

Summary Document

Babergh Development Framework to 2031

Core Strategy
Growth Consultation Summer 2010



Core Strategy Consultation – Future Growth of Babergh District to 2031

- i. Babergh is continuing its work to plan ahead for the district's long-term future and the first step in this will be the 'Core Strategy' part of the Babergh Development Framework (BDF). It is considered that as a starting point for a new Plan, the parameters of future change, development and growth need to be established.
- ii. It is important to plan for growth and further development to meet future needs of the district, particularly as the Core Strategy will be a long term planning framework. Key questions considered here are growth requirements, the level of housing growth and economic growth to plan for and an outline strategy for how to deliver these.
- iii. Until recently, future growth targets, particularly those for housing growth, were prescribed in regional level Plans. As these Plans have now been scrapped, there are no given growth targets to use and it is necessary to decide these locally. In planning for the district's future, a useful sub-division of Babergh can be identified. This is to be used in the BDF and it includes the following 3 main areas:

Sudbury / Great Cornard - Western Babergh

Hadleigh / Mid Babergh

Ipswich Fringe - East Babergh including Shotley peninsula

1. Employment growth in Babergh – determining the scale of growth in employment; plus town centres and tourism

- 1.1 Babergh is an economically diverse area, with industrial areas at the Ipswich fringe, Sudbury, Hadleigh and Brantham (and other rural areas); traditional retail sectors in the two towns; a high proportion of small businesses; and tourism / leisure based around historic towns / villages and high quality countryside and river estuaries. There is a significant agricultural base, and historically, Babergh has had a relatively high proportion of manufacturing employment. The Haven Gateway sub-region is recognised as a growth point. It has been further divided into Suffolk and Essex Haven Gateway. Suffolk Haven Gateway (SHG) comprises Ipswich Borough, Babergh, Suffolk Coastal, plus Mid Suffolk District, and is based on Ipswich, Adastral Park and the Port of Felixstowe. These are important drivers of economic development and employment in Babergh.
- 1.2 The evidence here is provided by numerous sources, primarily external consultants studies, such as the Suffolk Haven Gateway Employment Land Review and Strategic Sites Study 2009. These inform the overall approach and deal with a number of major employment land locations in Babergh and their status as strategic sites / land allocations. Although already allocated through the existing Local Plan (of 2006) these will be important in helping to meet future economic growth and new jobs aspirations. Please refer to the full technical document for anticipated phasing of potential Strategic Sites/Allocations (provided purely as an indication of when the major sites are seen as likely to come forward, rather than as any form of formal phasing approach).
- 1.3 As part of a new 20-year planning strategy we need to establish our jobs and economic growth aspirations for Babergh district. In doing so we should build on our strengths and recognise weaknesses. The figure will inevitably reflect our location in an economic area heavily influenced by proximity of Felixstowe Port, Ipswich, Colchester and Bury St Edmunds, and recognise the need to work with neighbouring local authorities particularly in the Ipswich Policy Area to promote and focus economic growth.

- 1.4 Babergh is well placed to play its part in planning for a growth in jobs in the Haven Gateway. The former regional plan set a target of 30,000 extra jobs for the Suffolk Haven Gateway (2001 to 2021). Current predictions indicate a shortfall in achieving this target. In 2001 Babergh had 22% of jobs in the SHG area. The forecast for 2021 is that there would be a 35.4% growth in jobs representing 24% of all jobs in the sub-region.

- 1.5 The following 4 scenarios are suggested for future jobs growth levels:

Scenario 1 – The “business as usual” approach – based on the forecast 2009 baseline scenario, we assume that job growth figures in Babergh for the 20-year period 2011 to 2031 will be the same as that for the (former Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)) 20-year period 2001 to 2021 – that is 8,100 jobs. Refer to the Employment Land Review (ELR) evidence research, Table 132. Approx. **8,100 new jobs**

