

## Babergh District Council



### Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan 2022 - 2037

#### Submission Draft consultation responses

In February 2025, Hitcham Parish Council (the 'qualifying body') submitted their draft Neighbourhood Plan to Babergh District Council for formal consultation under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The consultation period ran from Monday 24 March until Friday 9 May 2025.

Eleven representations were received. They are listed below and copies are attached.

Hitcham Parish Council were also given an opportunity to respond to new issues raised at this stage. Their response is included at the end of the document.

| Ref No. | Consultee                                    |
|---------|--|
| (1)     | Suffolk County Council                       |
| (2)     | Babergh District Council                     |
| (3)     | Historic England                             |
| (4)     | Natural England                              |
| (5)     | Environment Agency                           |
| (6)     | National Landscape Team                      |
| (7)     | National Highways                            |
| (8)     | Anglian Water                                |
| (9)     | Avison Young (obo National Gas Transmission) |
| (10)    | Sport England                                |
| (11)    | Resident - Harvey                            |
| (12)    | Response from Hitcham Parish Council         |

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# (1) SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
Enquiries to: Busranur Serin  
Tel: 01473 265631  
Email: [neighbourhoodplanning@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplanning@suffolk.gov.uk)



Planning Policy Team,  
Babergh District Council,  
Endeavour House,  
8 Russell Road,  
Ipswich,  
IP1 2BX

Dear Paul Bryant,

## **Submission Consultation version of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for consulting Suffolk County Council (SCC) on the Submission Consultation version of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan.

SCC welcome the changes made to the plan in response to comments made at the Reg. 14 pre-submission consultation stage.

As this is the submission draft of the Plan the County Council response will focus on matters related to the Basic Conditions the plan needs to meet to proceed to referendum. These are set out in paragraph 8(2) Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act. The basic conditions are:

- a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan
- b) the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- c) the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area)
- d) the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

Where amendments to the plan are suggested added text will be in *italics* and deleted text will be in ~~striketrough~~.

## **Natural Environment**

### ***Policy HIT10***

SCC notes that policy HIT10 is titled as "Natural Assets" however to be more consistent with other adopted N Plans, it is recommended that the policy is renamed as "biodiversity" (or something similar. This would provide greater clarity and context to the reader, and would be clear and unambiguous, in line with paragraph 16, part d) of the NPPF 2024.

## Policies Map

Within SCC's response to the pre-submission consultation stage, it was noted that Figure 22 was not significantly detailed to be classified as a Policies Map. A Policies Map is an important and useful tool which clearly displays the important features within the plan policies in one clear and consolidated image.

SCC recommended that the map displays the Settlement Boundary (as displayed in Figure 12), community facilities (as stated in Policy HIT12), PROW, and any other important features or facilities of the parish.

The parish council in their Consultation Statement responded that they "Agree to amend policy map to include SB and community facilities" and actioned to amend accordingly but no changes have been made to Figure 22 (Policies Map) in the Submission version of the plan. SCC assumes that is an oversight.

Whilst it is not a statutory requirement for one to be included generally in a neighbourhood plan, a detailed Policies Map would prove more useful if it contains all of the key features and facilities of the parish. This would provide clarity to the decision maker when determining future planning applications.

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If there is anything that I have raised that you would like to discuss, please use my contact information at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Busranur Serin  
Planning Officer  
Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure

## (2) BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Our ref: Hitcham NP R16 Response  
Dated: 8 May 2025

From: Planning Policy Team, Babergh District Council  
To: Janet Cheesley (Independent Examiner)  
cc: *Malcolm Currie (Chair, Hitcham PC), Rachel Leggett & Andrea Long (NP Consultants)*

*Sent by e-mail*

Dear Janet, (All)

- **Regulation 16 submission draft Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan 2022 - 2037**
- **Comments from Babergh District Council**

This response is made for and on behalf of Robert Hobbs [Head of Strategic Planning ~ Planning Policy and Infrastructure] at Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils.

Babergh District Council welcomes the changes that have been made to this submission draft Plan in response to our Regulation 14 stage comments. We also note that, within chapter 3, the supporting text helpfully explains that this council, working with Mid Suffolk, will now bring forward a Joint Local Plan Review rather than the previously indicated Part 2 Plan. The anticipated timetable for the Review is now set out in our 'Joint Local Development Scheme', published in March of this year.

The made changes aside, we do have some further comments to make on this draft Plan. These are appended to this letter and are set out under relevant chapter headings where appropriate. Of note, we repeat our request to make two changes to the proposed settlement boundary which, while noted for action in the Consultation Statement, do not appear to have been implemented. Some natural updating of the Plan will also be necessary should it be allowed to progress to a local referendum, e.g. to Figure 1 and parts of the supporting text, but that is to be expected.

