



Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

People & Place Plan

A New Approach to
Community Led Planning



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Introduction

Babergh and Mid Suffolk are trialling a pilot approach to work with our communities and test a different way to shape what you identify is important for your community to thrive and have influence over decisions that affect you. It is a 'lighter touch' to community led planning and is designed to be less onerous than developing a full Neighbourhood Plan.

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk project is running in parallel with six other Councils in England and is being overseen by the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The draft legislation includes proposals for a 'neighbourhood priorities statement' or People and Place Plan as we prefer to call it and is intended to provide communities with a simpler and more accessible way to set out priorities and preferences for their local area.

We will work with you and offer flexible support in the form of workshops, guidance notes, template ideas and access to specialists to enable you to identify what is important for the wellbeing, lifestyle, design and aspirations of your place.

We are looking to work alongside four community groups as we trial how it can work, could you be one?

Why join the pilot?

We think this pilot is most suited to communities that are:

- **already designated as a neighbourhood planning area**
- **not sure whether to develop a neighbourhood plan**
- **considering the review of an existing neighbourhood plan**
- **keen to mobilise the energy and enthusiasm of their community**
- **interested in documenting their local area**
- **keen to develop better links and relationships with us on planning and community issues**
- **opportunity to work with and get input from subject matter experts on heritage, environment, ecology, design, housing surveys and community initiatives**

We know and value just how much goes on across our communities and appreciate this is done almost entirely by local volunteers.

Working together we can test the lighter touch approach, resources and support offered to create a better way for communities to influence outcomes.

Whilst we are currently not able to guarantee the weight the outcomes will hold, this is a rare chance for you to influence government planning policy – as well as protect and enhance your place and all the information gathered, tested and produced can be transferred into a neighbourhood plan should the government adapt or change their current views.



More information

For example, do you want to protect a green space within your village or area? Or are dark skies an important feature for where you live? Or perhaps making sure new developments reflect the character of your place and/or sustainable development and renewable energy are top of your list? If it is just one feature or many, a People and Place Plan offers you a way to shape and enhance what is unique to your area.

A completed People and Place Plan will act as the evidence base for the neighbourhood priorities statement with the exact scope something you can develop and influence by working with us through the pilot.

Not all plans will be the same, and we welcome variety as it will help to test out different approaches depending on the ideas and needs of each community.

As an example a good People and Place Plan could:

- outline a vision for your local area, identifying the needs, desires, and aspirations of your community
- provide input to how policies should apply to your area
- Identify opportunities for community-led housing or other development schemes which can be delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans or planning applications
- encourage and enable a proactive, holistic approach to community aspirations in relation to wellbeing, design and living well.
- provide information about local character including unique and valued features
- inform mapping of areas for growth, renewal and protection
- provide information about local services and facilities and becoming a contributor to the community you live in
- provide information about local services and facilities, as well as access to these in neighbouring settlements

- identify which services and facilities, important for creating 20 minute neighbourhoods, could be added to a community. More information can be found here: [RTPI | Implementing 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Planning Policy and Practice](#)
- Influence infrastructure priorities, for example:
 - Highways – roads, footways, cycleways.
 - Street furniture – lighting, traffic calming, crossings, signage.
 - Transport links – bus services, stops and shelters.
 - Utilities - energy supply, water, flood defences, waste management.,
 - Recreation – sports pitches, sports halls, rights of way, parks, woodlands, play areas, public open space.
 - Social - education, health, social care, emergency services, affordable housing
 - Community infrastructure, village halls and pavilions
 - Green energy initiatives including communal EV charging
 - Identify opportunities for renewable energy schemes and nature recovery
 - Build capacity and identify priorities where you want to move to develop a full Neighbourhood Plan

Choose your support

The support offered is completely flexible and can be changed and tailored to deliver the outcomes you need.

Practical

Practical half day workshops led by Babergh and Mid Suffolk Community and Planning professionals working directly with community groups to cover:

- **introduction to place-making**
- **gathering and assessing evidence - including using digital tools**
- **community engagement - options/preparations**
- **developing and delivering proposals that add value and help guide decisions and investment for your place.**

Toolkits, guidance, delivery and funding stream advice which makes identifying and protecting the character and uniqueness of what's important about where you live easy and straightforward!

Providing Expert Help

Support to engage consultants and/or access specialist advice (e.g. Local Housing Needs Study), compile evidence, and to produce the final People and Place Plan.

We will also offer you project support as well as professional advice from Babergh and Mid Suffolk DC subject-matter experts.

Community

This is a great opportunity to make connections to all parts of your community and use new and innovative ways to engage future aspirations.

It is also a way to exchange ideas and learn alongside the other pilot groups and wider community.

