

Core Strategy Issues and Options

**Spatial Vision & Objectives Section
March 2009**



3 Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives

Core Strategy Spatial Vision

- 3.1 The local context provided in the Spatial Portrait section must be set against the backdrop of the national and regional context, including the agendas that are prevalent at these levels and the planning policies to which the district needs to have regard. Overall, the key agenda that planning for the future of Babergh must align with is to ensure that a planned sustainable strategy is developed and delivered. This does not mean that the strategy is sustainable just environmentally, but also economically and socially and generally in equal measure.
- 3.2 It is necessary that from the outset the Core Strategy identifies a clear vision of what it is that the LDF aims to achieve. So, in spatial terms, what is the kind of district that we are trying to maintain, evolve or create over the period of the next 15 – 20 years? The objectives that will support this vision must also be identified now. Of course, we are not starting from a completely blank canvas. Much debate, public consultation and input has already been carried out by Babergh and its partner organisations and we need to reflect and develop this to ensure that we produce a finalised new Plan that is built upon the best possible consensus and the widest range of inputs.
- 3.3 The existing Local Plan adopted in 2006 also provides a basis from which to start and may provide some elements that could remain within the Core Strategy. This set out the following broad aims:
- to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment including the cultural heritage of the Babergh District; and
 - to accommodate new growth and future development of the Babergh District in ways that will enhance the environment, improve the quality of life and create opportunities to sustain and enhance its economic well-being
- 3.4 Since then a new form of community focused approach has emerged. This is the 'Sustainable Community Strategy', along with the values / objectives of the Local Strategic Partnerships that develop them. Babergh is covered by two LSP areas (Western Suffolk LSP and Babergh East LSP) and must therefore take both into account. The new Plan needs to reconcile these for the district, since it is essential that the Core Strategy operates at a broad, strategic level and provides for the whole district in a unified way, whilst also respecting its diversity.
- 3.5 For Western Suffolk LSP's the identified objectives are to:
- " Maximise the potential of all children and young people;
 - Develop and maintain a safe, strong and sustainable community;
 - Create and support healthier communities; and
 - Develop a prosperous and sustainable economy".

3.6 For Babergh East the LSP's identified vision is:

- "To improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the communities in Babergh East".

This vision is supported by the following objectives, including shared action to achieve:

- "The development of programmes / projects which engage with young people and promote a sense of active citizenship and
- Support and advocate projects which raise opportunities for local communities to access jobs and training"

3.7 Thus there is much in common between the two, as they focus very much on the communities of people in their areas and the quality of life they are able to lead. The three strands of sustainable development come through, particularly in the East and economic issues, (including jobs and training) are pinpointed by both LSPs. To this we can add Babergh Council's identified vision, as follows:



'To provide community leadership which recognises that everybody matters and which encourages and supports strong and inclusive communities. Whilst respecting and protecting our heritage and environment, Babergh will willingly embrace change where that is of benefit to its residents and the district'

The vision to which we work must recognize and respect Babergh as a place and reflect its local distinctiveness.

3.8 It is suggested therefore that in short form, the collective vision for the district and the role of the LDF in it should be:

To create a shared spatial strategy that will manage and improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of Babergh and ensure that its residents (plus workforce and visitors) enjoy the best possible quality of life for the long-term.

Question SVO1: Do you agree with the broad content of this statement?

Core Strategy Spatial Objectives

3.9 The Core Strategy needs to identify specific and measurable spatial objectives that will support and help deliver the agreed vision. The recently adopted Local Plan identified the following strategic aims for the planning of Babergh district through delivery of sustainable development by:

- allocating sufficient land for housing, employment and other uses to achieve consistency with national planning policy / guidance and regional planning policy to meet the needs of the district;

This objective may benefit from a reference to these areas of land supply being flexible and responsive to changing circumstances

- steering this development to those parts of the Babergh District which are already well supported by services; are well served by public transport; have a range of employment opportunities; and are not protected by national or county level conservation designations;
- making the most of the District's intrinsic qualities and attractions;
- promoting economic growth in a positive manner through a number of policies and initiatives;
- conserving and enhancing the District's exceptional natural and built environments;
- encouraging a wide range of shopping, leisure and recreational facilities;
- promoting the prosperity of the District's two town centres, Sudbury and Hadleigh; and
- encouraging sustainable development and other measures to help protect the global environment.

In addition, it seems advisable to add an extra objective to suggest that the overall planning strategy should allow for contingencies if its 'Plan A' is not realized but also be sufficiently flexible and adaptable to be able to deal with any relevant changes of circumstances during the lifetime of the Plan. It would also seem appropriate to add an extra new objective concerned with ensuring that all new development makes sufficient provision for all of its infrastructure needs – in the form of new and /or improved infrastructure

- 3.10 It is not suggested that the new Plan merely replicates these aims through this Core Strategy but the above aims appear to be a reasonable point from which to begin discussion and consideration as to whether we wish to continue, amend or replace these specific objectives.
- 3.11 Focusing on substantive content, the following questions are suggested to guide thinking and responses:

Question SVO2: Do you consider that these Local Plan aims are still appropriate to guide the Core Strategy?

Question SVO3: Are there gaps or inadequacies in these that need to be addressed as new spatial objectives?