore notional estimates.

3.90 **Church Farm, Whatfield** - The Suffolk Wildlife Trust considers that the site is likely to have biodiversity value. The District Council will require prospective developers to undertake an ecological appraisal at the appropriate time of year in order to quantify the value of the site and put in place appropriate mitigation measures. A survey in 2000 showed that the site supports a good population of breeding birds in addition to Common Lizards, a protected species covered by Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Transport Authority has requested that the new footpath proposed along the front of the site be extended eastwards to connect with the existing right of way.

HS23 Approximately 1.7 hectares (0.7 hectares net) of land at Church Farm, Whatfield, are allocated for 15 houses. Development proposals will be required to provide for:

- retention of the existing ponds, and their immediate surroundings, to the east of the site, as shown on the Proposals Map;
- 0.7 hectares to the south of the site to be conveyed into public ownership for public open space and informal recreational use;

- retention and enhancement of the existing perimeter landscaping. Particular care must be taken to retain trees* fronting Naughton Road and ensure that development is kept at least 3 metres back from this part of the site, in order to protect and minimise the impact on the ponds;
- submission of an ecological appraisal of the site with the planning application, together with details of any measures necessary to mitigate any identified ecological damage resulting from the development.
- structural landscaping to the south and west of the site; and
- a new footpath along the entire eastern side of the site behind the ponds.

*A Tree Preservation Order has been made on trees in the site.

3.91 The District Council will seek a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure, amongst other things, the provision and long term maintenance of the public open space.

3.92 **Land off Church Lane, Sproughton**

HS24 Approximately 3.4 hectares (1.1 hectares net) of land off Church Lane, Sproughton, are allocated for 30 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- 2.3 hectares of land for public recreation, to be conveyed into public ownership before development begins;
- a structural landscaping belt to define and contain the housing area,; and
- a footpath linking Church Lane to the new public recreation area.

A Tree Preservation Order has been made on trees on the site.

The District Council will seek a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure, amongst other things, the provision and long term maintenance of the public recreation area.

3.93 Land at Crownfield Road, Glemsford

HS25 Approximately 1.8 hectares (1.3 hectares net) of land off Crownfield Road, Glemsford are allocated for 45 – 60 houses. Proposals for development will be required to provide for:

- 0.5 hectares of land for public open space;
- retention and enhancement of the existing perimeter landscaping (where most suitable for retention), combined with structural landscaping where required to supplement the existing perimeter landscaping;
- vehicular and pedestrian access from Crownfield Road;
- highways improvements as necessary to facilitate safe access;
- provision of a public footpath through the development linking in with the existing paths to the rear of the allotments and Fair Green; and
- upgrades to the footpath linking the site with Fair Green.

Note 1: Before a detailed application is determined an ecological survey and Flood Risk Assessment will be required.

Note 2: In relation to criterion four above the Transport Authority advise that notwithstanding any physical improvements that may be achieved at the junction of Crownfield Road and Brook Street, the minimum required to satisfy this criterion is that the developer should promote any Traffic Orders necessary to achieve traffic management measures designed to improve visibility at this junction.

Note 3: Satisfactory measures for surface water and foul drainage will need to be agreed before any development scheme for the site is implemented.

Note 4: The development of this site will have to be planned and implemented in a comprehensive way and piecemeal development must not occur.

Ipswich Policy Area

3.94 The Western and Southern Bypasses enclose large areas of land which are under some pressure for development. The undeveloped areas enclosed by the Bypasses and abutting the built-up area of Ipswich continue to have severe constraints and remain unsuitable for housing development generally for the following reasons:

- most of the land is in agricultural use and some is of high grade quality;

- land on the western fringe is rolling countryside, attractive in appearance and particularly prominent on the skyline;
- the southern fringe consists of the attractive valley of the Belstead Brook with numerous trees and hedgerows;
- the western fringe contains the valley of the River Gipping;
- there are fine mature trees in the area and the overall land gives a soft natural edge to the town and is an attractive gateway into Ipswich from the south and west;
- noise from the Bypasses would be an important consideration;
- there are severe constraints in terms of foul and surface water drainage; and
- more suitable land for development occurs on the northern and eastern side of Ipswich where all of the requirements for extra housing in the Policy Area can more adequately be met.

