

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM:** Acting Head of Planning Policy and  
Economic Development

**REPORT NUMBER**    **E276**

**TO:**        STRATEGY COMMITTEE

**DATE OF MEETING** 9 February 2006

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR BABERGH LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

1.    **SUMMARY**

1.1    A draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared as part of the new Local Development Framework (LDF) process. Following two preliminary rounds of public consultation, approval is now sought for submission of the document to the Secretary of State for independent examination by an Inspector. After submission a further round of public consultation is required, following which any responses received will be reported back to the Committee. After examination formal adoption of the SCI by the Council will be recommended.

2.    **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1    That the results of the Regulations 26/27 consultation exercise be noted and the draft Statement of Community Involvement be revised in the light of the responses received;
- 2.2    That the revised draft Statement of Community Involvement be approved for submission to the Secretary of State, and that a further period of public consultation takes place for the statutory six weeks (anticipated to be during February and March 2006) as required under Regulations 28/29 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3.    **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1    There are additional financial implications for the Council as a result of preparing the draft SCI as part of the new LDF (eventually to replace the emerging Local Plan). Accordingly, a bid has been made in the Service and Financial Planning process for funds to cover essential costs. These include costs required to reimburse the Planning Inspectorate for an independent examination. If the bid is unsuccessful the Planning Policy and Economic Development Division will need to identify a different way to meet these costs.

4.    **KEY INFORMATION**

4.1    The draft SCI has been prepared in accordance with the Council's programme in the Local Development Scheme, which was approved in February 2005. It meets rigorous requirements laid down in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, and also draws on Government advice, particularly in Planning Policy Statement 12. It is important to note that the draft SCI does not cover any planning matters, such as specific sites or policies for use in development control decisions.

- 4.2 The draft SCI is an important feature of the LDF as it sets out how the Council will involve the community in the planning process. It is not just about the community at large but all sectors, including those who find dealing with the Council on planning matters difficult, such as ethnic minority groups, old and young people, and disabled groups, as well as engaging with the business community. Although produced for the LDF, the draft SCI also covers the Council's arrangements for involving the community in planning applications.
- 4.3 The main requirement is to show that the Council will involve the community in a cohesive and practical way, how this will be done and that there are sufficient resources to do so. The draft SCI demonstrates the Council's commitment to community involvement in the LDF process, including close liaison through Local Strategic Partnerships.
- 4.4 The current draft follows two previous phases of preparation, known as the Early Stage and Regulations 25/26/27 consultations. The main objectives of community involvement are to:
- be transparent and consistent
  - be accurate and honest
  - be timely
  - be as simple in use of language and as free from jargon as possible
  - actively encourage feedback (and respond to it)
  - use a range of cost effective delivery methods
  - recognise the needs of different groups
  - be measured to see how involvement is working
- 4.5 The Regulation 26 version of the draft SCI (See Appendix 1) was the subject of public consultation from 31 October to 12 December 2005, which resulted in a total of 88 representations being received. A summary of the responses received and the recommended changes for the submission (under Regulation 28) version is available in the Members' Room, or can be obtained upon request. There are no fundamental changes proposed as a result of the consultation exercise, but further detail and clarification is recommended, particularly to give greater certainty to the community involvement process.
- 4.6 The key to successful and effective community involvement in the future preparation of Development Plan Documents, as required under the LDF, is in the development of a detailed and up to date consultation database. This identifies the different needs of consultees, and is derived from earlier consultations together with updated material. It is expected that electronic mailing and the Council's website will be widely used in the future but not all groups wish to be consulted in this way.
- 4.7 A range of other methods have been highlighted in the draft SCI such as public meetings, giving presentations to groups and press releases, and the Council will use the provisions of the document as a basis for community involvement in the planning process. Of particular interest is the situation relating to planning applications, in which the Council already invests considerable resources. The Council is satisfied that it meets the minimum requirements in all aspects of planning applications, although it is suggested by several consultees that greater acknowledgement of responses should be carried out.
- 4.8 When the draft SCI is examined by an independent inspector his/her task will be to test the 'soundness' of the Council's proposals for community involvement, which will affect the production of other planning documents and in dealing with planning applications. As well as demonstrating that the community is consulted, the Council will also be required to show that feedback is taken into consideration and that the effectiveness of community involvement is monitored. The SCI will be reviewed 3 years after adoption.

5. **APPENDIX**

- (a) Draft Statement of Community Involvement Regulation 26 version

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

- (a) Regulation 26 Consultation Summary and Recommendations (October 2005)
- (b) Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
- (c) Planning Policy Statement 12 (2004)
- (d) Babergh District Council Local Development Scheme (February 2005)

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**Local Development Framework**  
**Draft Statement of Community Involvement**

**October 2005**



**Local Development Framework**  
**Draft Statement of Community Involvement**

**October 2005**

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

## 1. INVOLVING BABERGH'S COMMUNITIES IN PLANNING MATTERS

- 1.1 The **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** is one of a number of documents that will form part of a new planning system for the Babergh District. It concentrates on helping the community to become more involved in planning matters. The general aim is to ensure that all sections of the community have full opportunities to contribute to the planning process from an early stage. It will make clear how they can become involved in the production of the new **Local Development Framework**, whom will be able to participate and when. The SCI will also cover community involvement in planning applications.
- 1.2 By achieving greater levels of community involvement in the planning process, local communities, stakeholders and other organisations can contribute more to shaping their environment and addressing key challenges that affect them, for example; on affordable housing and on access to local services. By working in this way, it is hoped that there will be an enhanced level of local ownership and understanding in planning matters and that a more flexible, inclusive and streamlined process will follow.
- 1.3 The Council has attempted to use Plain English, free of technical or legal language in the production of this draft document. This has not always been possible, for example, where official titles of documents have been used or words and sentences have been extracted from official publications.
- 1.4 The Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 provide detailed advice on the preparation of the SCI.

