

### Babergh Development Framework

#### Core Strategy - The Future Growth of Babergh to 2031

### Summary of Key Points: Town & Parish Council Workshops

A total of four workshops were held during October 2010, with at least one group at each workshop covering one of the following themes;

- Spatial Strategy/ Distribution
- Housing Growth
- Employment growth.

The summary below identifies the key issues / points raised under each theme across all four workshop events.

#### **Spatial Strategy / Distribution**

- Most of the smaller villages look to larger nearby settlements for many of their essential needs (Map exercise illustrates relationship between settlements for services);
- The value and relevance of applying a settlement hierarchy was questioned as a matter of principle;
- Some suggest that the settlement pattern be considered as clusters of villages rather than the hierarchical approach. This provides a more local approach and enables the relationship between settlements to be considered when planning for growth in the future.
- The clusters of villages identified should reflect defined “communities”
- Some villages are working together to deliver affordable housing schemes, recognising the links between villages and in communities.
- Some Parishes indicated disagreement in respect of where the proposed hierarchy currently places them, including;
  - Bures St Mary (Key Service Centre)- consider they should be an Other Village due to the lack of facilities and particularly question the reference to a convenience store and local employment;
  - Cockfield (Other Village)- Should be a Key Service Centre in view of the services available);
  - Polstead (Other Village)- Should be defined as countryside due to the lack of facilities and reduction of the bus service;
  - Stoke by Nayland (Other Village) - Should be a Key Service Centre.
  - Pinewood has its own identity and should be listed as a parish rather than referred to just as the Ipswich Fringe.
- Many of the rural villages provide a reasonable number of jobs when you include those provided by farming, village services, schools and working from home.
- It is generally considered that most villages should receive some housing growth, (few minority exceptions). Most of the smaller villages wish to see small scale growth.
- Common view that precluding development in the small villages could limit services being provided or improved and as such small villages should not be ruled out as unsustainable;
- Housing growth that villages would like to see, includes a mix of houses, to include affordable low cost houses to buy as well as social / housing association housing to rent for local people;

- General support was expressed for the concept that development should be incremental and proportionate to the size of the settlement. This suggests a distribution pattern of spreading development wide and thin.
- A greater number of smaller units are required to enable older people to down size and free up some of the larger family homes in many villages.
- Main employment needs are expected to be met in larger towns. An acceptance that you live in a rural area so you need to commute to work prevails in most areas of the district;
- Community based business hubs should be established in some locations, based on low cost, low key sharing of essential business facilities such as good internet access and IT and printing equipment.
- Some reference to the proportion of development between settlements was suggested, although by no means a consensus or conclusive including;
  - Proportion of growth suggested for Sudbury is too high;
  - Sudbury & Great Cornard have had a lot of development in the past. More should be directed to the east of the district including Hadleigh.
  - KSC's could take 100 houses over 20 years (5 a year), although some views expressed that this is not enough
  - Suggestion in principle that more development should be in the town and bigger villages, but all should receive some small scale growth- should be proportional to the size of the settlements.

### **Housing Growth**

- General agreement (with minority exceptions) that we need to plan for housing growth;
- Needs to be a balance between housing growth & employment growth;
- Need to look to a range of opportunities to provide affordable housing to meet local need, particularly in cases where land for exceptions schemes is problematic;
- The benefits identified as a result of housing growth include;
  - Affordable housing
  - Stronger communities and new communities
  - Allows families to stay in the area
  - Sustain village services especially shops and schools;
  - Can provide infill without damaging the character of the settlement;
  - Meet housing needs
- The disadvantages identified as a result of housing growth include;
  - Danger of coalescence between settlements;
  - Houses on their own are not enough, also need the services and infrastructure;
  - Increase in traffic
  - Loss of green space
  - Threat to the character of rural communities
  - Impact on existing services if the necessary infrastructure is not also provided.
- No new housing growth stagnates villages as population continues to age;
- Housing size is a key issue. There is a trend of loosing smaller units as people extend properties and stay in them rather than move to larger dwellings;

- Provision of additional sheltered housing required to address problems associated with the increasing ageing population.
- Settlements need all age groups to provide a balanced community;
- There needs to be a clear link between housing growth and the delivery of jobs, economic growth and infrastructure.
- Average wages in Babergh equal a barrier to accessing housing.
- Should not have housing growth for growth's sake, but be in response to a clear housing need;
- If the emphasis of economic growth is focussed around Ipswich why is so much housing proposed in Sudbury / Great Cornard?
- Good infrastructure will pull in more skilled and higher paid employers. Infrastructure is the key to this rather than additional housing;
- Accepted by many that some market housing will help deliver more affordable housing;
- Village services will decline if no new houses are provided over a long period of time.
- Public transport is essential in areas where housing is developed (emphasised further as people age- often rely more on public transport);
- Some suggest there should be greater opportunities to rent properties at an affordable rent, rather than properties to buy.

### **Employment Growth**

- Out-commuting is a fact of life as Babergh has no big main employer, so many workers look to Ipswich, Colchester, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe and London.
- Home working is increasing, but often restricted by poor coverage of Broadband and Mobile phone networks
- Copdock Interchange delays impacts negatively on economic growth.
- Some businesses are discouraged from locating in Babergh because of the inadequacy of infrastructure, including in particular, transport & Broadband.
- Villages should have employment growth of an appropriate scale. This should relate to the size of the settlement
- Farm Diversification- conversion of farm buildings, provides for small scale employment opportunities in the rural areas
- Key area of employment in Babergh now and in the future is in the service sector;
- New opportunities for employment lie within tourism
- Babergh should be promoted as a place for rest / relaxation & be proud of it.
- A mixed economy would be more robust
- Need to train and change the skills base in the district
- Planning policy should be more flexible and allow for more jobs growth in rural areas;
- Some large sites are allocated, but are employers attracted to locate here and actually deliver;
- For Suffolk to be promoted for economic growth it is necessary to address the communication issues;

- The haven ports provide employment and attract large numbers of commuters which can cause congestion
- Many jobs available in Babergh are low skilled and low paid;
- Housing should be related to existing areas of employment
- A long term vision is needed for the market towns
- The correct housing types and affordability need to be provided to match the jobs available. (Lower paid less skilled workforce and service sector).
- Overall employment offer in the district is poor;
- Housing & employment need to be related. Employers will locate where a pool of labour exists.
- It is difficult to match job types with housing provision due to pay levels;
- Brownfield sites must be retained and promoted for employment uses. Important to retain and reuse employment sites for that purpose.
- Babergh should recognise its strengths and promote economic opportunities from them, including tourism and local produce from the agriculture sector.
- Area has relatively low unemployment
- Aging population will mean that less jobs are required
- The infrastructure is better in the east of the district- along the A12 corridor;
- Access to the main trunk road network from Sudbury and area is poor due to poor overall road structure.
- Consider more mixed-use development schemes which provide jobs and homes
- Need to encourage high-tech companies to this area
- Need to strengthen links with the University to address skills shortage issues;
- Rural employment OK to a point, but need to remain protective of the rural environment
- Need to ensure there is careful selection of actual employment uses especially in rural areas to avoid problems of large vehicles on small roads.
- Opportunity to look towards Ports & Logistic and energy sectors for employment growth and supporting the ports at Harwich and Felixstowe.
- There is a reducing need for business parks and traditional industrial estates, as more people work from home and travel to more dispersed employment bases.