HS26 New housing development, over and above that considered acceptable in accordance with the Settlement Policy in respect of the 'Towns', 'Villages' and 'Countryside' will not be permitted in that part of the Ipswich Policy Area which lies in the Babergh District.

- 3.95 Most larger housing sites, and in some cases smaller ones, will require off-site works to be completed, or financial contributions to these works or to other improvements or facilities, all of which shall be so directly related to the proposed development such that the development could not be permitted without it. This will be secured by a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, before planning permission is granted – see Policy LP01 (chapter 1 – Introduction).
- 3.96 The type of work which will frequently be required will include highway and access improvements, drainage, watercourse improvements and surface water run-off attenuation, water supply and sewage disposal facilities, landscaping, recreational or open space, car parking provision and new community, school or social facilities on large sites or their replacement where they exist and are to be lost on the development site. However, in no instance will the District Council view the offer of such work or facilities sufficient to outweigh refusing a planning application for development which is unacceptable in all other respects.
- 3.97 The County Council and the Suffolk District Councils have produced a Guidance Note which sets out a countywide approach and common method for using Section 106 Planning Obligations. This Guidance Note has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the District Council.

Planning Obligations Relating to Development

Town Centres

- 3.98 In addition to development occurring through infilling, groups and the allocation of specific sites, other sites are likely to come forward in the Town Centres through redevelopment and conversion, particularly of public buildings. This is especially the case in Sudbury and specific examples are identified in the Sudbury Town Chapter.

Sewerage and Sewage Treatment

- 3.99 Where development could lead to the overloading of a particular treatment works, it is likely that Anglian Water Services Ltd, under the terms of the Water Act 1989, will request that the development is phased over a mutually acceptable timescale to allow time for any necessary improvements in the infrastructure to be implemented. Developers are encouraged to discuss proposals with Anglian Water Services Ltd at the earliest opportunity. The Environment Agency advise on any phasing agreement between the different parties and in turn monitor the Water Authorities discharges to verify that they comply with the consent issued.

Housing Density and House Type

- 3.100 PPG3, in advocating the creation of sustainable residential environments, advises that local planning authorities should avoid the inefficient use of land. Housing developments built at a net density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare can no longer be sustained and PPG3 encourages local planning authorities to promote housing developments with a net density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare. It also encourages greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility.
- 3.101 In considering density, PPG3 makes it clear that “net site density” should be used. This includes:
- access roads in the site;
 - private garden space;
 - car parking areas;
 - incidental open space and landscaping; and
 - children’s play areas where these are to be provided.
- 3.102 It therefore excludes:
- major distributor roads;
 - primary schools;
 - open spaces serving a wider area; and
 - significant landscape buffer strips.
- 3.103 Local planning authorities are also advised to revise their parking standards to allow for significantly lower levels of off-street parking provision, particularly in town centres, and schemes for elderly people, students and single people.

HS27 Unless the environmental quality or character dictates otherwise planning permission for residential development will not be granted where the density is below 30 dwellings per hectare net. Residential densities should be at least 30 dwellings per hectare. To maximise residential densities, lower car parking and open space standards will be acceptable on sites in towns where they are close to jobs and services, and where:

- the site is either well related to or offers the opportunity to invest in alternative modes of sustainable transport, including public transport and cycle provision; and
- compensatory off-site open space can either be provided, upgraded or enlarged where nearby open space already exists.

The District Council will seek a Planning Obligation for the compensatory off site requirements.

3.104 In applying Policy HS27 and considering any exceptions to it, the following circumstances will be considered as material:

- situations where a development solution with a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (or higher) cannot be achieved, in terms of the impact of the scheme on the character and appearance of the locality;
- the need to demonstrate that the lower density sought makes the most efficient use of land, whilst taking into account the character and appearance of the local area; and
- the need to demonstrate that higher density schemes would lead to unacceptable outcomes (such as increasing the need to travel) in terms of the incremental expansion of villages with few or no local facilities (including passenger transport services) and where there is little or no likelihood of such facilities being provided.