## 2. PREPARING THE DRAFT SCI

- 2.1 There are three main opportunities for consultation in producing a SCI for the Babergh District, as follows:

### Stage 1

*August 2005 – Early stage consultation.* Letters and questionnaires have been sent to Parish/Town Councils, and other statutory consultees, requesting their views on how they should be involved under the new planning system. Known as a **Regulation 25** statement under the 2004 legislation, this stage achieved a 30% overall response rate. (Appendix 1 summarises the consultation responses)

### Stage 2

*October- December 2005 - Preparation of this Draft Statement.* The first draft or **Regulation 26** version is published, which incorporates the results of the early stage consultation exercise. There will be a six week public consultation period, and a wide range of consultees will be offered the chance to be kept informed of progress on the SCI. Comments will be invited on the approach, content and layout of the draft. It is available on the Council's website ([www.babergh.gov.uk](http://www.babergh.gov.uk)) and also in hard copy form. (Appendix 2 lists the organisations involved in this consultation stage)

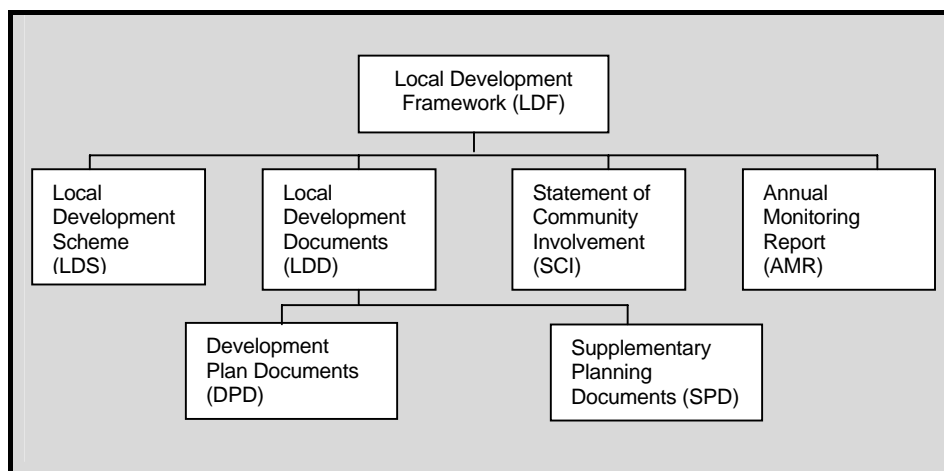
### Stage 3

*December 2005 – January 2006 - Formal submission and examination of the Draft Statement.* The SCI will be revised to take into account comments received at Stage 2, known as the **Regulation 28** document, and will again be made available for public consultation in a second six-week period followed by submission for an independent examination. Any representations made at this stage will be put forward and

considered by an independent inspector conducting the examination. (Appendix 3 explains the role of the Inspector in testing the soundness of the SCI)

### 3. THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 Substantial changes have recently come into effect as a result of the Town & Country Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). These include the replacement of the Local Plan with a **Local Development Framework (LDF)**, and measures to improve community involvement, including where planning applications are concerned. The preparation of the SCI is another requirement of the new legislation.
- 3.2 The LDF will resemble a folder and will hold a number of Documents. Each Local Planning Authority is required to prepare an LDF.
- 3.3 The new LDF system is intended to simplify the local planning process and to accommodate any required changes more easily. In addition to increased community involvement, there is greater emphasis on the environment and on sustainable development. **Local Development Documents (LDD)** will be subject to a **Sustainability Appraisal**, and some will undergo an independent examination by a planning inspector before adoption. The Sustainability Appraisal is a rigorous process that examines the social, economic and environmental implications of proposals.
- 3.4 Until the new documents are finalised and adopted, the Babergh Local Plan First Alteration 1995 remains valid in determining planning applications. It will be replaced by the Second Alteration, scheduled for adoption in July 2006.



### 4. THE BABERGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

- 4.1 The **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** contains a detailed list of all the LDDs, and includes a programme as to when they will be produced. It also refers to the SCI and the **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**. The AMR sets out progress on production of new planning documents and comments on the effectiveness of existing ones. It refers to the use of existing policies, and covers a range of key indicators, such as housing completions.
- 4.2 Published in August 2005, the LDS is available in public libraries in the Babergh District and the Council's offices in Hadleigh and the Advice Centre at Sudbury Town Hall. It can also be found on the Council's website at: [www.babergh.gov.uk](http://www.babergh.gov.uk)

## 5. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

5.1 These documents fall into two groups – **Development Plan Documents** and **Supplementary Planning Documents**.

5.2 **Development Plan Documents (DPD)** comprise of the following:

### **Core Strategy and Policies**

A strategic document setting out the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the whole of the Babergh District, and containing policies to be used in the determination of planning applications.