We trust that all of our comments are helpful and would be happy to answer any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Bryant  
Neighbourhood Planning Officer | Planning & Building Control  
Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils – Working Together  
T: 01449 724771 / 07860 829547 / E: [communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)



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**Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils**  
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX  
Telephone: (0300) 1234 000  
[www.babergh.gov.uk](http://www.babergh.gov.uk) / [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk)

## General Observations

**Figures:** The numbering of these from page 12 onwards, and any cross-references to them, will need to be checked and corrected, as necessary. Figure 6 on page 12 (the PRoW map) should presumably read as Figure 7, and so on.

Also, in Appendix C (Local Green Spaces), the photographs and maps on pages 93 to 96 inclusive are all either Figure 53 and or Figure 54.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

**Para 1.10** ~ Suggest updating the Design Guidance and Codes entry to explain that a post Reg. 14 version of this document was issued by AECOM in January 2025.

Nb: A similar update could be added at paragraph 8.8

## Chapter 6: Policies

**Figure 22 (Policies Map):** The two items listed below still need to be added to the Policies Map and Key (page 33). An Inset Map on a suitable OS base may be required to show an appropriate level of detail.

- a) Settlement Boundary (HIT1)
- b) Community Facilities (HIT12)

## Chapter 7: Housing

**Figure 23 (page 25):** Our R14 representation included two recommendations to amend the proposed settlement boundary. This is reproduced on pages 102/103 of the Consultation Statement which, under 'Actions' says, 'amend Figure 13 accordingly'. The settlement boundary map (Figure 23 in this draft Plan) does not appear to have been amended as agreed. Can the Parish Council please confirm to the Examiner that this will be corrected.

**Policy HIT3:** The first paragraph of this policy requires some additional editing to make grammatical sense. Our Reg.14 stage suggestion was :

*"Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes on sites outside of but immediately adjacent to or otherwise well related to the settlement boundary will be supported where:"*

## Chapter 9: Environment and Landscape

Some minor modifications are required:

Page 50: On the penultimate line of the Objective 3 text, insert the word 'and' before 'providing a measurable net gain in biodiversity' so this matches the text on page 30.

Page 51: Within the note under Policy HIT4; added at the suggestion of Suffolk County Council, the text on the fifth line should refer to the 'Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan', and the following sentence should read ' ... Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils ...'

Page 66: The paragraph numbering needs checking. Should this start at 9.41, and not 9.42?

## **Chapter 10: Community and Services**

Para 10.2: We see that the start of the first sentence has been amended, in part, per our Reg. 14 response but requires more editing. It should read:

10.2 [Policy LP28 of the BMSJLP Part 1 \(2023\)](#) seeks to protect ... [etc].

## **Glossary**

A polite reminder to the Steering Group that their Glossary entries should be relevant, i.e., Hitcham does not have a 'Heritage Coastline'.

[Ends]

### (3) HISTORIC ENGLAND

**E from:** Andrew Marsh (Historic Environment Planning Adviser)  
**Rec'd:** 30 April 2025  
**Subject:** RE: Consultation on R16 Hitcham NP (Babergh DC) - ends Fri 9 May

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on the Regulation 16 Submission version of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Having reviewed the plan and relevant documentation we do not consider it necessary for Historic England to provide detailed comments at this time. We would refer you if appropriate to any previous comments submitted at Regulation 14 stage, and for any further information to our detailed advice on successfully incorporating historic environment considerations into a neighbourhood plan, which can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/>

We would be grateful if you would notify us on [eastplanningpolicy@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:eastplanningpolicy@historicengland.org.uk) if and when the Neighbourhood Plan is made by the council. To avoid any doubt, this letter does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on or, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise as a result of the proposed plan, where we consider these would have an adverse effect on the historic environment.

Please do contact me, either via email or the number above, if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Marsh BSc MA MRTPI  
Historic Environment Planning Adviser  
Development Advice | East of England  
Historic England

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[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

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Ensuring our heritage lives on and is loved for longer.  
[historicengland.org.uk](http://historicengland.org.uk)

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## (4) NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 07 May 2025  
Our ref: 507093  
Your ref: Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan

Mr Paul Bryant  
Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

[communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)



Hornbeam House  
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Cheshire  
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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Bryant

### **Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 Consultation**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 24 March 2025.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

### **Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.**

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and to the following information.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further information on protected species and development is included in [Natural England's Standing Advice on protected species](#).

