



# Leavenheath

Our 'Planning' priorities for the future  
of the Village

March 2018

## **Our Role**

As a Parish Council we are able to support or object to planning applications received by Babergh District Council. Babergh Council have a duty to consider our response but by no means are they bound to follow it.

Our experience tells us that, often planning applications that we object to are passed by Babergh.

This document is designed to set out key planning principles that we are governed by and to set out the key priorities for our wonderful village.

If a parishioner has any comments in respect of a planning application we ask that you inform us as soon as possible as we often have quite tight deadlines for responses.

## **Purpose**

To, encourage effective protection and enhancement of local assets and appropriate development of the Village.

To, represent the priorities of the Villagers.

To, guide the Local Planning Authority in determining Planning Applications in Leavenheath.

To, contribute to the planning strategy.

To guide property owners, business leaders and potential developers

## **Context**

Leavenheath is generally well placed as a residential village, with close to 1400 residents, in a good environment, but with limited services. Although categorisation criteria have changed, the village remains “unsustainable”, apart from its strong social and community sustainability. It is highly

dependent on personal transport and interdependent with surrounding villages and towns. Due to its remoteness online ordering and purchasing with door step delivery are well used.

The Church, the Village Hall and the Village Green are all important centres of a diverse village social life.

Local businesses of some size include Stanton Farms, The Stoke by Nayland Hotel, Golf and Spa, PepsiCo/Konings/Copella (immediately adjacent to the Parish), Boxford Suffolk Farms, St Christopher's garage, Leavenheath Joinery, David Burr (Estate Agents) and a pub - The Hare and Hounds. The SESAW Animal Rescue is an important refuge, serving a wide area.

There is no shop within easy walking distance, no school, no GP surgery and no fuel station. There is extensive commuting to work to local towns and to London, with a bus service every 2 hours (3 on a Saturday) (very indirectly) to Colchester and to Sudbury.

Leavenheath is a village with one centre, which functions as a single community. However, the built-up area of the village is relatively dispersed, with settlements entirely separated by open and undeveloped countryside. Maintaining these gaps is important in keeping the sense of place and the character of Leavenheath, in preventing the erosion of the character of surrounding countryside, in protecting the landscape of the AONB and in protecting views.

Leavenheath is classed as a hinterland village within Babergh policy CS2.

It is a key objective of the plan to retain the character of the village and its individual parts and gaps between them, but also to enhance the green and open character of the village and to protect landscape.

Leavenheath has quite a diverse habitat. Biodiversity is not restricted to the AONB. Gardens, trees, hedgerows and gaps between settlements provide

wildlife corridors and house important species, which are essential to the maintenance of the rich biodiversity.

It will be considered that development should maintain, enhance and protect district wide biodiversity, in particular the nature conservation designations.

It is important that any new development seeks to protect and improve biodiversity and provide informal open space and improved footpaths.

Broadband speeds have been improved for most properties in the village, with speeds ranging from 7-35mbps. In outlying parts of the village low speeds discourages home working or any community based business hub. Improving the speed for all is an important priority.

Services in local demand include; [child-minding](#), care for the elderly (who are most affected by lack of local services), house and garden maintenance.

Royston Community Woodland has developed as a community facility e.g. for the Ladybirds, cubs, scouts, dog walkers, community events.



There is a range of sizes in the housing stock. Some additional capacity for residents to downsize may be appropriate in the future given the ageing population in the village. Additionally, young people whom have grown up in the village may also wish to continue to reside in the village.

We may be able to source more housing through diversification of appropriate farm buildings. Earlier proposals for a modest “affordable housing” development were thwarted by the lack of an appropriate site and the hostile views of the residents whom viewed it as social housing.

Any affordable housing proposals will be put before the village for consultation, before it proceeds to planning application.

Affordable housing can be used to meet a variety of local needs. Government policy and the Local Plan policies expect that the exact mix of housing will be negotiated on a site by site basis at the time a proposal is put forward and will involve Babergh DC as the housing authority.

Particular consideration will be given to the elderly and for starter homes for those brought up in the village that want to stay here.

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Babergh Council has identified one area within our village as suitable for development namely the orchard/field on the south side of the High Road where it meets the A134.

**Planning**

Our village

Leavenheath is a small countryside village, part of which is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is essential to minimise any impact on the landscape of the village, AONB and surrounding area.

Planning can be an emotive issue, but this plan aims to set out the relevant policies the council will consider for each planning application it considers.