### **Site Specific Allocations and Policies**

A document containing policies that apply to specific sites, locations or areas rather than covering the whole of the Babergh District.

### **Area Action Plans**

Documents containing the planning framework for future development and regeneration of towns, villages or specific localities.

### **Proposals Map**

A map on an Ordnance Survey base giving geographical expression to adopted policies. It can be revised as each new DPD is adopted.

5.3 The above documents must be compatible with the **Regional Spatial Strategy** for the East of England, **the East of England Plan** (see [www.eera.gov.uk](http://www.eera.gov.uk)), and will be examined by an independent inspector.

5.4 **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** elaborate upon the policies and proposals in DPDs, but they are not subject to independent examination.

## 6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – STRATEGY AND APPROACH

### **Objectives**

6.1 The Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 prescribe the minimum acceptable level of community involvement in planning matters. Babergh District Council has traditionally gone beyond the beyond the required level, and will continue to at least meet the minimum standards under the regulations.

6.2 The aim is to involve anyone with an interest as far as possible in the planning process. Some sections of the community can be difficult to involve for a number of reasons (commonly described as ‘Hard to Reach’ groups). There is a need to explore new approaches in order to gain the involvement of these groups.

6.3 The objectives of community involvement in the LDF process are to:

- be transparent and consistent
- be accurate and honest
- be timely
- be as simple and as free of jargon as possible
- actively encourage feedback (and respond to it)
- use a range of cost effective delivery methods
- recognise the needs of different groups
- be measured to see how involvement is working

### **The Council's Communication Strategy**

The Council ensures consistency of message to both external and internal audiences. It will effectively deliver the right messages to the right audiences through the most appropriate methods at the right time.

Communication is at the heart of the Council's operations and it endeavours to:-

- Explain clearly how the Council will approach its communications in support of its corporate priorities and the services it provides
- Identify communication themes that require co-ordination across services, between Council divisions and with external partners
- Provide communication principles and advice to guide service delivery in the future
- Ensure consistency of messages to all audiences

- 6.4 Although this SCI sets out the Council's approach towards community involvement in the planning process, it is important not to be too rigid and prescriptive. If a particular interest, organisation or individual wishes to be involved in the preparation of any particular document at a later date, the Council will take a flexible approach and aim to accommodate such requests.

### **Town and Parish Councils**

The Babergh District is mainly rural in nature, with 76 town and parish councils. The District Council sees working with these local councils as a fundamental element of the proposed approach for production of the Local Development Framework. The initial consultation with these organisations on the SCI during August 2005 achieved a 30% response rate, which is encouraging.

- 6.5 The types of individuals and groups, who comprise the broader community and need to be consulted, can include:

• General public	• Parliamentary representatives
• Community interest groups.	• Regional Planning Body
• Landowners, developers, agents and consultants	• County, district and parish/town councils
• Residents and local neighbourhood groups	• Babergh Councillors
• Local societies and associations	• Babergh service divisions
• Amenity societies/area focussed groups	• Other services providers
• The workforce	• The Council's partners
• Local clubs	• The media
• Employment/business sectors and	• Infrastructure and utilities providers

bodies representing them	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Government and national agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary and charitable sectors</li> </ul>

It would not be appropriate to list every organisation here, as they may change over time.

**Hard to Reach Groups**

- 6.6 Particular attention needs to be paid to involving the ‘Hard to Reach’ groups. The Council proposes that a number of methods of encouraging involvement by these groups be considered.

**Hard to Reach Groups**

These can include minority groups, those with special needs and other groups who can be excluded from the planning process, such as young people. Access to information and knowledge of institutional decision making processes can vary greatly, possibly due to language barriers or disabilities. As a result, some sections of the community can be at a disadvantage in getting sufficiently involved. The Council will have regard to relevant legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It will explore new and innovative methods of communication and involvement.