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If an Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours sincerely  
Sally Wintle  
Consultations Team

## Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

### Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)<sup>1</sup> website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification**, **Ancient Woodland**, **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, **Local Nature Reserves**, [National Parks \(England\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-parks-in-england), **National Trails**, **Priority Habitat Inventory**, **public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map)** and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available from [the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres](http://www.local-environmental-records-centres.org/).

**Priority habitats** are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)<sup>2</sup>. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

**National Character Areas** (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)<sup>4</sup> website and also from the [LandIS website](http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm)<sup>5</sup>, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

### Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework)<sup>6</sup> sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/)<sup>7</sup> sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

### Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>4</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>7</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

## Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)<sup>8</sup>), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)<sup>9</sup>. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

## Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)<sup>10</sup>) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)<sup>11</sup> to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

## Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see [Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land](#)<sup>12</sup>.

## **Improving your natural environment**

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment and should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you should follow the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy and seek to ensure impacts on habitats are avoided or minimised before considering opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. You may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development and how these could contribute to biodiversity net gain and wider environmental goals.

Opportunities for environmental enhancement might include:

- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to reduce impacts on wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.
- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.

Site allocations should be supported by a baseline assessment of biodiversity value. The statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) may be used to understand the number of biodiversity units present on allocated sites. For small development allocations the [Small Sites Metric](#) may be used. This is a simplified version of the statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) and is designed for use where certain criteria are met. Further information on biodiversity net gain including [planning practice guidance](#) can be found [here](#)

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision. Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) sets out further information on green infrastructure standards and principles
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance](#)<sup>13</sup>).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks or on verges, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>

- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

Natural England's [Environmental Benefits from Nature tool](#) may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside the statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) and is available as a beta test version.

## (5) ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



Paul Bryant  
Endeavour House Russell Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP1 2BX

**Our ref:** AE/2025/130401/01-L01  
**Your ref:** HitchamNHP  
**Date:** 07 May 2025

Dear Paul

### **HITCHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 16**

#### **HITCHAM**

Thank you for consulting us on the pre-submission plan for the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan.

For the purposes of neighbourhood planning, we have assessed those authorities who have “up to date” local plans (plans adopted within the previous 5 years) as being of lower risk, and those authorities who have older plans (adopted more than 5 years ago) as being at greater risk. We aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment, and with consideration to the key environmental constraints within our remit, we have then tailored our approach to reviewing each neighbourhood plan accordingly.

A key principle of the planning system is to promote sustainable development. Sustainable development meets our needs for housing, employment and recreation while protecting the environment. It ensures that the right development, is built in the right place at the right time. To assist in the preparation of any document towards achieving sustainable development we have identified the key environmental issues within our remit that are relevant to this area and provide guidance on any actions you need to undertake. We also provide hyperlinks to where you can obtain further information and advice to help support your neighbourhood plan.

#### **Environmental Constraints**

We have identified that the Neighbourhood Plan Area will be affected by the following environmental constraints:

#### **Flood Risk**

Based on a review of environmental constraints for which we are a statutory consultee, we find that there are areas of fluvial flood risk and watercourses within the neighbourhood plan area along the River Brett.

On the basis that future development is steered away from the sensitive aspects of the environment highlighted, we do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects relating to these environmental constraints. Nevertheless, we recommend the inclusion of relevant policies to cover the management of flood risk. Allocation of any sites and any windfall development delivered through the Plan period should follow the sequential approach. [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) paragraph 172 sets this out.

## **Water Resources**

Being in one of the driest areas of the country, our environment has come under significant pressure from potable water demand. New developments should make a significant contribution towards reducing water demand and mitigate against the risk of deterioration to our rivers, groundwater and habitats from groundwater abstraction. We recommend you check the capacity of available water supplies with the water company, in line with the emerging 2024 Water Resources Management Plan which is due to be published in 2023. The Local Planning Authorities Water Cycle Study and Local Plan may indicate constraints in water supply and provide recommendations for phasing of development to tie in with new alternative strategic supplies.

New development should as a minimum meet the highest levels of water efficiency standards, as per the policies in the adopted Local Plan. In most cases development will be expected to achieve 110 litres per person per day as set out in the Building Regulations &c. (Amendment) Regulations 2015. However, a higher standard of water efficiency (e.g. 85 l/p/d) should be considered, looking at all options including rainwater harvesting and greywater systems. Using the water efficiency calculator in Part G of the Building Regulations enables you to calculate the devices and fittings required to ensure a home is built to the right specifications to meet the 110 l/p/d requirement. We recommend all new non-residential development of 1000sqm gross floor area or more should meet the BREEAM 'excellent' standards for water consumption.

