

Lawshall Neighbourhood Development Plan

Community Engagement Strategy

Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan Team

May 2016

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Contents

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In August 2015 the Neighbourhood Plan Team was formed by Lawshall Parish Council to prepare a neighbourhood plan for the village, in accordance with the government Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (NPGR) and guidance. An important component of the preparation of the neighbourhood plan is the involvement of the local community in deciding upon its content and proposals. While it is not a requirement, under the Regulations, to identify how and when the local community will be invited to get involved, we have prepared this Community Engagement Strategy to spell out the key stages in preparing the Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan and how we'll seek to involve residents and other interested parties at those stages.

2. What is the Community Engagement Strategy and who is it for?

- 2.1 The community engagement strategy guides the Neighbourhood Plan Team as we engage the residents, interested people and organisations in the preparation of the plan. It sets out how the community and other interested individuals and groups will be involved in the plan making process, as well as providing clarity to consultees on how and when they can expect to be involved in the plan making process.

3. Key stages in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 There are a number of distinct stages that will occur as the plan is prepared, namely:
1. Area designation (completed in December 2015)
 2. Information gathering (ongoing)
 3. Identifying Options
 4. The Draft Neighbourhood Plan
 5. The final Draft Neighbourhood Plan as submitted to Babergh District Council
 6. Examination
 7. Referendum

4. Legal Requirements for Publicity and Consultation

- 4.1 In a nutshell and in the context of Lawshall, the regulations require:
- i. **Babergh District Council** to publicise the application for the designation of the neighbourhood plan area and invite comments for a period not less than six weeks (NPGR - Regulation 6);
 - ii. **Babergh District Council** to publicise on their website the confirmed designation of a neighbourhood plan area, including a map of the area (NPGR - Regulation 7);
 - iii. **Lawshall Parish Council**, before submitting the *draft* Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to Babergh District Council, to:

- a) publicise in an appropriate manner in the neighbourhood area:
 - i. details of the proposals in the NDP;
 - ii. details of where and when proposals for the NDP can be seen;
 - iii. details of how to make representations;
 - iv. the deadline for receipt of representations (minimum 6 week period);
 - b) consult relevant consultation bodies that may be affected by neighbourhood development plan; and
 - c) send a copy of proposals for the NDP to local planning authority.
(NPGR - Regulation 14)
- iv. **Babergh District Council** to publicise details of the *final* draft NDP on their website and “in such a manner as they consider is likely to bring the proposal to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business” in the area. They must also notify other councils and relevant government and statutory bodies. This consultation must last for at least six weeks and allow people to inspect the draft plan and make representations on the content of the plan to the District Council. (NPGP - Regulation 16)
 - v. **Babergh District Council**, following the examination of the neighbourhood plan by an independent examiner, to publicise the examiner’s report and the Council’s decision as to whether to send the plan to a parish referendum. (NPGR - Regulation 18)
 - vi. **Babergh District Council** must publicise their decision as to whether or not they decide to approve the neighbourhood plan. (NPGR - Regulation 19)
 - vii. **Babergh District Council** must publish, on their website wherever it considers appropriate, the final approved neighbourhood plan. (NPGR - Regulation 19)

5. Our approach to engagement

5.1 We want Lawshall residents and other stakeholders with an interest in the plan to be aware of the opportunities and mechanisms that will be available for them to engage in the preparation of the document. This Community Engagement Strategy therefore identifies, in broad terms, the main stages in the preparation of the NDP and what we, the Neighbourhood Plan Team, will do to engage people and organisations during those stages. It does not address the consultation that will be undertaken by Babergh District Council but we have identified what we as a Team will do in the village to get people to participate at these stages.

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states “Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any NDPs that have been made.”

5.3 The National Planning Practice Guidance, that supports the NPPF, states that a qualifying body (the Parish Council) should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its neighbourhood plan and ensure that the wider community:

- is kept fully informed of what is being proposed;
- is able to make their views known throughout the process;
- has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging NDP or Order; and
- is made aware of how their views have informed the draft NDP or Order.

5.4 As highlighted by the government guidance, effective community engagement will have a very important role in the development of the Lawshall NDP. We want to take the village with us through the process so that, when the electorate in the parish have an opportunity to vote yes or no to the plan, they know what the plan is and how its content was decided on.

5.5 The NP Team’s proposed minimum method of community engagement under each identified stage is set out in this Strategy.

6. Our Community Engagement Principles

6.1 By way of this community engagement strategy the NP Team group wish to show that we will do more than simply “inform” people and “consult” people but we will also “involve”, “collaborate” and “empower” people and organisations. Set out below are the key principles underpinning the community engagement strategy.