Some Hard to Reach groups may already have organisations that represent them, such as councils for particular groups of ethnic minorities. There is also a range of bodies within the voluntary sector and these are co-ordinated by the Council for Voluntary Services as an umbrella body. The Council is constantly seeking to encourage the involvement of young people in local matters through a variety of mechanisms, including Elected Member visits to schools and the hosting of an Annual Youth Conference.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Potential Issues Preventing Involvement</b>	<b>Possible solutions</b>
Ethnic minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English may not be a first language</li> <li>Lack of knowledge of local authority/planning activities</li> <li>Lack of interest in local authority/planning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult local umbrella groups for Ethnic minorities/Commission for Racial Equality</li> <li>Consider making material available in other languages</li> </ul>
Young people (under 30 age groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of time</li> <li>Lack of knowledge of local authority/planning activities</li> <li>Lack of interest in local authority/planning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy-to-complete standardised forms/questionnaires available on line</li> <li>Greater publicity on BDC website</li> <li>Information about how planning matters affect the community and how and why to get involved</li> <li>Publicise/ through local schools/colleges</li> <li>Elected Member visits to schools</li> <li>Encourage school pupil attendance at LSP events</li> <li>Consider use of SMS</li> <li>Annual Youth Conference</li> </ul>
People with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual impairments preventing reading of LDF material</li> <li>Gaining access to LDF consultation venues</li> <li>Hearing impairment preventing effective understanding of LDF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider Braille based or oral consultation material</li> <li>Ensure that venues are accessible by all as a rule and make special arrangements for access to information</li> </ul>
Old people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to ensure old people in sheltered housing schemes have access to information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicise through local authority and housing association services</li> </ul>
People in remote rural areas without easy access to transport provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in reaching BDC offices or other consultation venues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of web based consultations to reduce need to travel</li> <li>Consultation by post</li> </ul>
Those never previously involved in planning matters for any other or possibly no particular reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of knowledge of Council functions/activities or of planning</li> <li>Lack of interest in above</li> <li>Cynicism, distrust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer talks/presentations/ meetings to local groups, clubs and societies based around other unrelated interests</li> </ul>
New residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of knowledge of the provision of planning services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Portal provides local council look-up service</li> <li>Links from Suffolk County Council and Onesuffolk websites</li> <li>Information through Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>Babergh Matters newsheet goes to all households in District</li> <li>BDC website</li> </ul>

## 7. HOW TO INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY?

7.1 It is essential for the Council and for all involved in the LDF that we make the best possible use of our limited resources and time. The chosen methods of involvement need to be cost-effective and agreement will have to be reached on the preferred approach. The type of document, its stage of preparation and knowledge of the planning system held by particular groups, will influence which method of involvement works best in each case. All parties will need to be realistic about the time and resources that they can commit to the ongoing LDF process. It may be the case that the most appropriate methods will be new or amended processes.

7.2 There are three established methods of community involvement:

- **Publicity** where the community is kept informed.
- **Dialogue** where the community has the opportunity to present their views directly to the Council and hear its response.
- **Group Participation** where a number of communities and organisations can meet to discuss the LDF.

<b>METHODS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b>		
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	<b>DIALOGUE</b>	<b>GROUP PARTICIPATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BDC website</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Statutory notices (in particular newspapers)</li> <li>• Babergh Matters newsletter</li> <li>• Information at the Council's main offices</li> <li>• Information in local libraries</li> <li>• Information at the Sudbury Advice Centre</li> <li>• Through BDC Councillors</li> <li>• Through Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>• Public notices</li> <li>• Newspaper articles</li> <li>• Leaflets/newsletters</li> <li>• Exhibitions</li> <li>• Public attendance at District Council meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgeries</li> <li>• Individual meetings</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> <li>• Talks at Town and Parish Council meetings</li> <li>• Public speaking on planning applications</li> <li>• Consultation letters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Discussion meetings</li> <li>• Town and Parish Council meetings</li> </ul>

### **The Story So Far**

The Council has commenced on the creation of a Local Development Framework for the Babergh District, and has demonstrated its intention to involve the community through:

- Using the Council's website.
- Publication in Council newsletters.
- A series of workshops, involving stakeholders and town and parish councils, and Hard to Reach Groups.
- Press releases resulting in newspaper articles.
- A postal consultation exercise on the Regulation 25 SCI.

These methods will be reviewed and updated after considering the results of the Early Stage consultation phase.

## **8. EARLY STAGE CONSULTATION RESULTS**

- 8.1 In accordance with Regulation 25 of the 2004 legislation, the Council undertook early stage consultation on producing an SCI at the beginning of August 2005. A total of 137 survey forms were distributed to relevant organisations as set out by Government guidance, and they were given 4 weeks to respond.
- 8.2 Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate which methods of involvement would be best and at what point in the planning process they wished to become involved. The potential for developing further links using electronic communications was also explored.
- 8.3 Of the 137 surveys sent out, 41 responses were received giving a return rate of 30%. This is considered to be a good response for a survey of this kind, see Appendix 3 for the results.
- 8.4 59% of responses showed a strong willingness to be involved in all the consultation stages of the Local Development Framework process.
- 8.5 Access to the internet amongst respondents was good at 67%, although 56% did not want to receive future correspondence only by electronic communication. There were no distinct preferences for methods of involvement in the planning process.

## **9. INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- 9.1 It is important to the Council to have a co-ordinated approach to community involvement. A number of other strategies are relevant to the LDF, most notably the Community Strategy, Parish/Community Plans and the Council's own strategic objectives as contained in its Corporate Plan.
- 9.2 The Babergh East and Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnerships work to improve the quality of life and services across the District. They have adopted a Community Strategy/Plan in order to co-ordinate the work of the partners. The Council will work alongside the Local Strategic Partnerships involved in its area. It is the role of the LDF

to give spatial expression to the Community Strategy/Plan where it involves the use of land.

## 10. PARISH/COMMUNITY PLANS

- 10.1 A large number of communities in the District have prepared or are in the process of preparing their own parish or community plans. These have various titles of 'Town Plan', 'Parish Plan', 'Community Plan' etc, and the Council will consider the aspirations in these Plans and give them sufficient weight in preparing the LDF.

