



Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Council

Corporate Plan Refresh – Engagement

Cabinet update

About Us

New Local is an independent think tank and network with a mission to transform public services and unlock community power.

- Our **network** is home to 70+ councils and other organisations, united in a drive to create sustainable and community-led public services.
- Our **research** team explores some of the most pressing issues we're facing today – from climate change, to social care, to building economic resilience – and how we might address them through a community-powered approach.
- Our **practice** work connects directly with councils and other organisations, supporting them to work collaboratively with people, communities, and partners to transform how they work.

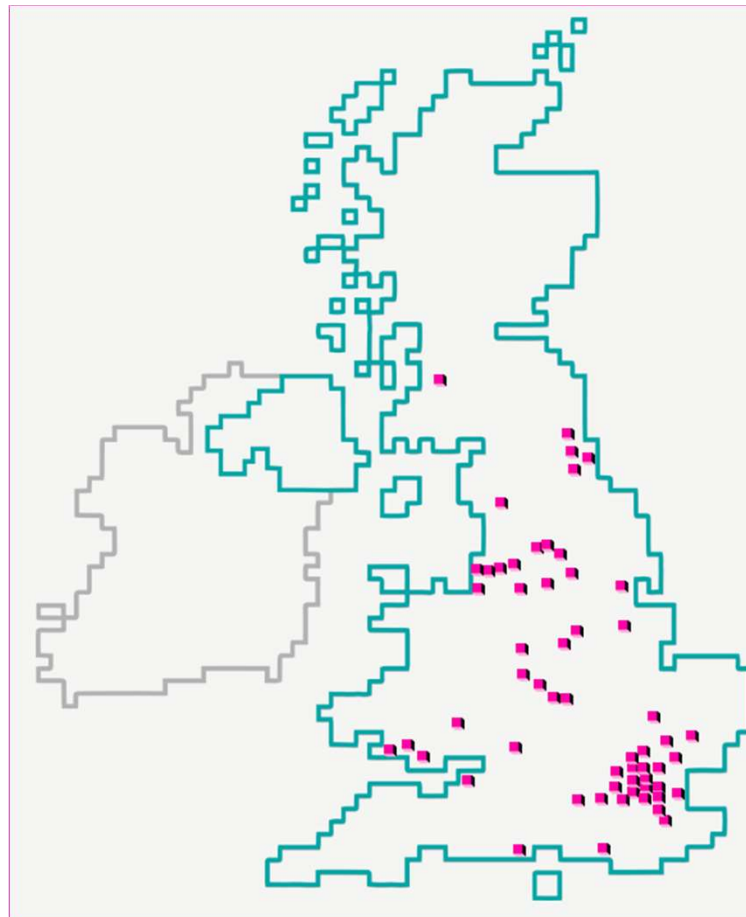
New Local is a company limited by guarantee and operates as a not-for-profit body. We were established in 1996 as the New Local Government Network.



Introducing our councils...

Our local authority members, listed below, are some of the most innovative and forward thinking in the UK. Our network spreads across the country, covers a range of tiers of local government and draws participation from senior officers.

Adur & Worthing	Lewisham
Babergh & Mid-Suffolk	Lichfield
Barking & Dagenham	Liverpool
Birmingham	Monmouthshire
Bolton	Neath Port Talbot
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Newark & Sherwood
Bradford	North East Lincolnshire
Braintree	Redbridge
Bury	Sheffield
Calderdale	Southend
Camden	South Gloucestershire
Cambridgeshire	South Tyneside
City of London	Southwark
Coventry	St Albans
Derby	Staffordshire
Doncaster	St Helens
Durham	Stockport
East Ayrshire	Sunderland
Enfield	Surrey
Essex	Sutton
Gateshead	Swansea
Haringey	Tewkesbury
Harrow	Vale of Glamorgan
Hounslow	Wakefield
Islington	Waltham Forest
Kent	Warwickshire
Kingston	Welwyn Hatfield
Knowsley	West Lindsey
Lambeth	West Northamptonshire
Lancashire	Wigan
	Wokingham



... and our partners

Drawn from both the non-profit and corporate sectors, our partners share a vision for change in local government and value the opportunities we provide for cross-sector collaboration.

Bridges Outcomes Partnerships
Browne Jacobson
FutureGov (becoming TPX Impact)
Jacobs
Lankelly Chase
Local Partnerships
Nesta: People Powered Results
Power To Change
Social Finance

Our goal

Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council (BMSDC) are planning to develop their Corporate Plans to guide their focus and activity over the next 8 years.