3.105 The Government believes that it is important to help create mixed and inclusive communities which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. PPG3 obliges local planning authorities to encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities, and so avoid creating large areas of similar housing. Local planning authorities must take account of assessments of local housing need in determining the type and size of additional housing, and they should assess the composition of current and future households in their area, as well as existing housing stock. This will help secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability to meet the changing composition of households in their area in the light of the likely assessed need. Local authorities must also encourage providing housing to meet the needs of specific groups.

- 3.106 The District Council endorses the aim of increasing housing densities. However, the environmental quality and character of the Babergh District is exceptional. This applies equally to both Towns and Villages and to the Countryside. Some housing sites, due to their sensitive location or to the proximity of very low density housing, will require to be developed at low densities and Policy HS30 will be relevant in this respect. The number of dwellings specified for each of the allocations is a notional capacity and conservative estimate of the potential of the site and not a precise calculation.
- 3.107 The District Council will seek to retain important gaps in street frontages and, in considering applications for infilling or groups of dwellings, seek to ensure that the need for economical use of land is not at the expense of a high standard of design and layout sympathetic to the site and immediate surroundings.

HS28 Planning applications for infilling or groups of dwellings will be refused where:

- the site should remain undeveloped as an important feature in visual or environmental terms;
- the proposal, in the opinion of the District Council, represents overdevelopment to the detriment of the environment, the character of the locality, residential amenity or highway safety;
- the layout provides an unreasonable standard of privacy, garden size or public open space; and
- the proposal is of a scale, density or form which would be out of keeping with adjacent and nearby dwellings or other buildings.

- 3.108 The District Council will prepare more detailed guidelines on the importance, interpretation and implementation of this policy.

- 3.109 Proposals will be treated on the same basis as other residential applications. The provision of services to isolated sites can be very costly and the presence of residential caravans can have a detrimental impact on the environment and landscape.

HS29 Planning permission will not be granted for residential caravans on sites which would not receive planning permission for permanent residential development, other than for permanent Gypsy and travellers sites*.

* Denotes sites which are permitted under Policy HS42

Residential Caravans

3.110 Applicants are advised to liaise with the District Council's Environmental Services Division in the first instance, to clarify the position of need and the number of pitches required. If it is likely that a private sewage treatment plant is proposed, applicants are advised to liaise with the Environment Agency before submitting planning application.

3.111 See paragraphs 6.53 - 6.57 of Chapter 6: Countryside and the Rural Economy.

3.112 The design of most new housing has long been of concern as it often fails to provide a good quality environment and to reflect local character. New housing development should be designed to harmonise with the special character of the Babergh District. PPG3 suggests that good design and layout of new development can help to achieve the Government's objectives of making the best use of previously developed land and improving the quality and attractiveness of residential areas. It suggests that new housing development, of whatever scale, should not be viewed in isolation and that consideration of design and layout must be informed by the wider context having regard to immediate neighbouring buildings, townscape and landscape of the wider locality. PPG3 also stresses the importance of the local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and ecology, all of which help to determine the character and identity of a development.

HS30 All new development shall be of a high standard of layout and design.

3.113 When the District Council determines planning applications for residential development, it will pay full regard to the Guidance Note No. 7, "An Approach to the Design of New Housing in Babergh", as well as to the "Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas", both of which have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The existing character of an area should be respected in the design and layout of any new housing and nationally adopted design solutions which do not reflect local character will not be acceptable.

3.114 Particular attention will be paid to the impact of new development which affects listed buildings or is located in a conservation area.

3.115 On larger sites, or on sites which require sensitive treatment, the District Council will prepare a Development Brief. Alternatively, a prospective developer will be asked to prepare a Development Brief or a "Master Plan" against which their proposals will be judged.