Scenario 2 – Highest Economic Ambition (and fullest compensation for local job target shortfall) - to use the forecast figure for Babergh of 8,100 jobs and add one-third of the number (i.e. one third of 7,140) that would have been necessary to achieve the former RSS target of 30,000 (assuming a three-way split between Babergh, Ipswich and Suffolk Coastal of the shortfall). Approx. **10,500 new jobs**

Scenario 3 – Mid Range Economic Ambition (lower compensation for local job target shortfall) - to use the (shortfall) forecast to 2021 of 8,100 jobs in Babergh and apply the same percentage growth to the jobs target for the district to 2031 as has been used in the former RSS (2001 – 2021) for the growth in new houses, i.e. 20%. Approx. **9,700 new jobs**

Scenario 4 – determine a jobs growth target after the housing growth target has been chosen on a simple 1:1 ratio of jobs to new homes / households.

Rationale - all scenarios:

- Partly included within text above; additional considerations suggesting pros and cons can be found in the full technical, longer version of this document and the sustainability appraisal work accompanying the current documents
- Scenario 4 suggests an approach which while simple, is housing target led

[Note: Although it had no formal status, and is no longer applicable, the Draft East of England Plan > 2031 published March 2010 set out a jobs target of 9,700 for Babergh]

2. Future Housing Growth

- 2.1 National planning policy applies, including the Government’s key housing policy goal to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. Babergh currently has as one its 5 priority themes ‘Increasing the supply of quality homes that local people can afford to buy or rent’. A useful starting point in setting a new housing growth figure is to review the baseline, in the form of previous housing development figures for Babergh. The following housing targets have previously applied / been devised for Babergh:

Document/source of target & time period	Annual Housing Growth Target
1. Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 - 2016	345
2. RSS (2008) 2001 - 2021	280 (inc. Babergh's share of IPA housing)
3. Draft RSS Review > 2031	335 (exc. Babergh's share of housing in Ipswich fringe)

- 2.2 Target 1 above applied until 2008, when the regional plan superseded the county level plan. Target 2 above then applied until July 2010 (regional plans then scrapped by new government).
- 2.3 Housing delivery for Babergh since 2001 has averaged at close to the level that the district was required to provide under the adopted regional Plan (for the period 2001 – 2021) that is 280 net dwellings per year. It is also evident that Babergh currently has a sufficient 5-year housing land supply (as demonstrated in its Annual Monitoring Reports, see Babergh's website). Based on the former RSS target this equates to approximately 9.3 years of housing land supply. The following table shows recent growth in Babergh's housing stock:

	A) Increase in housing stock 2001 – 2010	B) Stock growth over the period - % growth of each sub area	C) Average change in housing stock per annum (A)/9	D) Distribution of total new housing stock
Western Babergh	1346	7.9	150	52.7%
Mid Babergh	735	8.5	82	28.8%
Eastern Babergh	474	4.6	53	18.5%
Total Babergh	2555	(Ave.) 7.0	285	100%

Figures may not tally exactly due to rounding

Source: Babergh DC Council Tax records (properties subject to Council Tax charging)

- 2.4 Another important consideration is housing needs. These can be assessed through: Babergh's housing register; individual parish needs surveys; Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 & 2009 / Housing Needs Survey 2008. Future growth projections for households / population growth and economic / jobs growth projections will also be relevant. 3 main sources identified include:
- Household growth projections sourced by the former regional planning body (2006-31). These indicate a total need for 320 - 380 homes per annum 2010-31 (rounded)
 - Household growth projections sourced by official governmental bodies (Communities & Local Government and Office for National Statistics) (2006-31). These indicate a total need for 580 homes per annum 2010-31 (rounded)
 - Existing household formation rates (Strategic Housing Market Assessment research) (2009/10). These indicate a total need for 740 homes per annum 2010-31 (rounded)
- 2.5 Given all the various forms of evidence (see full Technical Appendix for details) it is considered that it would be appropriate to set out 4 alternative scenarios for housing growth over the next 20 years. These use alternative assumptions about factors likely to influence housing delivery over the same period. The basis and features of each are provided in the full, technical document, along with an outline of their pros and cons.