Developments that require their own abstraction where it will exceed 20 cubic metres per day from a surface water source (river, stream) or from underground strata (via borehole or well) will require an abstraction licence under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991. There is no guarantee that a licence will be granted as this is dependent on available water resources and existing protected rights. The relevant abstraction licencing strategy for your area provides information on water availability and licencing policy at Abstraction licensing strategies (CAMS process) - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

## **Contaminated Land**

For land that may have been affected by contamination as a result of its previous use or that of the surrounding land, sufficient information should be provided with any planning application to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF for dealing with land contamination. This should take the form of a Preliminary Risk Assessment (including a desk study, conceptual model and initial assessment of risk), and provide assurance that the risk to the water environment is fully understood and can



be addressed through appropriate measures. This is because Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan Area is a source protection zone 2 and 3 as well as on a principal Aquifer. For any planning application the prior use should be checked to ensure there is no risk of contamination.

### **Informatives**

We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, Historic England and Forestry Commission, we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: [How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

### **Source Protection Zones**

Your plan includes areas which are located on Source Protection Zones 2 and 3. These should be considered within your plan if growth or development is proposed here. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be considered with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. Identifying sites for the delivery of [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) could lead to habitat improvements in your area. Biodiversity Net Gain is a system that delivers habitat improvements on any local sites including [Local Wildlife Sites](#) to ensure that there is no loss of habitats from new development. Identifying areas that could benefit from management for conservation within your area could enable habitat to be created closer to development sites in your plan area, providing local ecological enhancement.

We trust this advice is useful.

Yours sincerely

**Mr Andrew Thornton**  
**Planning Advisor**

Direct dial: +44 20 3025 3127

Mobile: 07826434908

Direct e-mail: [andrew.thornton@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.thornton@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Team e-mail: [Planning.EastAnglia@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Planning.EastAnglia@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## (6) NATIONAL LANDSCAPE TEAM

**E from:** Beverly McClean (National Landscape Planning Officer)  
**Rec'd:** 8 April 2025  
**Subject:** Consultation on R16 Hitcham NP (Babergh DC)

Good morning.

The National Landscape team has been consulted on the Regulation 16 stage of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan.

As Hitcham lies outside the boundary of the Dedham Vale National Landscape and the Stour Valley Project Area, the National Landscape team will not be submitting any comments on the Regulation 16 stage Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan.

The National Landscape team do not need to be consulted on future consultations stages of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely

Beverley McClean



**Suffolk & Essex  
Coast & Heaths**  
National  
Landscape



**Dedham Vale**  
National  
Landscape  
& Stour Valley

**Beverley McClean**  
**National Landscape Planning Officer**  
Email: [beverley.mcclean@suffolkandessex-NL.org.uk](mailto:beverley.mcclean@suffolkandessex-NL.org.uk)

National Landscape Office, Saxon House, 1 Whittle Road,  
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[www.coastandheaths-NL.org.uk](http://www.coastandheaths-NL.org.uk)  
[www.dedhamvale-NL.org.uk](http://www.dedhamvale-NL.org.uk)

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

You can now make a nomination for the 2025 National Landscape Awards in the [Dedham Vale](#) and the [Coast & Heaths](#)!



## (7) NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

**E from:** Mark Norman (Spatial Planner – Network Operations)  
**Rec'd:** 29 April 2025  
**Subject:** Re. Consultation on R16 Hitcham NP (Babergh DC)

Dear ...

Thank you for consulting us on this Reg 16 consultation. As Hitcham is remote from the SRN we do not think it is appropriate for us to comment on this particular Neighbourhood plan consultation.

Kind Regards

Mark Norman  
Spatial Planner | Network Operations  
National Highways | Woodlands | Manton Lane | Bedford | MK41 7LW

...  
Web: <http://www.highways.gov.uk>  
GTN: 0300 470 4938

\* \* \* \*

**From:** BMSDC Community Planning <[communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 24 March 2025 10:21  
**Subject:** Consultation on R16 Hitcham NP (Babergh DC) - ends Fri 9 May

*This e-mail has been sent obo Robert Hobbs (Head of Strategic Planning - Planning Policy and Infrastructure)*

Dear Sir / Madam

### Consultation under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ~ The Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan 2022 - 2037

We are contacting you because you are a statutory consultee, or because you or your client have previously expressed an interest in planning matters in the parish of Hitcham, Suffolk.

Hitcham Parish Council have submitted their draft Neighbourhood Plan to Babergh District Council. Today, Monday 24 March, we commence formal consultation on this draft Plan. Written comments are being invited on whether or not it meets the basic condition tests against which it will be examined. These comments must arrive by no later than 4:00pm on Friday 9 May 2025.