Houseboats

Design of New Housing

Car Parking

Public Open Space and Play Areas on New Development

- 3.116 See paragraphs 9.65 - 9.69 of Chapter 9: Transport.
- 3.117 PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation gives guidance to local authorities. The National Playing Fields Association also provides guidance for local authorities with its “2.4 hectares” of public open space per 1,000 population standard. In addition, it recommends that Councils identify deficiencies in public open space and recreational provision in their district. In response, this District Council has initiated a survey focussing initially on the two market towns and larger villages.
- 3.118 Most new households undoubtedly make use of the available public open space. The relevant policy in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 1 only sought to provide new areas of public open space if the development site was over a certain size or could accommodate a certain number of dwellings.
- 3.119 The District Council recognises that this approach has, over the years, resulted in increased cumulative pressure of use, from new infill housing developments that have not contributed to improvement or provision of any additional open space. New open space has only been secured on the larger housing sites.
- 3.120 The problems of pressure of use and a growing imbalance with the level of open space provision, together with an increasing population, need to be addressed. The District Council has, therefore introduced a policy that requires a financial contribution from all residential planning permissions granted below a specified threshold site area of 1.5 hectares, where it is not practical to incorporate an area of public open space on either the site itself, or nearby. This approach ensures that all residential developments contribute to providing for either new and/or improved public open space. This will also ensure that there is no deterioration in the overall quantity or quality of provision, which would otherwise have to be paid for through an increase in local taxation. The nature of the public open space will be expected to be:
- usable open space in terms of its location, size and shape, with no single area being less than 0.15 hectares;
 - planned for in a positive way, that integrates the open space in the development it serves;
 - landscaped in a way that provides for visual amenity, biodiversity gain as well as areas of shade;
 - designed with the safety and the security of children in mind, including traffic calming of the access to the open space where this involves crossing a road; and
 - a range of different types of open space play areas on the larger sites to cater for different users in line with the National Playing Fields Association standards.

If open space and play equipment are to be adopted by the District Council, the developer must provide for their future maintenance. The District Council will seek to secure a Planning Obligation to make suitable financial provision for its subsequent maintenance.

HS31 Proposals for residential development on a site of 1.5 hectares and above are required to provide 10% of the gross site area as public open space. This must include providing play equipment, which has been agreed in advance with the District Council.

HS32 Proposals for all new residential development, ranging from a single dwelling up to the development of a 1.5 hectare site, will be required to provide open space and play equipment in proportion to the number of dwellings to be built. Developers will be given the choice to either:

- contribute financially to secure public open space with play equipment on a nearby alternative site, or enhance and improve the nearest existing provision provided by the District Council; or
- provide 10% of the gross site area as public open space with play equipment, if an opportunity exists to combine with an established adjacent area of public open space and if this has been agreed in advance with the District Council. If direct provision is possible, the open space will be assessed against the criteria listed in paragraph 3.120.

If a developer cannot provide open space and play equipment or facilities on an alternative site, a financial contribution will be required, in line with the prevailing charges set by the District Council, which are based on the number of bedrooms per house.

If open space and play equipment are to be adopted by the District Council, it will seek a Planning Obligation to make suitable financial provision for its subsequent maintenance.

3.121 In September 2002 the District Council adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance, which provides an explanation of the National Playing Fields Association standards and Babergh's interpretation of them. It includes the cost per dwelling, which is based on the number of bedrooms per property. Developers are advised to obtain a copy of the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Public Open Space and Play Equipment, which expands on the details provided in paragraph 3.120 and Policies HS31 and HS32.

Extensions to Existing Dwellings

- 3.122 Dwellings need to be adaptable to meet the changing requirements of family life. Home owners are increasingly choosing to extend their homes rather than move to a larger property. Most extensions are acceptable, provided that careful attention is given to design and materials, in order to respect the amenities of neighbours and the appearance of the street or locality. However, a balance needs to be struck to ensure that the existing stock of smaller dwellings, which are affordable to low income and first time buyers is maintained.
- 3.123 In relation to seeking to protect the supply of smaller affordable property the District Council will also take into account the previous planning history of properties to ensure that successive or “rolling” permissions are not used to circumvent this policy.

HS33 Planning permission will be granted to extend a dwelling if:

- the scale, mass, external materials and architectural details of the proposed extension blend in with those of the dwelling and its wider setting;
- the extension reflects and respects the relationship of the site and its setting, and those of adjoining dwellings;
- the proposal does not reduce the level of amenity enjoyed by occupants of neighbouring property;
- the proposal would not cause the felling of, or damage to any significant trees that contribute to the environmental quality and visual amenity of the locality; and
- a safe vehicular access can be achieved and sufficient space remains available to park vehicles in the curtilage of the dwelling.