Scenario 1: Balancing housing and economic growth (including 3 sub variations depending upon the level of economic aspiration and jobs growth to be chosen for the district) (All figures rounded)

A: Aim to create approx. 8,100 jobs up to 2031 and approx. 7,300 homes = **approx. 350 per year**. This would mean a need to plan for / allocate approx. 3,630 **NEW homes 2010-2031 through the BDF**

B: Aim to create approx. 10,500 jobs up to 2031 and approx. 9,430 homes = **approx. 450 per year**. This would mean a need to plan for / allocate approx. 5,770 **NEW homes 2010-2031 through the BDF**

C: Aim to create approx. 9,700 jobs up to 2031 and approx. 8,750 homes = **approx. 420 per year**. This would mean a need to plan for / allocate approx. 5,100 **NEW homes 2010-2031 through the BDF**

Rationale:

- Jobs / homes balanced on the existing ratio of 1 job: 0.9 home
- Assumes aim of delivering, as a minimum, the number of new jobs recently forecast to arise in the district over the period 2001-2021 and thereafter the same rate for 2021-2031 (that is, Option A)
- Variations B and C reflect alternative levels of higher economic aspirations, and actions to aim to help compensate for a forecast new jobs shortfall for the wider sub region of south-east Suffolk
- See section 2 of this paper for more information on jobs targets
- Pros and cons can be viewed in the full technical appendix document and the sustainability appraisal work accompanying the current documents

Scenario 2: Address affordable housing needs and market housing needs. (All figures rounded)

Suggests the delivery of 14,070 homes from 2010-2031 = approx. 670 per year. This would mean a need to plan for / allocate approx. 10,400 **NEW homes 2010-2031 through the BDF**

Rationale:

- Based on aiming to fully meet affordable housing needs arising over the period (193 per year) and consequently, also the level of open market housing calculated as necessary to deliver that level of affordable housing
- Pros and cons can be viewed in the full technical appendix document and the sustainability appraisal work accompanying the current documents

Scenario 3: Depressed market and continuing the existing level of development. (All figures rounded)

Suggests the delivery of 5,400 homes from 2010-2031 = approx. 255 per year. This would mean a need to plan for / allocate approx. 1,700 **NEW homes 2010-2031 through the BDF**

Rationale:

- Assumes depressed markets for first 3 years and resulting likely housing delivery levels, then resumption of previous delivery levels for remaining period to 2031

- Pros and cons can be viewed in the full technical appendix document and the sustainability appraisal work accompanying the current documents

Scenario 4: Market intervention/ quick market recovery and continuation of existing level of development. (All figures rounded)

Suggests the delivery of approx. 5,600 homes from 2010-2031 = approx. 270 per year. This would mean a need to plan for / allocate approx. 1,900 **NEW homes 2010-2031 through the BDF**

Rationale:

- Assumes that either possible interventions in housing / economic markets would be successful and /or a quicker rate of recovery in these markets occurs such that existing rates of delivery are sustained on average for the period 2010-2031
- Subsequent buoyancy of these markets could also have this effect, by compensating for any low delivery in early years through higher delivery in later years
- Pros and cons can be viewed in the full technical appendix document and the sustainability appraisal work accompanying the current documents

3. Where should growth go? - A settlement hierarchy for Babergh, and Potential Broad Locations for Growth

3.1 The previous sections considered the rural nature of Babergh district, and suggest a functional division into three areas. The 3 main towns/urban areas are clear within each third, and the network of larger villages that meet day to day local rural community needs need to be identified.

3.2 Planning policy at all levels requires the planning and delivery of new development to reflect sustainable development principles and directs most new development to within or adjoining existing towns. This also suggests developing a form of settlement hierarchy to cover smaller places than these, having regard to the characteristics of each level of community / settlement and its suitability for development in terms of scale / type. Former strategic Plans set out a useful approach to applying national policy to the local context here and it is suggested that this approach should be adapted to identify a network of the largest, key service villages (with a good range of services / facilities overall) in Babergh; then other villages (with some but less services / facilities). Finally, the smallest villages, hamlets or sporadic rural housing, with few or no services / facilities, would be counted as part of the mostly open countryside.

