

Meeting Minutes



Project Name: Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan

Meeting Date: Thursday 18th March 2021

Location: Online Meeting

Attendance: John Simpson, Paul Rossington, Dean Kingham, Rachel Bellenie, Nigel Rodgers, Pete Reason, Rachel Leggett, Andrea Long (part)

1.0 Apologies for absence

None.

2.0 Previous minutes

No comments on previous meeting minutes, therefore deemed to be accepted.

3.0 Funding confirmation

3.1 John confirmation that the latest funding application for 2021/2022 had been submitted and agreed to by Locality, with the grant money to be provided to the Parish Council shortly.

3.2 The grant is a total of £6,875, broken down into budget estimates as:
Stage 3b consultancy costs = £2000
Stage 4 consultancy costs = £2880
Stage 5 consultancy costs = £960
Room hire costs = £400
Printing & publicity costs = £635

4.0 Review of informal comments from Babergh

4.1 The pre-submission draft of the Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted to Babergh Council for comment, and informal comments received from them dated 5 May 2021. These comments are appended to these minutes for information

4.2 The comments were reviewed and discussed, with decisions made on whether/how to update the relevant parts of the NP.

4.3 General Comments:

Plan period to be changed to run to 2037 to align with Joint Local Plan.
Policy ordering to generally be retained.
Policies Map to be included at back as appendix.
File size of documents to be reviewed once complete, to ensure than these are suitable sized for online viewing/download purposes.
Chapter structure to be retained as is.
Policies to be listed on the contents page for ease of navigation.

4.4 Housing Matters:

Approach to settlement boundaries to be confirmed in the NP.
Last bullet point in LEAV 5 relating to phasing to be deleted.

4.5 Leav 1

Description of each view and merits to be confirmed in supporting text.
Photos to be included – Nigel to take photos for each location.

- 4.6 **Leav 2**
Local Green Space allocation to be confirmed in separate workshop.
Comments from Babergh reviewed, but it was confirmed by Andrea that sites in private ownership are not exempt from LGS allocation if there is a demonstratable compliance with relevant NPPF criteria.
- 4.7 **Leav 3**
Landscape character assessment to be used as supporting text.
Policy wording to be updated to clarify that the avenue of trees along High Road should be ‘retained’ rather than ‘maintained’ to avoid confusion.
Last paragraph relating to AONB extension to be moved to community projects.
- 4.8 **Leav 4**
The policy relates to local drainage issues rather than significant flood risk issues, and therefore we didn’t believe that the references were relevant.
- 4.9 **Leav 6**
Apart from the 1st paragraph the suggested policy wording was considered to be suitable. Design policy to be referenced.
- 4.10 **Leav 5, 6, 7**
Policy ordering to be changed to 5, 7, 6.
- 4.11 **Leav 8**
Non designated heritage assets to be confirmed in separate workshop.
- 4.12 **Leav 9**
Policy wording discussed, but suggested wording not to be used.
- 4.13 **Leav 10**
Suggestion agreed, ‘Where possible’ to be omitted.
- 4.14 **Leav 12**
‘Large’ to be replaced with ‘major’, and ‘development of 1 hectare or more’ to be omitted.
- 4.15 **Leav 13**
To be retained as is.
- 4.16 **Leav 14**
It was agreed that this policy should be deleted.
- 4.17 **Section 5.4**
It was agreed that a specific policy that sought to protect existing village facilities and amenities would be useful, and the wording for this was discussed.

5.0

Next Meetings

Workshops on NDHA and LGS designations to be held shortly – online/telephone calls to be held with owners to discuss any concerns.

Next NP meeting date to be confirmed.

Leavenheath N'hood Plan – v1 Pre-submission, May 2021

Informal comments from Babergh District Council (dated 5 May 2021)

In January 2021, you sent us an early draft of your Neighbourhood Plan [*DRAFT policies #7 Jan 2021*] and invited us to provide our initial thoughts/comments. Work pressures have meant that it is only in the last week that we have been able to devote time to this task, although we had previously passed on comments from our Heritage Team Officer [our e-mail of 9 March refers].

The Draft #7 document comprised a list of supporting text notes and some 14 policies, although many were incomplete. No maps were included but we were able to source draft maps from your Householder Questionnaire.