## 11. THE COUNCIL'S OVERALL APPROACH

- 11.1 The following table provides a guide to the proposed overall approach to community involvement in producing DPDs. It does not mean that all organisations quoted at each stage will be involved in all such documents, whilst others not listed may be involved:

### Development Plan Documents

STAGE OF PREPARATION	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	HOW THEY WILL BE INVOLVED?
Pre-production – Evidence gathering; e.g. housing needs survey, urban capacity study, etc.  In the case of the Core Strategy and Site specific allocations this will take place between 2004 and 2007	Specialist agencies; Development interests; Local groups/bodies who may hold information Neighbouring local authorities	<b>Dialogue &amp; Group:</b> Letters/telephone calls Email Project meetings
Preparation of, and consultation on, Issues and Options.  In the case of the Core Strategy and Site specific allocations this will take place during the winter of 2005/6	Babergh East LSP Western Suffolk LSP Town/Parish Councils Other relevant groups/organisations	<b>Publicity, Dialogue &amp; Group:</b> Letters E mail Website Workshops Discussion meetings
6 week formal public consultation period on draft document, at submission stage  In the case of the Core Strategy and Site specific allocations this will take place at the end of 2006	Babergh East LSP Western Suffolk LSP Town/Parish Councils Statutory consultees Other relevant groups/organisations General public All on LDF contacts database	<b>Publicity, Dialogue &amp; Group:</b> Letters E mail Website Individual meetings Libraries
Adoption  In the case of the Core Strategy and Site specific allocations this will take place during 2008-2009	All previously involved in the LDF process	<b>Publicity:</b> Press release Public Notices in newspapers Notices Website notification

## Supplementary Planning Documents

STAGE OF SPD PREPARATION	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	HOW WILL THEY BE INVOLVED?
Pre-production – Evidence gathering; e.g. scoping of site/development constraints	Specialist agencies/utilities providers; development interests; Local groups/bodies who may hold information (dependent on type of document, whether site specific or district-wide)	<b>Dialogue &amp; Group:</b> Letters/telephone calls Email Project meetings
Preparation of and consultation on Issues and Options (draft document) stage	Babergh East LSP Western Suffolk LSP Town/Parish Councils Other relevant groups/organisations	<b>Publicity, Dialogue &amp; Group:</b> Letters E mail Website Discussion meetings
6 week formal public consultation period on preferred options, at submission stage	Babergh East LSP Western Suffolk LSP Statutory consultees Other relevant groups/organisations General public	<b>Publicity &amp; Dialogue:</b> Letters E mail Website Individual meetings Libraries
Adoption	All previously involved in the process	<b>Publicity:</b> Press release Newspaper Notices Website notification

## 12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

12.1 The Council already has a number of well-established procedures in place aimed at involving the community in the decision-making process. These include:

- Display of a site notice
- Consultation letters to the occupiers of neighbouring properties
- Consultation letters to others considered to be materially affected by the proposal
- Weekly list of planning applications received, which is published on the Council's website and sent to all libraries
- Consultation with relevant parish and town councils (including neighbouring ones if materially affected)
- Consultation with local societies
- Consultation with specific organisations e.g. County Highways, Environment Agency
- Some applications are publicised weekly in the East Anglian Daily Times

12.2 The planning application itself is available to be viewed at the Council's office in Hadleigh during normal working hours, as well as being sent to the local parish and town clerk.

- 12.3 Where a planning application is likely to be sensitive or highly controversial the Council will sometimes hold a public meeting or stage an exhibition. These are carried out with the co-operation and approval of the planning applicant.
- 12.4 In all cases the Council encourages potential planning applicants to discuss their proposals with planning officers before submission. Qualified members of staff are available the Council's offices for this purpose. Applicants are also encouraged to discuss their proposals with neighbours.
- 12.5 Comments received in writing or by email should be submitted as soon as possible although they will be considered right up to the decision being made. All those received will be filed with the relevant application and will be available for public inspection. They cannot be treated as confidential and, unfortunately, because of sheer volume of numbers cannot be acknowledged. The majority of planning applications (almost 90%) are determined by the Head of Planning (Control) under delegated authority after full consideration of all comments. Those which are referred to the Development Committee will be debated in public. Applicants and objectors have the opportunity to speak.

### **Information and Communications Technology**

The Council recognises the benefit of information and communications technology in the delivery of efficient and seamless services. This includes the transformation of services to take maximum advantage of our staff resources, including the use of electronic service delivery mechanisms through our website, for example. Throughout this process, the Council will take account of the ways the public wants to deal with us. Some will not be comfortable with electronic delivery, and we must ensure that everyone's needs are taken into account and that we do not disenfranchise particular groups. A flexible approach to the use of technology will therefore be important.