Future Outcomes

A completed People and Place Plan and the methods used to achieve it will help to inform decisions for the design and planning of what is important to your community.

Your experiences and successes in the pilot will feed directly into the governments strong commitment to adopting this approach for future legislation and community led planning.



Who can we work with?

A parish or town council: As a parish or town council you can create a People and Place Plan (PPP) for either the whole parish area or a section of a parish area. You can also support a local community group who wants to create a PPP within the parish area.

A community group in an area with a parish or town council: We recommend talking to your parish or town council about submitting a proposal to create a PPP to cover your area.

A community group or parish meeting in an area without a parish or town council: As a community group or parish meeting in an area without a parish or town council, we can support you to create a PPP for your area.

Support your success

We understand that concerns about the time and resources required to create a full Neighbourhood Plan have been a concern and barrier for some communities and so, as part of this new approach to community led planning, we are pleased to be able to offer this different approach and suite of flexible support.



Time

We anticipate that a comprehensive PPP covering all the topics will take around 100 volunteer hours, however if you would like a more focussed plan with fewer topics this will require less resources and time.



People and Skills

We would recommend a group of around 5 volunteers to share and manage the workload. Having diverse skills, being resourceful, organised and great communicators will help to ensure success.

Throughout the process we will be working closely with you to explore how we reach as many community groups and residents as possible and produce a plan which reflects the right outcomes for your community.



Contact us

Any questions please contact Jo Wood, Community Engagement Planning Officer on 07850 882353 or 07825 301003 or email questions to: peopleandplaceteam@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk, or complete and return the Community Agreement Form.



People and Place Plan

Toolkit & Workshops





Workshop Support

We will deliver these sessions flexibly to suit groups and outcomes.

Introduction to Place Making

- Increase your knowledge of planning and how the system works
- Explore ideas for place making
- How to use the toolkit to get the best results
- What else should be consider to add value?

Gathering and Assessing Evidence including using digital tools

- Why is evidence important?
- Qualitative versus quantitative
- National sources
- Topic Areas
- Reviewing and presenting

Community Engagement, options/ preparations and people!

- Why do we need community engagement?
- How can we engage?
- What are the challenges and opportunities?
- How do we analyse and share results?

Developing and delivering proposals that add value and help guide decisions and investment

- How can we add value?
- Opportunities for your place
- How can you influence place making?
- How can you influence decisions?
- What's available to support delivery of your outcomes for your people and place

Toolkit Guidance

Initial Reaction to an Area

The initial reaction is exactly as it sounds and should be a summary of what you see and feel when you are describing your place.

A simple walkabout your place with other group members or residents is a great way to gather different views and observations and recording these alongside what is heard and felt is a great way to start to build a picture.

Survey

In the main body of the toolkit, the character features outlined in the 'Initial Reaction' section are then broken down into individual questionnaires. This is to help prompt a finer level of enquiry for each of the broader character themes. Don't worry if not everything contained within the list is relevant, and only comment where applicable.

Final Reaction

This invites you to consider a final reassessment of your initial reactions to the area, allowing you to include other views and make changes.

Spirit of Place

This is an open question allowing you to articulate what you feel, enjoy, and want to preserve about the place or unique feature.

Assigning Numerical Values and/or describing Features

You might like to assign a numerical value or score to help you analyse and interpret results. Scoring can help with evaluation of text however you don't need to allocate a score if you feel able to identify and describe positive, neutral and negative features easily.

If you choose to use a scoring system this may be a helpful approach;

- +1 to +5: Positive features that add to the character or special interest, e.g. a special tree or play area for local children. This can range from +1 which slightly adds to the character, to +5 that significantly adds to the character of the area.
- 0: Neutral features, or features that neither detract from or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.
- -1 to -5: Negative features which detract or take away from the area. This ranges from -5 which is detracts significantly to -1 which slightly detracts.



What's important?

Street/ Building/
Area Name

Date

Time

Weather

1. Initial Reaction:

What do you first see as making the most important contribution to the character of the area? Is the area's character defined by the public or private spaces, groups of buildings or particular views, the presence of particular materials or its trees and greenery? Do these reflect particular aspects of the area's history? Are less tangible features, such as the activity, noises and smells of the area significant? Please provide a few brief reasons for your choices.

Feature	Comments	Value (-5 to 5)
Spaces		
Buildings		
Views		
Light/Dark		
Surfaces		
Greenery & Landscape		
Uses and Activity		
Noises and Smells		
General Comments		

2. Spaces:

A 'space' is normally the gap between buildings and other features. They may be formally designed or develop informally overtime. They may be enclosed by surrounding buildings, trees and foliage, have structure created by the alignment and spacing of surrounding buildings or property boundaries, and can be narrow or wide and open. The character of areas can depend on their uses and vibrancy, as well as the choice of paving, kerbs, seating, telephone or post boxes or the presence of formal planting and other greenery.