Smaller Dwellings

- 3.124 The Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 2 Issues Report (1999) raised concerns about the size of most new houses being built, particularly in the villages, where these are invariably four or five bedroom dwellings. They are expensive and often beyond the financial means of many local people. This is particularly so in the case of first time buyers and single person households.
- 3.125 The concern about the size of new dwellings was expressed by many of the responses made to the Issues Report and has been confirmed by the recent Housing Needs Survey research, undertaken on behalf of the District Council. The threshold at which local people are able to afford to buy a property has been identified by the Housing Need Survey (2000) at this time as a combined household income of £17,500.

However, in the three years since the study, house prices have risen significantly, pushing this household income figure to a combined income of about £25,000 - £30,000.

- 3.126 PPG3 requires local authorities to assess the range of needs for different types and sizes of housing across all tenures, and to make provision accordingly in local plans.
- 3.127 The District Council proposes to introduce policies which enable it to secure housing developments which closely reflect local housing requirements. From latest housing needs surveys the Council will seek to secure that 20% of all dwellings built for sale over a specified threshold will be one and two bedroom units. Subsequent surveys will determine whether this figure should change over the plan period.

HS34 On all allocated housing sites - and others which come forward for residential development which are of 0.1 hectares or more in size and are capable of accommodating at least five dwellings, and on sites of similar size and capacity on which a renewal of planning permission is sought a percentage of dwellings shall be one and two bedroom units to meet the housing needs of first time buyers and single person households. The precise number of smaller one and two bedroom units (to have an internal floor area of 75 sq.m or less) to be provided on any site will relate to contemporary demands as indicated in housing needs surveys, site location and other factors.

- 3.128 The need for annexes (e.g. 'granny flat') is recognised, especially with the increasing numbers of elderly people and the desire of children and parents to live nearby whilst allowing a degree of independence. This can be met by purchasing a separate property, but it may be essential for help to be more immediately on hand during illness or advanced infirmity.
- 3.129 Planning permission is not needed to use part of an existing dwelling (or one of its outbuildings) as an annex, although the physical alterations may need permission. The District Council could only regard accommodation as an annex if:
- it is occupied by someone who is a close relative to the occupier of the main house;
 - either a degree of care is provided by the occupier of the main house or the occupier of the annex often spends some time in the main dwelling; and

Residential Annexes

- there is no separation between the annex and the main house e.g. no separate address, no division of the curtilage etc.

3.130 Annexes should normally be provided within or as extensions to the principal house, and the functional and practical links should be demonstrated.

HS35 Self contained annexes to existing dwellings will be permitted in the form of extensions, which will be considered against policy HS33. The application should:

- explain the need for the annex;
- demonstrate the functional and practical linkage between the annex and the main dwelling; and
- give an indication of how it will be used if the present need for the annex ceases to exist.

Proposals for an annex in the form of a free-standing building will only be considered where it can be demonstrated satisfactorily that an annex cannot be provided in the form of an extension.

Where an annex would be capable of forming a separate dwelling in contravention of the housing policies in the Local Plan, a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be sought to ensure its occupation is tied to the main dwelling.

Residential Amenity

3.131 Outside town centres, new shops, offices or other non-residential uses are often provided through the conversion of residential accommodation. This can have detrimental effects on:

- residential amenity;
- the character of the area;
- altering the delicate balance between residential and non-residential uses;
- loss of social mix of activities;
- a Conservation Area, through changes to frontages, the introduction of advertisements etc.;
- historic or listed buildings;
- exacerbating highway and parking problems.

HS36 Change of use from residential to non-residential will not be permitted where the proposal will have a detrimental effect on residential amenity, the surrounding environment, the Conservation Area or a listed building.

- 3.132 Hall Street and Little St. Mary's contain a balance of residential and non-residential uses which makes a significant contribution to the character of the village. This part of the village is in the Conservation Area and the majority of buildings are listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.
- 3.133 In recent years, the balance has changed with increasing numbers of non-residential uses. These uses have detrimental effects on residential amenity and create problems relating to car parking.
- 3.134 The majority of commercial uses tend to be in Hall Street. Little St. Mary's, which is narrow in places with less parking facilities, is more residential in character. In future new development will be expected to provide for parking in accordance with the District Council's adopted advisory standards.