3.3 'Key Service Centre' villages with a good level of services were those with:

- A Primary School within the village, a secondary school within it, or easily accessible by public transport;
- Primary Health care facilities
- Range of retail and service provision capable of meeting day to day needs, particularly for convenience shopping;
- Local employment opportunities and
- Frequent public transport to higher order settlements.

- 3.4 These suggested criteria need adapting to Babergh's modern circumstances in relation to matters like health care facilities and 'frequent' public transport and the dispersed settlement pattern. Other criteria relevant to a settlement hierarchy for Babergh include:

Population size: Some larger villages in the district have a strong function in supporting the rural hinterland beyond, including many smaller villages. Settlements providing service functions tend to show a relationship to the population size, for this reason we consider that settlements with a population of 1000+ should be considered for inclusion as key service centres (unless mostly bereft of services / facilities).

NB Exceptions identified here include Bures St Mary (proposed for Key Service Centre status due to overall size and services / facilities; although part of it lies in Essex) and Leavenheath (meets pure population level requirement but virtually without services / facilities, so not a proposed KSC)

Location / function: Due to the geography of the rural parts of the district, many smaller villages are remote from key urban centres such as Sudbury, Hadleigh or Ipswich. The larger rural settlements in between these centres have an important role to play, providing closer access to many of the essential services. It is important that key service centres are located within reasonable reach of the smaller villages and the rural hinterland in all areas of the district. The pattern of distribution, based on the criteria (4 of the 5 key facilities listed above, plus a population of 1000+), would ensure that all areas are well related to a key service centre.

- 3.5 We suggest that key service centres in Babergh are these 15 villages:

Acton; Bildeston; Boxford; Brantham; Bures St Mary*; Capel St Mary; Chelmondiston; East Bergholt; Glemsford; Great Waldingfield; Holbrook; Lavenham; Long Melford; Nayland; Shotley

- 3.6 The next type / level of villages are those with some of the services / facilities mentioned but less than those of the KSC villages and usually of smaller population size, with locations / functions able to accommodate less growth than the KSC villages. However, an allowance for some generally relatively limited development for these to prevent decline or further loss of facilities seems appropriate. We have therefore also considered the size and spatial characteristics of the smaller villages and looked at the key services and facilities that meet some of people's day-to-day needs. We consider these to be good public transport links to the towns and/or key service centres, a primary school and a convenience / food shop. Such services help to make a village sustainable, and are the services that are often under threat when a population or user-group declines.

- 3.7 These smaller villages that retain a settlement development boundary and have 2 or more of the identified key criteria should be identified as 17 **Other Villages** suitable for small-scale development to meet local needs:

Assington; Bentley; Cockfield; Copdock and Washbrook; Elmsett; Hartest; Hintlesham; Hitcham; Kersey; Lawshall; Monks Eleigh; Polstead; Stoke By Nayland; Sproughton; Stratford St Mary; Stutton; Tattingstone

- 3.8 In contrast, the smallest villages and hamlets with no services / facilities, or with poorer transport links are unsustainable and mostly unsuitable locations for additional development, even on a small scale, unless there is good reason for new development to be located in the countryside. It would be consistent with a new

settlement pattern and hierarchy if settlements in the countryside below 'Key Service Centres' or 'Other Villages' were to have no settlement development boundaries. These would be considered to be in the countryside. In these areas development would be restricted and any development permitted will require exceptional justification. However, in order to meet local housing needs and maximise the delivery of affordable housing it is considered that the current Local Plan policy on affordable housing rural exception sites should continue for sites that are in or immediately adjacent to Other Villages and in or adjacent to settlements even without a development boundary at a scale proportionate to proven local needs.

