



# Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan Review Public Consultation March 2024 Elmsett Parish Council

## **WE NEED YOUR COMMENTS**

The Parish Council has decided to carry out a Focused Review of the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan to bring it in line with the new policies for the location of development across Babergh and with those in other neighbourhood plans.

In a nutshell, we are amending two of the ten chapters of the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan to bring it up-to-date and bring the policy that determines where new development can take place in line with national and district policies.

### **Drop-in Information Event**

**We're holding a drop-in information event at the Village Hall on Saturday 23 March between 10.00am and 3.00pm. It will provide you with an opportunity to find out more about the Focused Review. Refreshments will be available.**

In 2019 the Parish Council completed the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Elmsett when 93% of residents that voted supported Babergh District Council adopting the Plan and using it when making planning decisions.

Six years on, there is now a need to update one of the key planning policies in the Plan, the policy that determines where development would be allowed to take place.

In November 2023, Babergh District Council adopted Part 1 of a new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. Whereas the previous Local Plan allowed development, including housing, to take place outside of defined "Built-Up Area Boundaries" where a need could be demonstrated, the new Local Plan (Policy SP03) limits all but specific exceptions of development to take place within "Settlement Boundaries". However, the same policy states that "Outside of the settlement boundaries, development will normally only be permitted where... it is in accordance with a made Neighbourhood Plan..."

The current Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan states that "Proposals for development located outside the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) or Rookery Road Hamlet Settlement Boundary will only be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal and that it cannot be satisfactorily located within the BUAB/Settlement Boundary."

The consequence of the adoption of the Local Plan is that our Neighbourhood Plan policy is now "out of sync" with many other neighbourhood plans across Babergh. As a result, Elmsett could come under pressure for further housing development outside the Settlement Boundaries if a developer can demonstrate to the District Council that a "local need" exists. There have already been a number of speculative housing applications, but they were unable to demonstrate a local housing need.

### **THIS CONSULTATION**

The Review effectively replaces Chapter 's 4 (Planning Policy Context) and 7 (Planning Strategy) of the 2019 Plan with new and up-to-date chapters that will, if approved, bring our neighbourhood plan in-line with the newly adopted Local Plan and reduce the pressure for speculative development outside our settlement boundaries.

**In a nutshell, we are amending two of the ten chapters of the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan to bring it up-to-date and bring the policy that determines where new development can take place in line with national and district policies.**

Elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan, reference is made to the 2012 version of the National Planning Policy Framework. The most recent version of this was published in December 2023 and the references will also be updated in the Review.

**This leaflet sets out the current Chapters 4 and 7 and the proposed new Chapters.**

**We are now consulting on the changes for a period of just over 6 weeks.  
We need your comments by 13 May 2024.  
The back page identifies how you can comment.**







## 4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The regulations governing the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans require that they take account of the NPPF and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local development plan. In July 2018 the Government published a Revised NPPF that was to be used straight away for the purposes of making decisions on planning applications. However, for planning policy documents including Neighbourhood Plans, a “transition period” was introduced that would require all Neighbourhood Plans submitted to the local planning authority before 24 January 2019 to be examined against the 2012 NPPF. This Neighbourhood Plan was prepared within that context and submitted to Babergh District Council before 24 January 2019.

4.2 The 2012 NPPF requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans should:

- Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development.
- Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

4.3 At a more local level, the Plan has been prepared in the context of the current status of the Babergh Local Plan, which comprises the Core Strategy and the “saved policies” of the 2006 Babergh Local Plan. Babergh District Council adopted a Core Strategy in February 2014. It provides the current strategic planning framework for Elmsett which this Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to. These documents are collectively referred to as “the local plan” in this document. In 2015 Babergh District Council announced their intention to produce a new Joint Local Plan (the emerging Local Plan) with Mid Suffolk District Council that would provide a planning framework for the management of growth across the two districts to 2036.

4.4 The adopted Core Strategy identifies a hierarchy of settlements ranked according to their size and the services they provide. It identifies Elmsett as a “hinterland village” within the “functional cluster” of Hadleigh, acknowledging that Hadleigh provides a range of and facilities to meet many of the needs of Elmsett’s residents. The Core Strategy recognises that there are several larger villages (core villages) that provide a range of services and facilities for a cluster of villages around them. In so far as Elmsett is concerned, the saved policies of the 2006 Local Plan and the policies in the Core Strategy are those by which planning applications will be judged until replaced by a new local plan.

4.5 In 2015 the District Council commenced the preparation of a new Joint Local Plan in conjunction with Mid Suffolk. In August 2017 a consultation document was published and in July 2019 the Preferred Options Draft Joint Local Plan was published for consultation. The Preferred Options Draft Local Plan document identified Elmsett as a Hinterland Village and made provision for a minimum 50 additional dwellings between April 2018 and 2036 (which includes outstanding planning permissions granted as at 1 April 2018).