Long Melford

HS37 Change of use from residential to non-residential will not be permitted in Little St. Mary's and Hall Street, Long Melford, south of the former Congregational Church. In the remainder of Hall Street northwards to Bull Lane, change of use from residential to non-residential will only be permitted where:

- the proposal will not result in more than 50% of properties in a particular frontage of seven properties of which the particular property is the centre, being in non-residential use;
- the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on residential amenity;
- the proposal would not adversely change the appearance of a particular frontage to the detriment of the character of the Conservation Area;
- the proposal would not adversely affect a building listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest;
- adequate off-street parking is being provided without detriment to residential amenity or the appearance of the Conservation Area, unless the applicant has demonstrated to the District Council that the proposal will not require such parking.

Lavenham

- 3.135 Lavenham is a sizeable village with pressure for additional tourist facilities (tea rooms, gift shops etc.) and office uses. The village has a well-defined central commercial core outside of which the streets are residential in character. That character, and residential amenity should be protected by restricting non-residential uses.

HS38 Change of use from residential to retail (and other appropriate uses) will only be permitted within Lavenham in the Market Place, Lady Street, High Street (between Water Street and Pump Court), and Water Street (between High Street and Lady Street) subject to there being no adverse impact on:

- residential amenity;
- the Conservation Area;
- listed buildings, and
- access and highway safety.

Special Needs Housing

- 3.136 Legislative changes have led to local authorities playing a vital role in the community care planning process. The “Care in the Community” initiative involves providing housing for the elderly; people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities; and people with mental health problems; to enable each group to fully integrate and live independently in the community.

New nursing, residential care, rest homes and sheltered housing

HS39 Planning applications for nursing, residential care, rest homes and sheltered housing and extensions to such homes will be permitted provided:

- they are in the built-up area of a Town or *sustainable Village (with a range of services and facilities available);
- in the case of sheltered housing, the proposal does not conflict with the housing policies of the Plan, including the overall level of housing growth in the policy area against which they will count;
- the development provides an adequate amount of accommodation for warden/staff;
- the development incorporates usable, attractive areas of communal garden;
- the development is well located in relation to local facilities;
- adequate car parking is provided in accordance with the District Council’s adopted advisory standards, without intruding on communal garden areas;
- the internal and external layout and design meets the needs of people with mobility problems;

- where permission is granted for an institutional use (Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended) the permission will be restricted to the use permitted only; and
- there is no detriment to road safety, residential amenity or drainage infrastructure.

Where planning permission is granted for sheltered housing, it will normally be subject to a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, restricting occupation to persons over 60 years of age.

*sustainable villages are listed in Policy HS03

3.137 The District Council supports the “Care in the Community” initiative but does not have the resources on its own to fund or build the required quantity of special needs housing to meet the needs of the people in the Babergh District. Help from other agencies and private investment is therefore required to fulfil these objectives.

HS40 Planning permission for the change of use of a dwelling/building to nursing/residential/rest home or to accommodation for the mentally or physically handicapped will be permitted provided:

- they are in the built-up area of a Town or *sustainable Village (with a range of services and facilities available);
- the proposed property is a substantial detached dwelling/building;
- the development incorporates a suitable communal garden for residents;
- it is well located in relation to local facilities;
- where the proposal involves extending a property it will be considered in relation to the character of surrounding properties;
- adequate car parking is provided in accordance with the District Council’s adopted advisory standards, without intruding on communal garden areas;
- the internal and external alterations and design meets the needs of people with mobility problems; and
- there is no detriment to road safety, residential amenity or drainage infrastructure.

Change of Use to Nursing/Residential Care/Rest Home

*sustainable Villages are listed in Policy HS03

Low Impact housing

- 3.138 The District Council is prepared to encourage innovation and to accommodate “low impact houses”, that are designed to be largely self-supporting in energy consumption, and have a low environmental impact.
- 3.139 For the purposes of the Plan, the term “low impact housing” will conform to the following criteria:
- be small-scale;
 - unobtrusive;
 - use predominantly local materials;
 - protect wildlife and enhance biodiversity;
 - consume few non-renewable resources;
 - generate a very low level of traffic;
 - have some positive environmental benefits; and
 - be a high standard of design.

