



Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Joint Local Plan

Technical Note – Boat Dwellers

July 2021



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
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Introduction

- 1.01 During the Matter 2 Hearing Session – Housing for Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers on 21st June 2021, the Inspectors requested that the Councils produce a note in response to Mr Fisk's objection to Houseboats at Pin Mill, Chemondiston.
- 1.02 The Councils re-affirm that in terms of matters regulated by the Town & Country Planning regime, the houseboats are at Pin Mill legally as explained through the Statement of Common Ground between Babergh District Council, Associated British Ports (ABP Ltd) and Ipswich Borough Council ([Document H14](#)).
- 1.03 There has been a long-established history of vessels moored at Pin Mill, which form part of the character and heritage of the area. The houseboat area identified in the Joint Local Plan is the same area as that identified on the Proposals Map (Inset 20) of the adopted Babergh Local Plan (2006). The area cannot be extended due to the Habitats of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries, and the longer-term plan is to free-up capacity through management of the area. Therefore, capacity for houseboats is restricted and the Councils believe it is appropriate to address applications for additional moorings on a case by case basis, as mentioned in the Councils' Hearing Statement – Matter 2 (June 2021) ([Document I201](#)).
- 1.04 As part of the Joint Local Plan evidence base a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) including Appropriate Assessment was produced in October 2020 ([Document A05](#)). Policy LP10 was listed as having the potential for Likely Significant Effects on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area and Ramsar because of water quality issues. The Appropriate Assessment concluded that water mitigation must be outlined prior to planning permission being granted for any houseboat application.
- 1.05 Therefore, the Joint Local Plan and the Statement of Common Ground outlines the positive approach taken through Policy LP10 – Moorings, Marinas and Houseboats and in the management of the area.
- 1.06 A project level HRA will be required for each houseboat planning application and all proposals will need to demonstrate acceptable environmental protection measures and a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be required.
- 1.07 Additionally, for any future houseboat proposals within the defined area of Pin Mill, Chelmondiston, the total number of houseboats is to be no greater than 28 units, the vessels must be worthy and capable of floating, access must be via a jetty, and the boat is secured to the access jetty and/or a mooring post. The



applicant will also be required to enter into a legal agreement for the removal of any vessel that becomes unit for habitation or abandoned.

1.08 The need for planning permission is distinct from other licensing requirements that may need to be obtained to serve the development or specific aspects of the development. Statutory bodies including the Environment Agency, the Marine Management Organisation, and Natural England have all been consulted on the proposals set out in the Joint Local Plan as well as the National Trust who are the landowner adjacent to the area identified in Policy LP10.

1.09 The other regulatory regimes include:

- Landlord consent. At Pin Mill the landlord is likely to be Ipswich Borough Council. They also act on behalf of ABP Ltd, the Port Authority.
- Byelaw 80 of the Port of Ipswich Byelaws 1996 requires houseboats to be berthed alongside a frontage where there is direct access from the shore by agreement with the owner of the frontage. The owner of the frontage at Pin Mill is the National Trust and licences are required from the National Trust to use their land to access individual boats and install basic infrastructure such as a water supply, electricity supply junction boxes and rubbish collection points.
- Consent may also be required from the Marine Management Organisation for construction activities (exemptions may apply).
- Works within 16 metres of the riverbank will require an environmental permit from the Environment Agency unless the Environment Agency is satisfied that the Marine Management Licence addresses their concerns.
- A mitigation licence to carry out work that may affect European protected species will be required from Natural England. If an environmental permit is applied for, the Environment Agency will contact Natural England. If planning permission is required, that should be obtained before requesting a mitigation licence from Natural England.

1.10 There are a sufficient number of houseboats that have been moored at Pin Mill for many years to demonstrate that the licensing regimes manage change rather than prevent it.

1.11 The Planning Authority will produce a Good Practice Guide to provide advice to those that have an interest in the area to help sustain it for future generations. Reference to a proposed Good Practice Guide is set out in the draft post-Examination Chelplin Neighbourhood Plan.

1.12 The existing capacity at Pin Mill is for five houseboats and the capacity does change over time. The Joint Local Plan through Policy LP10 and through the management of the area will address this capacity in meeting future provision.