## **13. MONITORING**

- 13.1 The previous sections have set out the Council's proposed approach to community involvement in the LDF process and in the determination of planning applications. It would be inappropriate to be specific about the exact nature of community involvement in every case. Community involvement at each stage of the LDF and in the determination of planning applications may be tailored to the nature and timing of the particular case. Community involvement will have to comply with this SCI, and a brief statement setting out how the Council is involving the community will be prepared in each instance.
- 13.2 The effectiveness of the Council's approach to, and methods of, community involvement will also be monitored by way of:
- Analysing the use of the Council's web site
  - Asking for feedback from users of the web site
  - Regular surveys of consultees and respondents to consultation exercises
  - Feedback forms to complete after specific events
  - Monitoring of press articles
  - Random research of employees' views, representing residents and workers in the district
  - Random surveys of councillors' views
  - Regular surveys of town and parish councils

13. **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT**

- 13.1 This Draft Statement of Community Involvement is published for consultation purposes over a 6-week period starting on Monday 31 October 2005. All those people or groups that are likely to be affected by the LDF or by planning applications have the opportunity to comment on the Council's proposed approach and methodology.
- 13.2 The Council will consider all of the comments received before finalising the document. Comments should be sent using the response form at the back of this document (which is also available on the website - [www.babergh.gov.uk](http://www.babergh.gov.uk) ).

All comments must be received **by 5.00pm on Monday 12 December 2005** and should be sent, using the response form to:

Planning Policy & Economic Development Division  
Babergh District Council  
Corks Lane  
Hadleigh IPSWICH  
Suffolk IP7 6SJ

Tel: (01473) 825872

Fax: (01473) 825707

Email: [localplan@babbergh.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@babbergh.gov.uk)

**Thank you for your time in reading this paper. The Council looks forward to your involvement in the Babergh LDF process**

## APPENDIX 1 –STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT EARLY STAGE CONSULTATION ANALYSIS – AUGUST 2005

(The percentage figures refer to the number of respondents showing a preference for a particular form of consultation)

<b>Internet access?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	Acton, Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bramford, Brettenham, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Cavendish, Cockfield, Essex CC, Felixstowe TC, Gt Henny Lt Henny Middleton & Twinstead, Hadleigh TC, Hartest, Higham, Nedging w Naughton, Newton, Preston St M, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Sproughton, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone, Tendring DC, Thorpe Morieux	Copdock & Washbrook, Elmsett, Foxearth & Liston, Ringshall, Shimpling
<b>E mail correspondence?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Brettenham, Bures St M, Capel St M, Chelmondiston, Cockfield, Essex CC, Hadleigh TC, Higham, Newton, SB Surveyors, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone	Acton, Boxford, Bramford, Bures Hamlet, Cavendish, Copdock & Washbrook, Elmsett, Felixstowe TC, Foxearth & Liston, Gt Henny Lt Henny Middleton & Twinstead, Hartest, Highways Agency, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Preston St M, Ringshall, Shimpling, Shotley, Sproughton, Stratford St M, Tendring DC, Thorpe Morieux
<b>LDF correspondence no longer wanted</b>		Nacton, Offton & Willisham
	<b>LDF</b>	<b>Planning applications</b>
<b>Public notices</b>	Acton, Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Cavendish, Copdock & Washbrook, Elmsett, Essex CC, Felixstowe TC, Foxearth & Liston, Hadleigh TC, Hartest, Higham, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Ringshall, SB Surveyors, Shimpling, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone, Thorpe Morieux <b>(18%)</b>	Acton, Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Cavendish, Copdock & Washbrook, Elmsett, Foxearth & Liston, Hadleigh TC, Hartest, Higham, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Ringshall, SB Surveyors, Shimpling, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone, Thorpe Morieux <b>(17%)</b>
<b>Newspaper articles</b>	Acton, Boxford, Bures St M, Copdock w Washbrook, Elmsett, Felixstowe TC, Foxearth & Liston, Hadleigh TC, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Ringshall, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC <b>(11%)</b>	Boxford, Bures St M, Capel St M, Copdock & Washbrook, Elmsett, Foxearth & Liston, Hadleigh TC, Nedging w Naughton, Ringshall, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Stratford St M, Thorpe Morieux <b>(9%)</b>
<b>Exhibitions</b>	Acton, Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bramford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Copdock & Washbrook, Felixstowe TC, Hadleigh TC, Hartest, Kersey, Shimpling, Shotley, Suffolk Coastal DC <b>(11%)</b>	Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Copdock & Washbrook, Hadleigh TC, Hartest, Shimpling, Shotley, Suffolk Coastal DC <b>(8%)</b>
<b>Questionnaires</b>	Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Felixstowe TC, Foxearth & Liston, Hartest, Kersey, Preston St Mary, Ringshall, Shimpling, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone <b>(11%)</b>	Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Foxearth & Liston, Preston St M, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone <b>(8%)</b>
<b>Website/e mail</b>	Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Brettenham, Bures St M, Capel St M, Felixstowe TC, Hartest, Higham, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone, Tendring DC <b>(12%)</b>	Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Brettenham, Bures St M, Capel St M, Hartest, Higham, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Sproughton, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone, Tendring DC <b>(12%)</b>
<b>Leaflets &amp; newsletters</b>	Acton, Alhamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Brettenham, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Copdock & Washbrook, Elmsett, Felixstowe TC, Foxearth & Liston, Hartest, Higham,	Boxford, Brettenham, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Elmsett, Foxearth & Liston, Hartest, Higham, Nedging w Naughton, Preston St M, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal

	Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Preston St M, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tendring DC, Thorpe Morieux (16%)	DC, Thorpe Morieux (11%)
<b>Councillors</b>	Brettenham, Bures St M, Capel St M, Copdock & Washbrook, Elmsett, Hartest, Higham, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Preston St M, SB Surveyors, Shimpling, Shotley, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone, Thorpe Morieux (12%)	Acton, Boxford, Brettenham, Bures St M, Capel St M, Elmsett, Hartest, Higham, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Preston St M, Shimpling, Shotley, Stratford St M, Tattingstone, Thorpe Morieux (12%)
<b>Area forums</b>	Acton, Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Hartest, Kersey, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Sproughton, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC (9%)	Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Capel St M, Hadleigh TC, Hartest, Shotley, Stratford St M (6%)
<b>Consultation groups</b>	Alphamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Copdock & Washbrook, Hartest, Kersey, Ringshall, SB Surveyors, Shimpling, Shotley, Sproughton, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC (10%)	Boxford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Hartest, Kersey, Ringshall, SB Surveyors, Shimpling, Shotley, Sproughton, Stratford St M, Suffolk Coastal DC (9%)
<b>Discussion groups</b>	Alphamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bures St M, Hartest, SB Surveyors, Shimpling, Shotley, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tendring DC (7%)	Boxford, Bures St M, Shotley, Thorpe Morieux (3%)
<b>Individual consultation</b>	Acton, Alphamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bramford, Bures St M, Essex CC, Hartest, Higham, Highways Agency, Preston St M, Shotley, Sproughton, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tendring DC (10%)	Acton, Boxford, Bures St M, Hartest, Higham, Highways Agency, Kersey, Preston St M, Shimpling, Shotley, Sproughton, Tendring DC (9%)
<b>Other methods (see below)</b>	Shotley	SB Surveyors, Shimpling, Shotley
<b>Stages</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Pre-draft</b>		
<b>Draft/submission</b>	Brettenham, Capel St M, Elmsett, Essex CC, Kersey, Nedging w Naughton, Preston St M, Ringshall, Shimpling, Stratford St M, Tendring DC, Thorpe Morieux	
<b>Final/adopted</b>	Brettenham, Capel St M, Elmsett, Essex CC, Nedging w Naughton, Preston St M, Shimpling, Stratford St M, Tendring DC	
<b>All stages</b>	Acton, Alphamstone & Lamarsh, Boxford, Bramford, Bures Hamlet, Bures St M, Cavendish, Chelmondiston, Cockfield, Copdock & Washbrook, Felixstowe TC, Foxearth & Liston, Gt Henny Lt Henny Middleton & Twinstead, Hadleigh TC, Hartest, Higham, Highways Agency, Newton, SB Surveyors, Shotley, Sproughton, Suffolk Coastal DC, Tattingstone, Tendring DC	
<b>Other comments</b>	Acton – important that neighbouring parishes be given the opportunity to comment on proposals	Brettenham – prefer information to be user-friendly ideally with a precis or summary to ensure maximum feedback
	Chelmondiston – found the consultation letter and form confusing, and have chosen to reply in general terms. Local radio and exhibitions are better at engaging people on major planning applications and the LDF rather than planning notices. Lesser proposals could be communicated via the local community newspaper, Babergh Matters and the BDC website (although this last feature is not universally available to the general population. Local news could be distributed via community newspapers. Strong feeling for local councillors to be fully briefed and allowed to express the communities views at planning committees	Cockfield- wish to be involved in all stages. Detailed comments on Policy HS04. NB. Have not ticked any of the boxes relating to LDF and planning applications
	Go East – welcomes the progress being made on producing the SCI, and offers advice particularly on the steps to be	Great Henny Little Henny Middleton and Twinstead – happy with present arrangements and wish to continue with

	taken to ensure that the SCI is sound	them
	Hadleigh TC – has responded in general terms but wishes to be more involved, ie. through forums on issues such as affordable housing	Hartest – formal notification to all parish councils on planning applications should continue as at present
	Highways Agency – wish to enter into early dialogue on LDF where the trunk road network is affected. Wish to be consulted on all DPDs but only those SPDs affecting the trunk road network. Planning applications affecting the trunk road network should be referred to them	Copdock & Washbrook – wish to be involved in exhibitions on large scale development
	Newton – wish to be involved in all stages of the process that have a direct and indirect impact on the village and surrounding area, eg. Proposals resulting in traffic increases. Stress early involvement in planning applications required. NB. Have not ticked any of the boxes relating to LDF and planning applications	Preston St M – would like to be involved in LDF where it affects the parish
	SB Surveyors – planning applications should be split between major schemes affecting large numbers of people and more local ones where less publicity is required	Shimpling – interested in exhibitions for major works only, and asks for direct consultation on planning applications adjacent to the parish
	Shotley – require more information on forums, consultation and discussion groups before committing to that part of the process; Babergh needs clearly defined policy on consultation, ie. new framework is driven by needs of community and not developers; Babergh needs to show how LDF will be continuous and interact with other initiatives such as Strategic Partnerships; how is Babergh going to refocus resources to help communities? Shotley PC is the properly elected body and therefore the focus of community involvement; young people should be consulted; how is Babergh to discharge this responsibility?	Sproughton – the present system of notifying the Parish Council on planning applications should continue, as local knowledge is taken advantage of. Full documentation on the LDF should be sent by surface mail and backed up by e mail.
	Suffolk Coastal DC – responses to their own pre-SCI consultation were that the forms were “boring” and “difficult” for Parish Councils to complete	Suffolk County Council – wishes to be consulted at all stages on a number of policy documents. Advice is also given on the main points of contact within the organisation for future consultation purposes
	Sudbury TC – did not return form as requested but replied by letter on a number of detailed points. Suggest that as it is a “Quality Council” they wish to become more involved in planning decisions affecting Sudbury. Suggest that non-contentious planning applications be decided by them. Requests that the Council considers this suggested delegation for an initial period of one year	Thorpe Morieux – attendance of local councillor at PC meetings adds greatly to discussions. Hope that the SCI does not cost large sums of money to implement and that the old system worked
	Wrabness – wish to be consulted on any major proposals regarding the north side of the Stour estuary	