Further details are set out in the attached letter. Also attached is a copy of the submission draft plan. The same and the other submitted documents can be found on our [www.babergh.gov.uk/HitchamNP](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/HitchamNP) webpage.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Bryant  
Neighbourhood Planning Officer | Planning & Building Control  
Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils – Working Together  
T: 01449 724771 / 07860 829547  
E: As per this email or [paul.bryant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:paul.bryant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)  
W: [www.babergh.gov.uk](http://www.babergh.gov.uk) / [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk)



## **(8) ANGLIAN WATER**

**E from:** Carry Murphy (Spatial and Strategic Planning Manager – Sustainable Growth)  
**Rec'd:** 6 May 2025  
**Subject:** Re. Consultation on R16 Hitcham NP (Babergh DC) - Anglian Water response

Dear Paul,

Anglian Water has previously submitted comments on the pre-submission version (Reg 14) of the Hitcham neighbourhood plan. We welcome the amendments in the submission version of the neighbourhood plan, following our comments and recommended changes.

I can confirm, Anglian Water has no further comments to make.

I should be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this representation and keep me updated on further progress made on the neighbourhood plan. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

**Carry Murphy**  
Chartered Town Planner - MRTPI  
**Spatial and Strategic Planning Manager – Sustainable Growth**  
**Quality & Environment**

Email: [cmurphy5@anglianwater.co.uk](mailto:cmurphy5@anglianwater.co.uk)



Web: [www.anglianwater.co.uk](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk)

**Anglian Water Services Limited**  
Lancaster House, Lancaster Way, Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. PE29 6XU

# (9) AVISON YOUNG (obo NATIONAL GAS TRANSMISSION)



Central Square  
Forth Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 3PJ

T: +44 (0)191 261 2361  
F: +44 (0)191 269 0076

[avisonyoung.co.uk](http://avisonyoung.co.uk)

Our Ref: MV/ 15B901605

02 May 2025

Babergh District Council

[communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

via email only

Dear Sir / Madam

## **Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 Consultation March – May 2025**

### **Representations on behalf of National Gas Transmission**

National Gas Transmission has appointed Avison Young to review and respond to Neighbourhood Plan consultations on its behalf. We are instructed by our client to submit the following representation with regard to the current consultation on the above document.

#### **About National Gas Transmission**

National Gas Transmission owns and operates the high-pressure gas transmission system across the UK. In the UK, gas leaves the transmission system and enters the UK's four gas distribution networks where pressure is reduced for public use.

#### **Proposed sites crossed or in close proximity to National Gas Transmission assets:**

An assessment has been carried out with respect to National Gas Transmission's assets which include high-pressure gas pipelines and other infrastructure.

National Gas Transmission has identified that no assets are currently affected by proposed allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

National Gas Transmission provides information in relation to its assets at the website below.

- <https://www.nationalgas.com/land-and-assets/network-route-maps>

Please also see attached information outlining guidance on development close to National Gas Transmission infrastructure.

#### **Distribution Networks**

Information regarding the gas distribution network is available by contacting:

[plantprotection@cadentgas.com](mailto:plantprotection@cadentgas.com)

#### **Further Advice**

Please remember to consult National Gas Transmission on any Neighbourhood Plan Documents or site-specific proposals that could affect our assets. We would be grateful if you could add our details shown below to your consultation database, if not already included:





**Matt Verlander, Director**

[nationalgas.uk@avisonyoung.com](mailto:nationalgas.uk@avisonyoung.com)

Avison Young  
Central Square  
Forth Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 3PJ

**Kam Liddar, Asset Protection Lead**

[kam.liddar@nationalgas.com](mailto:kam.liddar@nationalgas.com)

National Gas Transmission  
National Grid House  
Warwick Technology Park  
Gallows Hill  
Warwick, CV34 6DA

If you require any further information in respect of this letter, then please contact us.

Yours faithfully,

**Matt Verlander MRTPI**

**Director**

**0191 269 0094**

**[matt.verlander@avisonyoung.com](mailto:matt.verlander@avisonyoung.com)**

**For and on behalf of Avison Young**

National Gas Transmission is able to provide advice and guidance to the Council concerning their networks and encourages high quality and well-planned development in the vicinity of its assets.

#### Gas assets

High-Pressure Gas Pipelines form an essential part of the national gas transmission system and National Gas Transmission's approach is always to seek to leave their existing transmission pipelines in situ. Contact should be made with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in respect of sites affected by High-Pressure Gas Pipelines.