## Our Priorities

We will seek to:

1. To retain the character of Leavenheath as a village by avoiding over development, overbearing proposals and the loss of privacy;
2. Determine planning applications in accordance with local capacity, needs and aspirations and have due regard to the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] [as per Babergh Plan Para 2.8];
3. Maintain the village status as we are not an industrial or commercial centre therefore its character and facilities are not appropriate for any substantial expansion of local business, or the import of large businesses. Should circumstances modify this view, such expansion should only be permitted in collaboration with the wishes of the village community, prioritising local employment and protecting the environmental/social capital of the village;
4. To enhance community life, by providing housing for local needs, promoting local employment and supporting suitable retail, community and sports provision;
5. Resist development outside planning boundaries, except for housing for the elderly or appropriate affordable housing. Affordable housing should be modest in numbers and scale, and in keeping with surrounding properties. Any affordable housing proposed will be fully considered by village residents for comment and approval, before it proceeds to a planning application.

6. To improve the quality of the built environment through high quality design and layout of development, improvement to the street scene and conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, thus ensuring developments are appropriate/in-keeping with their surrounding and protect space between buildings and our open frontages;
  
7. In avoiding overdevelopment, we will take this to be one or more of the following:
  - A significant reduction of on-site car parking potential;
  - A significant reduction in the amount of external amenity space on the property;
  - A close proximity of buildings on the site to the full length of all of its site boundaries;
  - An overall cramped development in relation to the size of the site;
  - The height and dominance of external walls negatively impacting upon the visual amenity of an area;
  - The height and dominance of external walls dominating and causing loss of light to neighbouring property, and any external windows overlooking neighbouring private amenity space
  
8. To enhance the green and open character of the village (which includes Spouse's vale, Royston Wood, Village greewn), providing green areas, habitats and open space, particularly in association with development;
  
9. To promote a village that functions as a single community but retains the character of its individual parts and the gaps between them, through the location of development and community provision and improved walking and cycling access;

10. To minimise the impact of development on landscape and wildlife and to promote their protection. Protect mature hedgerows, trees, verges and ecological habitats- Spouse's Vale, Royston Wood/Tree warden/Golf course. Use native trees for tree planting. Encourage property boundaries to be appropriate to the local character;
  
11. Respect the landscape, landscape features, streetscape/village-scape, heritage assets, important spaces and historic views. Protect open spaces (including but not limited to the Village Green, Royston Wood, open verge near entrance to Wright's Way; the openness of Maple Way and the wide verge at village sign).
  
12. Protect historical assets and views- e.g. Honey Tye from upper Radley's Lane; over the golf course; west across the orchard to the east side of Edies Lane. Restrain further damage to views by overhead wires/pylons.
  
13. Consult widely any proposed application involving Travellers, Gypsies, and Travelling Show People have their own specific accommodation needs; (There is a long established showman's storage field at Southerdown, Cock Street.(junction with Bridle way to Nayland Hall Farms.
  
14. Minimise waste (including waste water) during construction, and promote and provide for the reduction, re-use and recycling of all types of waste from the completed development;

15. Minimise the energy demand of the site through appropriate layout and orientation (passive design) and the use of building methods, materials and construction techniques that optimise energy efficiency and are resilient to climate change (e.g. resilience to high winds and driving rain);
  
16. Maintain the status quo of the limited street lighting, unless substantial safety concerns require it;
  
17. Support work to enforce speed limits and provide road safety with fewer signs.

## Planning Principles

Planning is to conform to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and most importantly reflect the views of the Leavenheath community.

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how those are expected to be applied. It must be taken into account and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

All planning decisions will have due regard to the principles contained within the NPPF. This is a key document, which will always be at the forefront of the council's mind given it sets out the legal tests for planning policy.

The emphasis of the framework is on the need for planning to achieve sustainable development, suggesting, "sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations".

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through decision taking.

For decision-taking this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
  - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or



- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The NPPF sets out 12 core land-use planning principles that planning should follow. It states that planning should: empower local people; creatively finding ways to enhance and improve places; proactively drive and support sustainable economic development; always seeking high quality design; take account of an areas different character; support the transition to a low carbon future; conserve and enhance the natural environment; encourage effective land use; promote mixed use development; conserve heritage assets; maximise public transport; and support local strategies to improve health and social wellbeing.

### Green Belt

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- ii) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- v) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

### Our AONB

Legislation provides protection and guidance within AONB's as the Government for the purpose of ensuing designates them that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England are conserved and enhanced.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, as confirmed by Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act).

We recognise the importance of our AONB. We have a duty in accordance with Section 85 (1) of the CROW Act 2000 to consider the AONBs nationally protected status in any land use related decisions. This includes planning applications. The landscape within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be safeguarded through the strict control of development.

In respect of planning applications with the AONB we will have due regard to paragraph 115, which says:

- a. **“Great weight”** should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty; and that
- b. AONBs have **the highest status of protection** in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

In specific relation to “major development”, Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that planning permission **should be refused** for major developments in AONBs **except in exceptional circumstances** and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest, and sets three tests that have to be assessed:

“116. Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

***Leavenheath Parish Council is committed to close collaboration with the District Planning Authority, not only to care for the village, but also to connect into partnerships with adjacent parishes to enhance any local planning development of high quality.***