Overarching principles for engaging the community	
Key Principles	How will we do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Be open and honest with the community</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We will let people know why we are engaging with them and use methods that are proportionate to the significance of each issue as it comes up.</i> • <i>We will be clear about what can be influenced and what can't</i> • <i>We will use honest, accurate and unbiased information</i> • <i>All dates of NP Team meetings and other events will be publicised on the NDP page of Parish Council website along with minutes and other relevant info – and likewise posted on NP Team facebook page.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Listen to the community's views</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We will listen and respond to individuals and community groups, enabling and empowering residents to play an effective role in shaping their local area.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Include as many people as possible in the process</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We will undertake fair and impartial engagement to a high standard to ensure that everyone is offered equal opportunities to participate in issues that may affect them and make a difference.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work together</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The NP Team will act together with a consistent approach</i>

Overarching principles for engaging the community	
Key Principles	How will we do this
<i>collaboratively with the community</i>	<p><i>to community engagement under the terms of this Strategy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We will create a record of engagement activities to provide an overview of what consultation has and will be undertaken, and use the findings where applicable to avoid consultation overload.</i> <i>We will share knowledge and information openly with the community, whilst respecting confidentiality and use what we have learnt from contact with individuals to better understand and engage with the community as a whole</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Keep in touch with the community</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We will provide feedback at each stage of the process and, where appropriate, identify the changes that are made as a result of engagement.</i>

7. Plan Stages and Community Engagement Methods

7.1 The section of the Strategy identifies the stages of the NDP that remain to be completed. For each these future stages, we have identified what type of engagement we will undertake and the minimum methods we will employ to achieve our principles of full community engagement – also ensuring that we meet the requirements of the government regulations.

7.2 **Stage 2 – Information Gathering**

What it involves: The policies and proposals in the NDP will need to be based on evidence that we gather at the early stages to identify what the issues and problems are that the Plan might be able to address. This information rests with residents, clubs, societies and other local organisations as well as local and national bodies.

Community engagement methods that will be used		
Type of engagement	Who we'll engage	Methods that we'll use:
<i>Finding out information, thoughts and opinions that will help provide a foundation for the content of the NDP</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Residents</i> <i>Business operators</i> <i>Village groups and clubs</i> <i>Services providers incl. Lawshall Primary School</i> <i>Babergh District Council</i> <i>Suffolk County Council</i> <i>Office for National Statistics</i> <i>Other national statutory</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Household surveys</i> <i>Drop-in sessions</i> <i>Open meetings, consultations, presentations, briefings.</i> <i>Regular Website and social media updates.</i> <i>Full page spread in monthly Parish Magazine.</i> <i>Noticeboards, posters and door to door flier drops.</i> <i>School workshops</i>

Community engagement methods that will be used		
Type of engagement	Who we'll engage	Methods that we'll use:
	<i>bodies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Village walks</i> • <i>Internet searches</i> • <i>Emails and Letters</i> • <i>Meetings with specific service providers</i>

7.3 Stage 3 – Developing Options

What it involves: We will need to consider a range of options for the content of the NDP before we decide which options to include in the *actual* Plan. We want residents and other interested parties to be involved in this process in order that they understand how the content of the *final* NDP has been arrived at.

Community engagement methods that will be used		
Type of engagement	Who we'll engage	Methods that we'll use:
<i>Identifying and assessing NDP Options</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Residents</i> • <i>Business operators</i> • <i>Village groups and clubs</i> • <i>Local landowners</i> • <i>Services providers</i> • <i>Babergh District Council</i> • <i>Suffolk County Council</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Full Community Consultation</i> • <i>Options document and questionnaire on posters, website and facebook.</i> • <i>Meetings with Babergh District Council planning and housing officers</i> • <i>Emails and Letters</i> • <i>Meetings with specific service providers</i>

7.4 Stage 4 – The *Draft* Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

What it involves: At this time we will have a full *draft* NDP to consult on. As noted above, we have a statutory duty (under Regulation 14 of the NPGR) to:

- a) publicise in an appropriate manner in the neighbourhood area
 - i. details of the proposals in the NDP
 - ii. details of where and when proposals for the NDP can be seen
 - iii. details of how to make representations
 - iv. deadline for receipt of representations (minimum 6 week period)
- b) consult relevant consultation bodies that may be affected by the NDP
- c) send a copy of proposals for the NDP to local planning authority

However, we want to do more than the minimum and we will provide opportunities for those with an interest in the NDP to come and discuss the content of the plan at drop-in sessions at the village hall during the six week consultation period.