Potential Broad Locations for Growth

- 3.9 The available evidence indicates that whatever future growth levels are to be chosen for Babergh, it is very likely that most growth will need to be accommodated by new, properly planned, strategic type developments at the edges of the 3 towns (although the KSC and Other Villages would accommodate some growth). These would be planned as sustainable new developments providing for mixed, balanced communities, allowing, as far as possible, opportunities to live and work locally, together with the social, physical and green infrastructure required. However, it is not necessary or appropriate to define precise boundaries for these broad locations at this point in the planning process.
- 3.10 The attached map shows 9 broad locations for potential growth: 3 around Hadleigh (west; north; east), 4 around Sudbury and Great Cornard (north; east; south-west; south-east), and 2 on the Babergh Ipswich Fringe (west; south-west).

Questions

Jobs Growth

- Q1: Should Babergh adopt a cross-boundary or sub-regional approach towards economic development, new jobs growth and associated matters? If so, this could mean higher economic growth for Babergh to meet wider job creation targets but greater overall prosperity. Please give reasons for your response(s) – *to help us understand their merit*
- Q2: Please state your preference(s) on the jobs growth scenarios ranking them from 1 to 4, with 1 for your greatest preference and 4 for your least favoured approach. Please give reasons for your choices – *to help us understand your preferences*.
- Q3: Are there any other scenarios/approaches that you consider would be preferable or more beneficial, but also realistic and deliverable (and beyond minor variations of the scenarios set out above)? Please give the reasoning behind/evidence for your alternative approach(es) or scenario(s) *to help us understand their merit*.

Housing Growth

- Q4: Please state your preference(s) on the scenarios ranking them from 1 to 6 (this allows for scenarios 1A, 1B, and 1C to be scored individually), with 1 for your greatest preference and 6 for your least favoured approach. Please give reasons for your choices – *to help us understand your preferences*.
- Q5: Are there any other scenarios/approaches that you consider would be preferable, as well as viable, realistic and deliverable (beyond minor variations of the scenarios set out above)? Please give reasons for any alternatives you may suggest – *to help us understand their comparative merits*.

Settlement Hierarchy

- Q6: Do you agree with the suggested approach to settlement types or a 'hierarchy' as set out above? If not how would you change this and why?
- Q7: Do you think that the population threshold of 1000, for defining key service centres, is appropriate for the make up of this district? If not please indicate what you consider to be appropriate and why.
- Q8: Do you agree with the other suggested criteria for defining key service centres in Babergh? If not how would you change these and why?
- Q9: Do you agree with the 'Other Village' category approach and the criteria for defining these villages? If not how would you change this and why?
- Q10: Do you agree that the smaller / smallest settlements (villages, hamlets and dispersed groups of houses) that do not meet the criteria for either 'Key Service Centres' or 'Other Villages' should be considered to be in the countryside without settlement development boundaries – i.e. a generally very restrictive approach to development applied? If not how would you change this and why?

Potential Broad Locations

- Q11: **Overall Approach** - Do you agree that we should plan mainly for larger (strategic-scale) developments, through 'urban extensions' to accommodate new housing, jobs and other development? If not, please give your reasons and suggest an alternative strategy / approach.
- Q12: **Hadleigh** - Would you prefer to see growth spread out among all 3 broad locations for potential growth, or all growth concentrated in just 1 (or 2) locations? Please give your reasons, and any alternative to the 3 locations considered above.
- Q13: **Sudbury and Great Cornard** - Would you prefer to see growth spread out in parts of all 4 broad locations for potential growth, or all growth concentrated in just 1 (or 2) locations? Please give your reasons, and any alternative to the 4 locations considered above.
- Q14: **Ipswich Fringe** - Would you prefer to see growth spread between both broad locations for potential growth, or all growth concentrated in just 1 location? Please give your reasons, and any alternative to the 2 locations considered above.
- Q15: **All / Any Broad Locations** - Are there any of the 9 broad locations for potential growth that you consider should not be developed at all? If so, please let us know which these are, and why you consider they should not be developed.
- Q16: **Other Broad Locations** - Are there any alternative broad areas around the towns and/or on the Ipswich Fringe that we have not identified that you feel would be better locations for future housing and / or employment growth? If so, please let us know the reasons why, and (if possible) identify any possible constraints / issues.