National Gas Transmission have land rights for each asset which prevents the erection of permanent/ temporary buildings, or structures, changes to existing ground levels, storage of materials etc. Additionally, written permission will be required before any works commence within the National Gas Transmission's 12.2m building proximity distance, and a deed of consent is required for any crossing of the easement.

National Gas Transmission's '*Guidelines when working near National Gas Transmission assets*' can be downloaded here: <https://www.nationalgas.com/document/82951/download>

#### How to contact National Gas Transmission

If you require any further information in relation to the above and/or if you would like to check if National Gas Transmission's transmission networks may be affected by a proposed development, please visit the website: <https://lsbud.co.uk/>

For local planning policy queries, please contact: [nationalgas.uk@avisonyoung.com](mailto:nationalgas.uk@avisonyoung.com)

## (10) SPORT ENGLAND

**E from:** Planning.Central@sportengland.org  
**Rec'd:** 3 April 2025  
**Subject:** RE: Consultation on R16 Hitcham NP (Babergh DC) - ends Fri 9 May

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above neighbourhood plan.

Government planning policy, within the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF), identifies how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Encouraging communities to become more physically active through walking, cycling, informal recreation and formal sport plays an important part in this process. Providing enough sports facilities of the right quality and type in the right places is vital to achieving this aim. This means that positive planning for sport, protection from the unnecessary loss of sports facilities, along with an integrated approach to providing new housing and employment land with community facilities is important.

Therefore, it is essential that the neighbourhood plan reflects and complies with national planning policy for sport as set out in the NPPF with particular reference to Pars 102 and 103. It is also important to be aware of Sport England's statutory consultee role in **protecting playing fields** and the presumption against the loss of playing field land. Sport England's playing fields policy is set out in our Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document.

[https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing\\_fields\\_policy](https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing_fields_policy)

Sport England provides guidance on **developing planning policy** for sport and further information can be found via the link below. Vital to the development and implementation of planning policy is the evidence base on which it is founded.

[https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#planning\\_applications](https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#planning_applications)

Sport England works with local authorities to ensure their Local Plan is underpinned by robust and up to date evidence. In line with Par 104 of the NPPF, this takes the form of **assessments of need and strategies for indoor and outdoor sports facilities**. A neighbourhood planning body should look to see if the relevant local authority has prepared a playing pitch strategy or other indoor/outdoor sports facility strategy. If it has then this could provide useful evidence for the neighbourhood plan and save the neighbourhood planning body time and resources gathering their own evidence. It is important that a neighbourhood plan reflects the recommendations and actions set out in any such strategies, including those which may specifically relate to the neighbourhood area, and that any local investment opportunities, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, are utilised to support their delivery.

Where such evidence does not already exist then relevant planning policies in a neighbourhood plan should be based on a proportionate assessment of the need for sporting provision in its area. Developed in consultation with the local sporting and wider community any assessment should be used to provide key recommendations and deliverable actions. These should set out what provision is required to ensure the current and future needs of the community for sport can be met and, in turn, be able to support the development and implementation of planning policies. Sport England's guidance on assessing needs may help with such work.

<http://www.sportengland.org/planningtoolsandguidance>

If **new or improved sports facilities** are proposed Sport England recommend you ensure they are fit for purpose and designed in accordance with our design guidance notes.

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/>

Any **new housing** developments will generate additional demand for sport. If existing sports facilities do not have the capacity to absorb the additional demand, then planning policies should look to ensure that new sports facilities, or improvements to existing sports facilities, are secured and delivered. Proposed actions to meet the demand should accord with any approved local plan or neighbourhood plan policy for social infrastructure, along with priorities resulting from any assessment of need, or set out in any playing pitch or other indoor and/or outdoor sports facility strategy that the local authority has in place.

In line with the Government's NPPF (including Section 8) and its Planning Practice Guidance (Health and wellbeing section), links below, consideration should also be given to how **any new development**, especially for new housing, will provide opportunities for people to lead healthy lifestyles and create healthy communities. Sport England's Active Design guidance can be used to help with this when developing planning policies and developing or assessing individual proposals.

Active Design, which includes a model planning policy, provides ten principles to help ensure the design and layout of development encourages and promotes participation in sport and physical activity. The guidance, and its accompanying checklist, could also be used at the evidence gathering stage of developing a neighbourhood plan to help undertake an assessment of how the design and layout of the area currently enables people to lead active lifestyles and what could be improved.