## APPENDIX 2 - CONSULTATION ORGANISATIONS

The following organisations have been consulted on the Draft SCI.

### Consultee List A

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations (2004), requires that the following organisations must be consulted:

- Regional planning body (East of England Regional Assembly) (EERA)
- Regional Development Agency (East of England Development Agency) (EEDA)
- Anglian Water Services Ltd
- Adjoining LPAs (Suffolk County Council, Essex County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Tendring District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council)
- All Babergh Town and Parish Councils
- Adjoining Town and Parish Councils
- British Telecom
- Central Suffolk PCT
- Countryside Agency
- East of England Development Agency
- East of England Regional Assembly
- East Suffolk Health Services
- EDF Energy
- English Heritage
- English Nature
- Environment Agency
- Highways Agency
- Ipswich PCT
- National Grid Transco
- Network Rail
- Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority
- Powergen
- Planning Inspectorate
- West Suffolk Health PCT

### Consultee List B

Based upon Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) recommendations, the following will be consulted:

- The Secretary of State (through Government Office for the East of England (GOEast))
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department for Education and Skills (GOEast)
- Department for Transport (GOEast)
- Department for Trade and Industry (GOEast)
- Age Concern Suffolk
- Allington NHS Trust
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Defence Estates
- Essex & Suffolk Water
- Housebuilders Federation
- Ministry of Defence
- Office of Government Commerce
- West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust

## Consultation list C

The Council intends to involve the following more localised groups where they wish to participate:

- Babergh East LSP
- Babergh Tenants Forum
- Babergh Sheltered Tenants Forum
- Chambers of Commerce, Business Link and Enterprise agencies
- Church Commissioners
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
- Commission for Racial Equality
- Country Landowners Association
- Countryside management projects
- Crown Estate Office
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Commission
- Department of Culture Media & Sport
- Environmental groups at national, regional and local level including Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), Friends of the Earth (FoE) RSPB and Wildlife Trusts
- Disability groups
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Forestry Commission
- Freight Transport Association
- Further education establishments
- Gypsy Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Housing Corporation
- H M Prison Service
- Learning & Skills Council
- Local area partnerships
- Local amenity societies
- Local community action groups
- Local public transport operators
- Local sport & leisure organisations/clubs
- Residents associations
- National Playing Fields Association
- NHS Trusts
- National Farmers Union
- National Trust
- Navigation authorities
- Police architectural liaison officer
- Port operators
- Post Office Property Holdings
- Rail companies and The Rail Freight Group
- Regional development agencies
- Road Haulage Association Ltd
- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Showmans Guild of Great Britain
- Sport England
- St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Diocesan Registry
- Sudbury-Marks Tey Rail Users Association
- Suffolk Constabulary
- Suffolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
- Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service

- Western Suffolk LSP
- Women's National Commission
- Youth & community projects

Consultee List D - comprises:

- Individuals/organisations wishing to be notified of future changes
- Local agents and land owners
- Individuals/organisations who purchased Local Plans or associated documents
- Individuals/organisations who requested that they be included in LDF consultation

This list is not exhaustive and will be continually updated via the Local Development Framework review process.

### **APPENDIX 3 – THE TEST OF SOUNDNESS**

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will be subject to a formal examination by an Inspector. The Inspector will use the following criteria, as set out in Government guidelines, in order to test the soundness of the SCI : -

- The Council has complied with the legal requirements of production;
- The Council's strategy for community involvement is cohesive and links with other community involvement initiatives;
- Sets out generally, the local community groups and other bodies to be consulted;
- Shows how the local community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- Determines that the consultation methods to be used are suitable for the intended audience and stages in the production of LDDs;
- Demonstrates that the Council has sufficient resources to manage community involvement efficiently;
- It can be shown how the results of community involvement will be input into the production of DPDs and SPDs;
- The Council is equipped for reviewing the SCI; and
- The SCI clearly describes the Council's policy for consultation on planning applications.

Source: ODPM – Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks. Guide to Procedures and Code of Practice (2004) p. 20.