## 4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the content of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant Local Plan documents that cover the parish. The Plan must have regard to the content of the NPPF and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The paragraphs below identify how these are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

### National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In December 2023 the Government published a Revised NPPF. The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states: “Before Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”.

4.3 Paragraph 29 of the NPPF states that: “Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.”

### The Local Plan

4.4 At a more local level, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the current Babergh Local Plan, which comprises the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan - Part 1, adopted in November 2023 and referred to as JLP1 in this Neighbourhood Plan. It provides a set of strategic and local development management policies, which will be used to inform decisions on planning applications and appeals. These do not need to be repeated in the Neighbourhood Plan but which the Neighbourhood Plan can complement by adding locally based detail.

4.5 Part 2 of the Joint Local Plan is to be prepared during the coming years, with adoption currently scheduled for Autumn 2026. It will identify a settlement hierarchy for the two local authority areas, the distribution of any further housing growth

## 2019 Neighbourhood Plan Chapter 4 (continued)

- 4.6 At this time the Joint Local Plan is at a very early stage of preparation and, therefore, is not a matter that has been given weight in the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan. The emerging Local Plan will not be adopted before the Neighbourhood Plan is "made" by the District Council. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to conform with the policies in the adopted Local Plan documents, while having regard to the status and content of the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.7 As previously noted in paragraph 1.5, when work commenced on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, Babergh did not have a five-years supply of available housing land, as required by government policy. However, the 2017-18 Mid Suffolk and Babergh Annual Monitoring Report published in July 2018, concluded that a five-years supply was available as at 1 April 2018.
- 4.8 Given the status of the Joint Local Plan and the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan will be completed before the Local Plan is adopted, the Core Strategy and saved policies of the 2006 Local Plan remain the district planning policies, along with the NPPF. Regard has been given to these in preparing this Plan while not seeking to contradict the emerging strategic policies of the Joint Local Plan.

## Proposed Replacement Chapter 4 (continued)

and identify any sites required to meet that growth. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the District Council had commenced a "call for sites" that landowners/developers would like to be considered for allocation in Part 2.

- 4.6 In July 2020, Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan which is part of the strategic policy framework for the area. Much of the parish does fall within a Minerals Consultation Area and the District Council will consult the County Council on planning applications that fall within this area.



## 2019 Neighbourhood Plan Chapter 7

- 7.1 As noted above, the planning policy framework for Babergh is currently evolving from that which is set out in the Core Strategy (2014) to a new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared ahead of the Joint Local Plan being adopted and the strategy for the village is based on the continuation of the Hinterland Village designation as designated in the current adopted Core Strategy.
- 7.2 Core Strategy Policy CS2 designates Elmsett as a Hinterland Village which will "accommodate some development to meet the needs within them" and where "All proposals will be assessed against Policy CS11."
- 7.3 Core Strategy Policy CS11 has three key strands to it that are relevant to setting the policy context to the Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan. In summary, it states that development proposals will be approved where:
- proposals score positively when assessed against Policy CS15;
  - a series of matters identified in the policy are addressed; and
  - proposals are able to demonstrate a close functional relationship to the existing settlement sites.

## Proposed Replacement Chapter 7

### Context

- 7.1 The planning policy framework for the Parish is established in the adopted Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (November 2023) and the 2020 "made" Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan. The term "Built Up Area Boundary" has been superseded in the Joint Local Plan and they are now known as Settlement Boundaries.
- 7.2 The principle of development within Settlement Boundaries is accepted, in principle, while there is a general presumption against development outside them, unless this is allowed for by national or specific local policies. The level of services and facilities in the village as well as the limited accessibility to higher order settlements means that only limited housing growth is appropriate in the village over the period of the Plan. It is, however, essential that the growth is focused on the existing built-up area of the village where there is a close relationship with accessibility of the existing services and facilities.
- 7.3 Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan does not define a settlement hierarchy across Babergh nor allocate sites for development. These matters are being addressed in the emerging Part 2 of the Joint Local Plan, planned for completion in 2026. As such, there is no housing requirement for Elmsett that the Neighbourhood Plan has to meet.



7.4 The sites identified for development in this Neighbourhood Plan satisfy these criteria.

7.5 A central principle of this Plan is to support limited and sustainable growth in Elmsett that doesn't have an irreversible impact on the historic and natural environment of the area. Elmsett has been in receipt of modest growth over a number of years, in the form of small estates and infill plots. This approach is expected to continue throughout the life of this Plan.