NPPF Section 8: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/8-promoting-healthy-communities>

PPG Health and wellbeing section: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

Sport England's Active Design Guidance: <https://www.sportengland.org/activedesign>

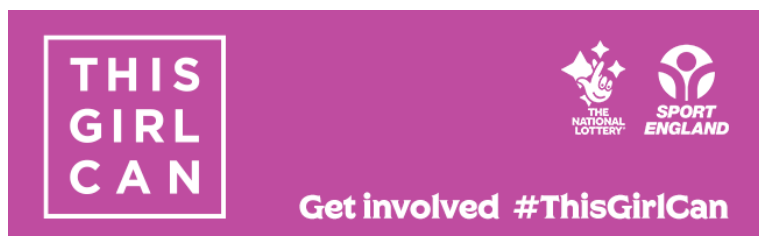
*(Please note: this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.)*

If you need any further advice, please do not hesitate to contact Sport England using the contact details below.

Yours sincerely,

**Planning Technical Team**

E: [planning.central@sportengland.org](mailto:planning.central@sportengland.org)



Sport Park, 3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough, Leicester, LE11 3QF



We have updated our Privacy Statement to reflect the recent changes to data protection law but rest assured, we will continue looking after your personal data just as carefully as we always have. Our Privacy Statement is published on our [website](#), and our Data Protection Officer can be contacted by emailing [Gaile Walters](#)



## (11) Resident – Harvey

### Section One: Respondents Details

All respondents should complete Part A. If you are an Agent, please complete Part's A & B

| Part A: Respondent                      |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Title / Name:                           | Mr / Mrs Harvey |
| Job Title (if applicable):              |                 |
| Organisation / Company (if applicable): |                 |
| Address:                                | Hitcham         |
| Postcode:                               |                 |
| Tel No:                                 |                 |
| E-mail:                                 |                 |

| Part B: Agents – Please complete details of the client / company you represent |  |
|--|--|
| Client / Company Name:   |  |
| Address:   |  |
| Postcode:  |  |
| Tel No:  |  |
| E-mail:  |  |

## Section Two: Your comment(s)

Which part of the Plan does your comment relate? Use separate forms if necessary.

|                      |                    |                   |  |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Paragraph No.</b> | 20, 23, 57, 58. 21 | <b>Policy No.</b> |  |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|

**Babergh DC Note:** The numbers referred to above have been confirmed as meaning the numbers that appear in the left hand column of Appendix 6(d) of the submitted [Consultation Statement](#), where General Comment no's 20 and 57 record the Reg 14 representations made by 'Individual 19', and General Comment no's 23 and 58 record the Reg 14 representations made by 'Individual 21'. The number 21 is a cross-reference to the Reg 14 representation made by 'Individual 19' in the same Consultation Statement document.

**Do you support, oppose, or wish to comment on the above? (Select one answer)**

|                                   |     |                      |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------------------|--|
| <b>Support</b>                    | Yes | <b>Oppose</b>        |  |
| <b>Support with modifications</b> |     | <b>Have Comments</b> |  |

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Please give details of your reasons for support / opposition / other comments:</b></p> <p>20, 23, 57, 58 - these headings relate to comments that we made and we wanted to re-iterate them again but would ask you to note that the explanations mentioned in the notes that refer to responses sent 17/12 and 18/12 were never received by us.</p> <p>21 - we wanted to say that we wholeheartedly support these comments and concerns, we are unaware of potential development sites in Cross Green.</p> <p>We are very concerned that references are made in various documents to an event that has been referred to as "call for sites". It seems certain people in the village were invited to offer details of potential development sites that were to be considered in the LP and it seems very much centred on the Cross Green area within Hitcham. It seems this was not made available to everyone as certainly we were not invited to participate. This seems extremely unfair and somewhat underhand - surely everyone in the village should have been made aware of the call for potential development sites and allowed to offer up details of any sites they felt could be considered.</p> <p>We feel strongly that this has been very poorly handled. In addition, where are the details of what sites have been put forward, why are they being kept secret and not open for everyone to see? How can we now add a potential site within our property - we feel it would be appropriate for a single one storey dwelling - to the call for sites list?</p> <p>Are we right in thinking the call for sites is not formerly part of the NP? If so what is the process now, how does it directly affect the NP and how does the LP fit into all of this?</p> <p>We would kindly request a formal and direct reply to our concerns please, thank you.</p> <p>We would also like to fully support the various comments within the draft NP in relation to the needs for older people in Hitcham and potential and clear need for suitable accommodation for residents as they get older and want to continue to live in the village in smaller sized, appropriate homes.</p> |
|---|

We are happy to be contacted if you want any further details or comments relating to the above.

We appreciate the chance to be involved in this plan process

**If seeking changes, what improvements or modifications would you suggest?**

*Please be as brief and concise as possible ...*

Note: If you are including additional pages these should be clearly labelled and referenced.

