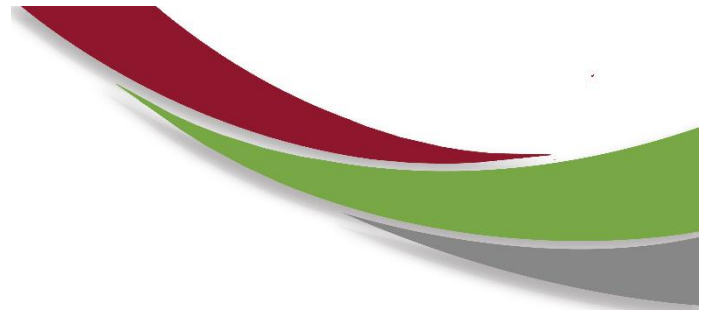




(Sent by e-mail).

Date: 16th July 2025

Dear Town / Parish Clerk

Withdrawal of Government funding for Neighbourhood Development Plan Preparation

We wrote to you on 21st March 2025 explaining the district-wide housing requirement position set by the Government for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils over the next 20 years. This also included an indicative position whereby the district-wide figure was apportioned across each Town and Parish, to provide a guide for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Last month, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) announced that direct Government funding for Neighbourhood Development Planning (i.e., the Locality grant), had been withdrawn with immediate effect. In addition, the technical support packages that were delivered by AECOM are no longer available.

The District Councils continue to recognise the 'added value' that Neighbourhood Development Plans can bring and support their preparation. Where Town and Parish Councils have Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy monies or alternative means to self-fund their Neighbourhood Development Plans, we would encourage and support this.

The Councils are currently exploring what other funding could be made available for those Town and Parish Councils wishing to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans that might not have the financial resources to undertake these to the point of their formal submission to the District Councils.

We are also developing an evidence base for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review and, at the appropriate time, elements of this will be shared with Neighbourhood Development Plan Groups to support their Plan preparations. For example, the District Councils undertook a Call for Sites exercise for residential development in 2024 and will be able to share the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) later this year. This will help inform those seeking to allocate sites for residential development. A further Call for Sites exercise is also planned later this year.



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Any funding that the Councils can secure to support Neighbourhood Development Plan Groups may be conditional on those Plans supporting new housing delivery and meeting the strategic objectives of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review.

For those Neighbourhood Development Plans and Plan Reviews that have already been submitted to the Councils, we will continue to take these through consultation, examination and referendum. If you have yet to reach the submission stage, please contact us and we can discuss a suitable way forward in the absence of Government funding. If you are considering producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Plan Review, please can you let us know together with the geographical area being considered and what you wish the Plan to achieve.

As mentioned above, the District Councils are determined to continue their support for Neighbourhood Development Plans. We believe they can add real value at the local level. We would like to work with you to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans that will meet both our strategic planning objectives (in particular meeting housing needs) and allow communities to shape their future.

Yours faithfully

Cllr Sallie Davies
Babergh Cabinet Member for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure

Cllr Andrew Stringer
Mid Suffolk Cabinet Member for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure



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