7.6 The level of services and facilities in the village as well as the limited accessibility to higher order settlements means that only limited housing growth is appropriate in the village over the period of the Plan. It is, however, essential that the growth is focused on the existing built-up area of the village where there is a close relationship with accessibility of the existing services and facilities.

7.7 A Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) is defined for the main built-up area of the village in order to manage the location of future development and ensure that the location of new development is well related to existing services and facilities. The boundary is based on that contained in the 2006 Local Plan but has been reviewed to reflect recent changes and opportunities for new development that will arise during the Neighbourhood Plan period. In order to manage the potential impacts of growth, new development will be focused within the BUAB. In addition, a "hamlet" is also defined at Rookery Road where there is a definable cluster of at least 13 dwellings. Through the course of the lifetime of the Plan there may be opportunities for sensitively designed infill dwellings or replacement dwelling to be constructed within the Rookery Road "hamlet".

7.8 In accordance with Policy CS11 of the Babergh Core Strategy, there may be opportunities for limited growth adjoining but outside the BUAB. However, such an approach to development must respect the landscape quality and setting of the village and not result in further ribbon development along the roads leading from the village centre. Furthermore, it would not be sustainable to allow development that would increase the extent of the Rookery Road area and, as such, the policy approach of CS11 does not apply to the Rookery Road hamlet designation.

7.9 There may be situations where it is necessary for development to take place away from the BUAB, but proposals outside the BUAB will need to be supported by evidence to demonstrate why the proposal has to be located there. However, this approach does not restrict the conversion of agricultural buildings to new uses where proposals meet the government regulations and local planning policies for such conversions.



7.4 Policy SP03 of the Part 1 Joint Local Plan sets out where new development would be supported, but the approach is very high level with general references to windfall development in accordance with the policies in Neighbourhood Plans or elsewhere in the Joint Local Plan.

#### Settlement Boundaries

7.5 The Neighbourhood Plan Review confirms the Settlement Boundaries of the 2019 Plan.

7.6 In accordance with Policy SP03 of the Joint Local Plan, the spatial strategy for Elmsett supports the principle of development within the defined settlement boundaries subject to the consideration of the impact of the proposal as assessed against other policies in the Joint Local Plan - Part 1 and Neighbourhood Plan, such as

- the presence of heritage assets;
- the landscape setting of the village;
- the capacity of services and infrastructure;
- the potential impact on the amenity of existing residents; and
- the impact of development on the wider area.

This approach will ensure that the largely undeveloped countryside will remain preserved.

7.7 There may be situations where it may be adequately demonstrated that it is necessary for development to take place outside the Settlement Boundaries. However, this will be limited to that which is specifically supported by the NPPF, the Joint Local Plan - Part 1 and the Neighbourhood Plan. Table 5 of the Joint Local Plan - Part 1 identifies the types of development that would, subject to other considerations, be supported outside settlement boundaries.

***For the purposes of this consultation, market housing schemes outside the Settlement Boundary would not be supported by the Joint Local Plan.***



## What next?

Once this consultation is complete, the Parish Council will review the comments and submit the Review to Babergh District Council. The District Council will then carry out further consultation and submit the Review documents and comments to an Independent Examiner. The Examiner will decide whether any changes are required and whether the Review needs to be the subject of a Parish Referendum. At this stage the Parish Council feels that a further Referendum will not be necessary. When the Review is complete, the new policy will be used when planning applications in the parish are considered by Babergh District Council.



## HOW TO COMMENT

We welcome your comments on the Review, even if you fully support the proposed changes. Demonstrating support will help the Examiner know what the local feelings are. You can comment by either completing the slip below and returning it to The Clerk, Moat Farm, Hadleigh Road, Elmsett IP7 6ND or, if you are able, by completing the response online at [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Elmsett/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Elmsett/)



You can also respond on a mobile device by scanning this QR Code

### Consultation Questions

1. Do you support Revised Policy EMST1 - Spatial Strategy? Yes  No  Unsure

Comments

2. Do you have any comments on the new Chapter 4? Yes  No

Comments

3. Do you have any comments on the new Chapter 7? Yes  No

Comments

Data Protection Notice: All information collected and processed by the Parish Council at this stage is by virtue of our requirement under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Please note: All comments received will be made publicly available and will be identifiable by name / organisation. All other personal information provided will be protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Name .....

Address (optional) .....

EMAIL (optional).....

Would you like to be notified when the Parish Council submits the Review to Babergh District Council?

(if yes, please provide either address or email address above) Yes  No

Would you be willing to have your contact details shared with Babergh District Council for the sole purpose of enabling that Council to keep you informed of further consultations on the Review? YES  No

Data will be processed by Babergh District Council in accordance with their information security policies and Privacy Notice (available on their website).

**Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan Review**  
**Public Consultation**  
**March 2024** Elmsett Parish Council