Normally, the appointed Examiner will consider all matters through the written representations. If necessary, they may call a hearing [this may be a virtual meeting or a meeting held in person] to discuss a particular issue. If you consider that a hearing should be held, please explain why this is necessary.

The decision on whether or not to hold a hearing is entirely at the discretion of the Examiner.

**I consider that a hearing should be held because ...**

*Please be as brief and concise as possible ...*

**Please indicate below (use X, or type Yes) if you wish to be notified by e-mail of:**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Our publication of the Independent Examiners Report on this Plan      | X |
| The 'making' (adoption) of the Hitcham NP by Babergh District Council | X |

**Please sign and date your response** (a typed signature is acceptable)

|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Signed:</b> | <b>Dated:</b> 8 May 2025 |
|----------------|--------------------------|

## (12) HITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Response from Hitcham Parish Council (the Qualifying Body) to the Regulation 16 comments on the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan:

| Respondent:                     | Summary:                           | Suggested NPSG Response:  |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Suffolk County Council</b>   | Policy HIT10 – Natural Environment | No objection to suggested name change to policy.  |
|                                 | Policies Map                       | No objection to suggested amendments.   |
| <b>Babergh District Council</b> | General Observations               | No objection to suggested amendments.   |
|                                 | Para 1.10                          | No objection to suggested addition.   |
|                                 | Policies Map                       | No objection to suggested amendments.   |
|                                 | Figure 23                          | Map to be amended as requested.   |
|                                 | Policy HIT3                        | No objection to suggested amendments.   |
|                                 | Chapter 9                          | No objection to suggested amendments.   |
|                                 | Chapter 10                         | No objection to suggested amendments.   |
|                                 | Glossary                           | No objection to suggested amendments.   |
| <b>Historic England</b>         | No comments                        | Noted.  |
| <b>Natural England</b>          | General Guidance                   | Noted.  |
| <b>Environment Agency</b>       | Floodrisk                          | The Hitcham NP is not making any specific allocations for new development. The issue of floodrisk is dealt with in the Local Plan.  |
|                                 | Water Resources                    | The Hitcham NP is not making any specific allocations for new development. Policy LP23 of the Local Plan includes a limit of 110 litres per day which is compliant with building regulations. Neighbourhood Plans are not able to require standards above those in Building Regulations without specific justification – there is no specific justification in this case. |
|                                 | Contaminated Land                  | The reference is to information to support a planning application, which is noted.  |
|                                 | Informative                        | Information is noted.   |
|                                 | Source Protection Zones            | The Hitcham NP is not making any specific allocations for new development   |
|                                 | Biodiversity Net Gain              | See comments from SCC above. The Hitcham NP is not making any specific allocations for new development.   |

| <b>Respondent:</b>                                | <b>Summary:</b>       | <b>Suggested NPSG Response:</b>  |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| <b>National Landscape Team</b>                    | Out of area           | Noted.   |
| <b>National Highways</b>                          | No comments           | Noted.   |
| <b>Anglian Water</b>                              | No comments           | Noted.   |
| <b>Avison Young obo National Gas Transmission</b> | General Advice        | Noted.   |
| <b>Sport England</b>                              | General Advice        | Noted.   |
| <b>Resident – Harvey</b>                          | Call for Sites        | <p>Apologies if the responses referred to were not received. A summary is repeated below:</p> <p>“The Call for Sites was undertaken in respect of the Local Plan (not the Neighbourhood Plan). The District Council undertook the Call for Sites between January and February 2024. The results of the Call for Sites for the Local Plan can be seen here:</p> <p><a href="https://sway.cloud.microsoft/hTNu9LzJEnAOeZnO?ref=Link">https://sway.cloud.microsoft/hTNu9LzJEnAOeZnO?ref=Link</a>.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating any additional housing sites. “</p> <p>As part of the review of the Joint Local Plan, the District Council will consider the need for new housing numbers in the parish. This is likely to cover a longer plan period than the Neighbourhood Plan. The timetable for the Local Plan Review which will take place between 2025 and 2029 is set out in the Local Development Scheme:</p> <p><a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-joint-local-development-scheme-2025-2029">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-and-mid-suffolk-joint-local-development-scheme-2025-2029</a></p> |
|   | Needs of older people | Support noted.   |

The Steering Group also wish to let the Examiner know that, with regard Appendix C, Local Green Space 4 (Church Green) that:

- The photograph of the dog was retained in error from the Pre-submission draft Plan and will be deleted from the final version Plan.
- That the text, currently labelled Figure 53, will be amended to remove the reference to Hitcham Hall Lower Meadow, and
- That the Figures will require renumbering (as advised).