We now have a copy of your '*v1 Pre-submission*' draft plan. As this is the most up-to-date iteration, it is sensible that we base our comments on this. It is also clear that this draft plan and the ordering of its policies etc. is similar to the Whatfield NP and Wilby NPs. The Whatfield NP has just had its Examination Report made public which may be helpful. (See: www.babergh.gov.uk/WhatfieldNP)

Our informal comments on your v1 Pre-submission draft plan are set out below:

Policy etc.	Comments / Suggested Changes
General Comments	<p>The Plan is well presented but we draw your attention to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The plan period is shown as 2022 - 2042, but no explanation is provided. We remind you that the emerging Joint Local Plan (JLP) runs to 2037, with a 1st April 2018 base date.• On a related matter, all references to the JLP need to be checked and updated, e.g., para 2.10 states that it has just been through consultation. (It has now been formally submitted).• We are suggesting you address housing matters from the outset which would then set out the overall planning context for this plan.• We recommend the inclusion of a Policies Map to show all allocations and other policy constraints in one graphic overview.• File size: Most readers will access this Plan online. The Dropbox files, at c.130Mb for the Word version and c.80Mb for the PDF version, are impractical. As a guide, you should aim for a file of c.10Mb (preferably smaller). Care will be needed with maps to avoid loss of quality, but other images should be compressed for web/screen viewing. You might also want to convert some of the proposed appendices (Character Appraisal and Design Codes) to separate Supporting Documents if that helps.• Chapters: We suggest simplifying the chapter / paragraph structure. Instead of having sections 5.1, 5.2 etc., set these out as Chapter 6, Chapter 7 etc., and amend the paragraph numbering accordingly. Paras 5.2.19 to 5.2.22, the associated maps and policy LEAV8 all relate to Heritage so might sit better as a standalone chapter rather than be sandwiched between house types and house design policies.• Finally, we recommend that you continue to keep other NPs under review, especially those at the independent examination stage.

Contents	For ease of navigation, list the Policies on the contents page. It will also be helpful to list key maps etc.
Housing Matters Section 5.2 LEAV5 and LEAV7	<p>We have already referred to similarities between this draft plan and those from Whatfield and Wilby. In both, housing matters come after their natural environment policies.</p> <p>Our preference would be to see you address housing matters before the environment and landscape sections of the plan. Doing so would demonstrate from the outset that this Plan has been positively prepared and that it recognises the JLP makes a housing allocation here. The foundations are there, with policies LEAV5, LEAV7 and their supporting text.</p> <p>There also appears to be overlap between these two policies. Could these policies be combined into one which gives the strategic overview of what this NP aims to achieve (i.e., setting out the circumstances where new housing development within, adjacent to, and outside the settlement boundaries will be acceptable)? The wording in JLP policy SP03, especially the third and fourth criteria, is a useful starting point but look at what other NP Groups have done.</p> <p>In the supporting text you also need to be clear on your approach to ‘settlement boundaries. It is assumed that the Leavenheath NP will adopt those set out in the JLP for the Harrow Street, High Road and Honey Tye hamlets. Paragraph 3.6 in the Whatfield NP gives an example of how you can approach this.</p> <p>Finally, a comment about the last bullet point in LEAV5. This reads as a statement based on a local wish that the District Council cannot support. The bullet point should be deleted. You have not allocated any sites of your own for future housing development (where an element of phasing may have been allowed) and you should also be aware that at examination, any reference to phasing is likely to be caveated with <i>‘unless the housing market dictates otherwise.’</i> Note also that there is no phasing requirement across the LA098 allocation.</p>
Para 1.9	Last sentence. Technically speaking, it is the District Council who adopt the NP following a successful referendum result.
Chapter3	Under Stage 5, you suggest this NP will have transitioned through all regulatory stages and be at referendum during winter 2021/22. While theoretically possible, we caution against building up local expectations.
Para 4.2 and Figure X	Suggest matching the order of the text to reflect the order of the objectives as they appear in Fig. X.
Para 5.4	List of policies do not match those in the body of the NP, e.g., LEAV 7 – 9.
LEAV 1 Para 5.1.6	<p>Without knowing where these proposed ‘Views of community importance’ are, there is a limit on what we can offer by way of feedback. From your early Questionnaire, they would appear to be [1] views northwards and eastward of the High Road hamlet (from a point east of the JLP LA098 allocation) <i>and</i> [2] views northwards from the Harrow Street hamlet.</p> <p>It is assumed that appropriate evidence / justification will be forthcoming and that this will do more than explain that “the merits of the views were considered by the Steering Group.” (para 5.1.6).</p>