The term “low impact” relates not only to the dwelling itself, but also to the use of the land in the curtilage of the dwelling and the lifestyles of its occupants.

- 3.140 Any proposal for low-impact housing will need to ensure that it is of the highest quality and fits with the general policies and design principles in the countryside.

HS41 If it can be demonstrated that a significant environmental benefit will result low impact housing may be permitted as an exception to the prevailing policy of restricting residential development in the countryside.

In such circumstances a Planning Obligation will be sought to ensure that the low impact nature of the development will remain in perpetuity. The development will have to be removed if it ceases to be low impact.

Low impact housing will only be permitted if it is close to a village that has a range of social and community facilities. These must include a school and food shop. Low impact housing will not be acceptable in or adjacent to, designated landscapes and protected or designated national and county wildlife sites.

3.141 ODPM Circular 1/2006 – Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites provides guidance on the planning aspects of finding sites for gypsies and travellers and how local authorities and gypsies and travellers can work together to achieve that aim. It requires the Regional Spatial Strategy to identify the number of pitches required (but not their location) for each local planning authority. Local planning authorities are required to translate any allocation the RSS may make in their administrative areas into specific site allocations in one of the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that will form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (the replacement for the Local Plan introduced by the Planning and Compensation Act 2004). The Core Strategy DPD should set out criteria-based policies against which to determine planning applications for such sites.

3.142 “Gypsies and travellers ” are defined in paragraph 15 of the Circular as:

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding member of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such”.

3.143 There are several major difficulties in allocating a site or sites in the Plan, for example:

- there is no evidence to suggest that a permanent Gypsy site is required in the Babergh District or that there is a permanent population of Gypsies;
- there is no evidence that a site is required for other travellers. In any case it would be difficult to identify a site that would be in a location that would enable it to be used;
- the different travelling groups (Gypsies and Travellers) generally do not mix on sites, whether authorised or unauthorised, and lead different lifestyles. The issue of which group should be provided for remains contentious. The potential location of a suitable site is fraught with difficulties. For example, Gypsies tend to prefer an urban location where there is likely to be more impact on residential and other amenities. New-Age travellers, on the other hand, tend to seek more rural, semi-isolated locations; and
- travellers can now provide sites for themselves.

3.144 In the light of this, the District Council sees a criteria based policy, as opposed to the allocation of a specific site(s) as the preferred way forward for this Local Plan. The District Council will normally expect sites to accommodate between six and fifteen caravans. Applications for sites above this number of pitches will need to provide detailed supporting evidence of need.

HS42 Planning permission for permanent sites for Gypsies and other Travellers in mobile units of accommodation will be acceptable where:

- there is evidence of a local need for a site;
- they are located outside settlements, but in a reasonable proximity to key services, particularly schools and shops;
- the proposed development has no adverse impact on residential amenities, the flood plain, drainage infrastructure, landscape character, historic features or biodiversity;
- the site is, or can be adequately screened by appropriate landscaping;
- the site is neither in, nor adjacent to, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a Special Landscape Area;
- the site offers safe access and adequate off-site parking for cars, lorries and caravans;
- there is good access to the main road; and
- utility services can be provided, including fresh water supply, foul drainage services and electricity. Private sewage treatment plants may be acceptable, but septic tanks will not.

In granting planning permission, the number of caravan pitches to be accommodated must agree with the supporting evidence of local need, which has been agreed with the relevant authorities* before the application is submitted.

*The relevant authorities referred to in Policy HS42 are the District Council and Suffolk County Council's Gypsy Liaison Officer.

Structural Landscaping

3.145 See Policy LP01 (Introduction) relating to Section 106 Planning Obligations.

3.146 In considering proposals for new development, the need for structural landscaping will be assessed. Where it is included, it will help provide a “green edge” to new development, particularly where a site abuts open countryside, or where the amenities of existing residents need to be protected. Public open space and pedestrian cycle paths can, if appropriate, be included in schemes of this kind. An important consideration will be the long-term management of the structural landscaping, which will be sought through a Planning Obligation, together with contributions from developers towards the cost of future management.