We will publicise the consultation period dates through our regular page in parish magazine, posters, website and social media.

Community engagement methods that will be used		
Type of engagement	Who we'll engage	Methods that we'll use:
<i>Formal consultation on draft NDP</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Residents</i> • <i>Local Businesses</i> • <i>Village groups and clubs</i> • <i>Services providers</i> • <i>Babergh District Council</i> • <i>Suffolk County Council</i> • <i>Those bodies and organisations consulted by Babergh District Council at the time of the designation of the NDP boundary</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Drop in sessions at village hall both daytime and evening</i> • <i>Parish magazine</i> • <i>Posters</i> • <i>Social media</i> • <i>Making consultation documents, including a response form, available to view in public buildings, on website, and as printed copies available on request by residents.</i> • <i>Email notification to statutory bodies</i>

7.5 **Stage 5 – The *final* Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

What it involves: Following the consultation that we undertake on the *draft* NDP, we will make any required amendments to it and the Parish Council will, if it votes to do so, submit the amended draft Plan to Babergh District Council. This will essentially be the Plan that we want to be approved by the referendum and by Babergh Council. At this time, the District Council will undertake a further formal six week public consultation on the *final* draft Plan.

Together with the NDP, the Parish Council will need to submit a Basic Conditions statement and a Consultation Statement. The Consultation Statement will contain:

- Details of who was consulted about the Plan (throughout the whole plan making process)
- Explain how they were consulted (throughout the whole Plan making process)
- A summary of the main issues and concerns raised at each stage of the Plan making process
- An explanation as to how these issues and concerns were considered and or addressed

Babergh District Council need to follow the regulations in respect of consultation and we have no formal role at this stage. However, following our principles of openness and inclusiveness, we will undertake additional local publicity to ensure we reach all

residents and interested parties to encourage them to participate in the formal consultation and respond to it.

We will publicise the consultation period dates through articles on our regular page in parish magazine, posters, website and social media.

Community engagement methods that will be used		
Type of engagement	Who we'll engage	Methods that we'll use:
<i>Final formal consultation on submitted final draft NDP by Babergh District Council.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Residents</i> • <i>Local businesses</i> • <i>Village groups and</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parish magazine</i> • <i>Posters</i> • <i>Website and social media</i> • <i>Making consultation documents, including a response form, available to view in public buildings, on website, and as printed copies available on request by residents.</i>

7.6 Stage 6 – The Neighbourhood Plan Examination

What it involves: Following the consultation Babergh District Council will gather together all the responses and submit them, with all the NDP documentation, to an independent examiner. The examiner will assess the Plan and see if it meets the “basic conditions” specified by the Acts of Parliament relating to the preparation of NDPs.

We have very little responsibility at this stage, but we will make sure that our website is kept up-to-date to ensure that people are kept informed on progress with the examination and can find out about what the examination of an NDP involves.

7.7 Stage 7 – The Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

What it involves: Once the NDP has gone through the examination and any required amendments have been made, Babergh District Council will organise a referendum in the parish. All those on the electoral register in Lawshall will be entitled to vote. Babergh will be required to publicise the referendum and run it, but we will make sure that residents know what the referendum is about and ensure that the *final* NDP is available to view on the website and available to inspect in public places in the village.

8. Hard to reach groups

- 8.1 We recognise that some groups in the community may be hard to reach and rarely get involved with what is happening in the village. These may be people who do not know about what's happening, are not confident or able to get involved, may not wish or have the time to be involved or may be happy with the decisions being made. By monitoring the involvement level in our community activities we will look out for such hard to reach groups. Where we identify such a group and where we feel that a part of the Plan may have an impact on such a group we will review our engagement methods carefully and seek advice, as appropriate, from organisations such as Babergh District Council as to how we could improve the effectiveness of our consultation activities with such groups.

9. How will we record the Community Engagement

- 9.1 We will record the results of the community engagement activities throughout the life of the Plan and we will report back to the community on these. We will follow the following principles:

- We will aim to look at all engagement and consultation responses. Where we can act on suggestions, within reason we will do so. If not, we will aim to explain why.
- Where possible we will aim to keep those who have responded informed of subsequent consultations as the plan progresses to help build momentum towards referendum.
- After each formal consultation on the Plan we will summarise the comments received in a consultation statement that will be made available on the PC website, facebook page and as part of the Plan.
- Following questionnaires, workshops and other forms of engagement we will make the findings available in the parish magazine, on posters, and on the PC website and facebook page.-