	With reference to the note about inserting photographs of the view, we remind you also of our comment about the use of compressed image files.
Para 5.1.8	A typo. Para 5.1.8 refers to LEAV10. Presumably, this should now read LEAV2 (subject to other suggested policy changes).
LEAV2	<p>The allocations are noted. We may comment further once we have seen the justification. Your Examiner will also come to their own conclusion on whether the LGS sites comply with relevant NPPF criteria. Those perceived not to be able to endure beyond the end of the plan period and sites in private ownership/with no public access are unlikely to be permitted.</p> <p>Finally, amend the last paragraph to read: <i>“Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy and, where appropriate, Joint Local Plan policy for Designated Open Spaces.”</i></p>
LEAV3 Fig X, pg. 28	<p>Further justification will be needed to evidence and support the proposed ‘Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity’ allocation. That could be through your own landscape character assessment or some other criteria-based study. There are examples of this in other NPs.</p> <p>Regarding the third paragraph, see the modifications set out in the Whatfield NP Examiners Report on their policy WHAT1. This effectively replaces the text <i>“and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through:”</i> with <i>“Development proposals will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example:”</i></p> <p>We note also that LEAV3 states that the avenue of trees along High Road should be maintained, but it does not explain how or by whom. Given the vagaries of this sentence we recommend that it be deleted.</p> <p>Similarly, the last paragraph (re AONB extension) also reads as a community aspiration so should be deleted. [<i>Nb: you might want to reword modify the text and place it at the end of para 5.1.14</i>].</p>
LEAV4	<p>Question: Was any advice sought from Suffolk County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority) prior to identifying these sites? If so, it would be helpful to refer to that in supporting text.</p> <p>We also draw your attention to the updated Water Cycle Study and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments undertaken on our behalf by JBA Consulting, and which form part of the JLP evidence base. References to Leavenheath are limited but some of their content may be of relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMSDC Water Cycle Study Report (Oct 2020).pdf • BMSDC Water Cycle Study Addendum (Oct 2020).pdf • BMSDC SFRA Level 2 Report & Appendices (Oct 2020).pdf
LEAV5	[See our earlier comments under ‘Housing Matters’]

<p>LEAV6</p>	<p>Housing Need changes over time and, while the AECOM study provide a firm starting point, the policy wording should offer more flexibility. The specific reference to ‘optional M4(2) Standards’ also contravenes the Written Ministerial Statement dated 25 March 2015 which makes it clear that neighbourhood plans should not set out any additional or local technical standards relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings.</p> <p>As a ‘work-in-progress’ suggestion, we offer:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><i>“New residential development proposals should be of a size, type and tenure that reflect the aspirations of the local population. In line with the latest available evidence of need, the mix of house types should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-bedroom family homes. • Starter homes and smaller homes for downsizing. • Specialist housing for older people. • A range of affordable housing, including shared ownership, social rented, private rented and privately owned properties. • Homes that are adaptable in order to meet the needs of the increasingly ageing population, without restricting the needs of younger families. <p>Where affordable housing is proposed it should be identical in external form, quality and character to open market housing.</p> <p>It should also be noted that not all of the above housing types may be suitably accommodated on every site and that affordable housing contributions can only be required for major development sites.</p> </div> <p>Currently, this policy sits between LEAV5 and LEAV7. We mention elsewhere that there are enough similarities between those two policies to suggest they could be combined or, at least follow/complement each other. Logically then, your ‘House Type, Size & Tenure’ policy would follow afterwards.</p>
<p>LEAV7</p>	<p>[See our earlier comments under ‘Housing Matters’]</p>
<p>LEAV8 Fig X pg.41</p>	<p>You have already seen the initial feedback from our Heritage Team, but we repeat this here because it remains relevant to the Village Hall and Gedding Hall. We note also that the map on page 41 still needs updating.</p> <p><i>“We consider that the following identified buildings are unlikely to contain sufficient historic or architectural interest for the Heritage Team to consider them non-designated heritage assets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leavenheath Village Sign • Leavenheath Village Hall • Gedding Hall (although two barns on the site are older and have previously been considered NDHA’s during planning applications, so consideration should be given to including these instead.) <p><i>These buildings all appear to be fairly recent and would thus have to meet a higher bar of significance in other ways to make up for the lack of age, which I consider they are unlikely to do. Nonetheless, if clear justification for their inclusion is submitted, [we] can reconsider.”</i></p>