Feature	Comments	Value (-5 to 5)
Formal / Informal Spaces		
Gaps Between Buildings		
Means of Enclosure		
Building Plots		
Wide / Open Spaces		
Narrow / Enclosed Spaces		
Winding / Straight Spaces		
Relationship of the Space to Building and Structures		
Uses and activity		
Paving Materials		
Street Furniture		
Impact of Vehicles and Traffic		
Usability and accessibility of the space		

3. Buildings:

Do buildings make an important contribution to the character of the area and if so what features are significant to their contribution? Do buildings reflect an important period in the area's history and is this reflected in their past or current use? Do buildings share a uniform scale and size, or is there a high degree of variation that is visually attractive? Are the buildings very old or do they form a single development with shared or similar architectural detailing? Do styles of windows, doors and other features add to the visual interest of the buildings, reflect their origins or use, or from their origins and use, or form part of a designed scheme? What conditions are the buildings in? Have changes increased or reduced their interest, or have they lost important feature?

Feature	Comments	Value (-5 to 5)
Contribution of the buildings to the space		
Size/ Scale		
Age		
Materials		
Windows		
Doors		
Roofs/ Chimneys/ Gables		
Uses (Past and Present)		
Can you tell if a building has been altered ?		
Condition		

4. Views:

Are there views of interest and distinction? Is a view well known because of a historical event, painting, prose or poetry, or is it popular with local residents as part of a public place? Are views glimpsed through gaps between buildings, channelled by lines or trees or buildings, or open and expansive? Does the shape of a street create a series of views, or is a single viewing point particularly important? What features of the view contribute to its interest? Does a landmark, such as a building or group of trees, form a local focal point? Does the view include an attractive frontage or roofscape? Is the view urban or rural in character? Do background features like the rural setting of places contribute to the view's attractiveness?

Feature	Comments	Value (-5 to 5)
Historic / Popular Views		
Form or View: Short or Long. Unfolding, Glimpsed, Channelled or wide and open		
Focal Points		
Streetscape		
Roofscape		
Urban / Rural Views		
Views Out of the Space		

5. Landscape:

What landscape features contribute to the area's character and how do they affect it? Do hedgerows or grass verges create a rural feel or do street trees provide a leafy suburban character? What hard surfaces are present, are they attractively designed or do they use materials that are out of keeping with the area? Does their maintenance affect their contribution? Is a river or pond a significant feature within the area? Does it have scenic or wildlife value?

Feature	Comments	Value (-5 to 5)
Leafy and / or green image		
Hard urban landscape		
Public / Private Greenery		
Does Water Form a Key Feature of the Area		
Topography		

6. Ambience:

Many less tangible features, such as activity, changes in light during the day, shadows and reflections affect reactions to an area. How does the area change between day and night? Do dark corners or alleyways feel unsafe at night time? What smells and noises are you aware of and is the area busy or tranquil? What affect, if any, does vehicle traffic have on character?

Feature	Comments	Value (-5 to 5)
Activities		
Level of Activity		
Traffic		
Dark, Shady, Light, Airy		
Day and Night		
Smells and Noises		

7. Final Reaction:

Take a moment to consider the notes and any scores that you made, in your initial reactions survey sheet and the subsequent pages. Are there any features that would now rate as having a greater positive or negative value or are there particular aspects of these features that you would highlight as having a high significance to the character of the area? Try ranking the features in order of their relative importance in forming the area's character and appearance?

Feature	Example Ranking	Your Hierarchy
Buildings	1	
Spaces	5	
Long/ Short Views	2	
Light / Dark	7	
Surfaces	6	
Greenery and Landscape Features	3	
Noise, Smell and Traffic	4	

8. Spirit of Place:

Having undertaken the survey and considered each feature, now try to sum up the character of the area in a few brief sentences, picking out the most significant positive and negative features of its character and appearance.



People and Place Plan - A New Approach to Community Led Planning

Community Agreement

Village or Place Name: Date:

Key Contact(s):

.....

Contact Numbers:

Email:

Additional Information

What are you hoping to achieve?

.....
.....

What groups will you work with?

.....
.....

What other resources do you have (if any)?

.....
.....

Sign Up

By signing this agreement you are agreeing that your village, town or place will work with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council to trial the People and Place Plan, including attending the workshops, using the tool kits and guidance issues and sharing information and evidence in order to fulfil the requirements of the governments pilot. We require sign up by three members of the community or established group.

Full Name: Full Name: Full Name:

Signature: Signature: Signature:

Address: Address Address:

.....

.....

.....

Phone: Phone: Phone:

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