	<p>We see also that the justification for the identification of these sites as NDHA's is still to follow (Appendix C) so our Heritage Team may have further comments to make on the proposed allocations that remain.</p> <p>Para 5.2.21 briefly mention Historic England's guidance on these matters. If this is what you have used to inform your decision making, you should make this clear, especially for the benefit your NP Examiner. Including a weblink to the relevant document(s) would also be helpful."</p> <p>Finally, no's 9 & 10 on the list of proposed NDHA's should read as one entry.</p>
LEAV9	<p>An interesting approach not to set out the design criteria within the policy itself but, instead, to direct readers to the 'Design Guidelines and Codes' document. It will be interesting to see what your NP Examiner thinks of this.</p> <p>We offer an initial thought on a change to the policy wording as follows:</p> <p><i>"All proposals for new development proposals that respond positively to creating an attractive parish and enhance each of the hamlets' aesthetic qualities (High Road, Honey Tye and Harrow Street) will be encouraged supported and should be guided by Development should be use the 'Leavenheath Design Guidelines and Codes' document. (See Appendix X)."</i></p>
Para 5.3.5	Grammar: Suggest deleting 'of walking' from the end of the second sentence.
LEAV10	Suggest: " Where possible, Existing Public Rights of Way should be protected"
Para 5.3.11	There is a typo in the last sentence, which should read 'also'
LEAV11	We make no comment on this policy but colleagues at Suffolk County Council may do so at the Reg 14 stage.
Section 5.4	<p>The Figure on page 50 and paragraphs 5.4.1 to 5.4.6 refer to a number of community assets. Royston Wood and the Village Green are already identified as a local green spaces, and the Village Hall is a proposed non-designated heritage asset, which we have advised against.</p> <p>Question: Was any thought given to including a specific policy that sought to protect existing village facilities and amenities? That could refer to the Hare & Hounds, the Village Hall and, maybe St Matthews Church. It would naturally follow after the paragraphs mentioned above. Some editing of para's 5.4.1 to 5.4.6 would also be necessary to separate out which facilities are relevant to the policy from those facilities that are already covered elsewhere.</p>
LEAV12 Para 5.4.10	<p>We may comment further on this policy at the Reg 14 consultation stage. For now ... what do you mean by 'large residential development', and how does this differ from 'development of 1 hectare or more'?</p> <p>Note also that para 5.4.10 should be amended to refer to policy LEAV12.</p>
LEAV13	This reads more as a Community Aspiration. By all means retain it but mark it up accordingly.

<p>LEAV14 Para 5.5.6</p>	<p>We refer again to national technical standards (see LEAV6). While the Covid-19 pandemic has made 'home-working' the norm for many, a policy requirement that specifically instructs developers to make provision for this cannot be applied through a neighbourhood plan. Consequently, Policy LEAV14 should be deleted.</p>
<p>Appendix A</p>	<p>Typo? We presume it should read: 'Rachel Leggett & <u>A</u>ssociates'</p>
<p>Appendix E: Glossary</p>	<p>This is headed up with the phrase "[Anything else you want adding in?]" Our response to this is: "<i>What needs deleting?</i>"</p> <p>The glossary includes definitions for 'Major Hazard Sites', 'Out of Centre / Town', 'Primary Shopping' and 'Ramsar' to name just a few. None of these are covered in this plan and, therefore, are not needed in the glossary. You will need to carry out your own checks to remove other unnecessary definitions.</p>

Ends