Both councils have identified that **community, partner, councillor and staff engagement** should be at the heart of the process for developing this plan. This will inform the final content of the Plan and help build stronger foundations for engagement and civic participation over the long-term.

Our design approach and methods consider:

- (i) Engagement with internal stakeholders to make the case for community engagement and build consensus around the approach
- (ii) Engagement with external stakeholder within the community to help inform the emerging priorities

The BMSDC team is working with **New Local** (as the lead partner) and **Just Ideas Sustainable Solutions** who will be focusing on helping shape and deliver the community engagement activities.

Babergh's Priorities

Environment

We will lead our district's response to the climate emergency, whilst also protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment.

- Encourage energy efficient homes and businesses through planning policy
- Promote greener and healthier forms of travel
- Plant more trees and restore habitats, boosting biodiversity.

Communities – our people

We are ambitious for our economy and young people, prioritising a green economy and working with education providers to develop the required skills.

- Develop and promote hubs for higher paid, higher skilled, sustainable jobs.
- Preserve the unique character of our market towns and villages, but work with partners so they can adapt to future needs.
- Lobby for better infrastructure, but minimise impact on the countryside.

Communities – our places

We think strong communities should be built on good housing, wellbeing and pride of place. Our guiding principle will be the right homes in the right places, at an affordable price

- Encourage communities to develop neighbourhood plans
- Reduce the impact of the housing crisis, and look at partnerships to build affordable homes to buy and rent
- Boost the visitor economy by promoting the heritage, character and beauty of our places. Ensure every part of Babergh is clean and tidy – building pride.

Mid-Suffolk's Priorities

Social responsibility

Increase the availability of truly affordable homes, improving peoples' physical and mental wellbeing, with deeper, more meaningful community engagement..

Harness our district's fantastic heritage and culture, improve rural transport, support small rural businesses, and build pride

- Increase homes available at social and affordable rent..
- Help grassroots sports and activity groups to thrive, especially in rural areas.
- Ensure everyone has access to green spaces in their communities.
- Promote active citizenship, enabling people to further influence where and how much the council spends, and improving the accessibility of council staff in communities.
- Increase community engagement, including the development of neighbourhood plans.
- Work with communities to improve sustainable rural transport, improving access to services.
- Tackle inequalities, helping areas which aren't thriving.

Environmental responsibility

Progress the council's plan to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030, playing a leading role in helping residents, communities and businesses to achieve this..

- Deliver our own energy-efficient homes.
- Plan to improve insulation for homeowners and those who rent privately, including small private landlords.
- Investigate options with Community Land Trusts, parishes and other groups on community energy production.
- Take action to increase recycling rates, supporting repair initiatives and investigating a digester/food waste pilot.
- Develop a biodiversity strategy, working with the agricultural industry and developers.
- Investigate developing an energy and water strategy.
- Support and encourage new, small-scale food producers - including farmers' markets, farm shops and community-supported agriculture initiatives - so there is greater resilience to shocks in the supply chain..
- Develop a greener economy, creating new skills and jobs- including a new Innovation and Centre of excellence for green skills at Gateway 14.

What we want to learn and how

1 citizenlab

- Citizen Lab **online survey** to engage a wide variety of voices within Babergh and Mid Suffolk communities and amongst residents
- To engage specifically with the business community

2 NEW LOCAL +

- **Facilitated sessions** with communities – specific focus on seldom heard groups
- Workshops with Partners and wider BMSDC staff

CONTENT FRAMEWORK

Thematic area	Engagement requirements
Visioning Exploring the question 'what makes a thriving community?'	Understanding how different communities interpret this question and their perspective on what makes them thrive
Prioritisation Exploring emerging priority areas	Exploring emerging political priorities to gain a sense of which are most important to communities.
Resources An overview of how the council spends its money	Opportunity to comment on existing spending profile Opportunity to express whether this is the right mix of investment priorities
Initiatives / Assets Exploring the initiative areas (under priorities) that the council should focus on	Within the context of the vision for thriving communities and emerging strategic priorities, where should the council focus its attention? What has worked well (to build on) vs. what could be better (to improve on)



Engagement Design – highlights

- Working alongside BMSDC staff to interrogate and analyse existing networks, finalise groupings and decide which mode of engagement is best
- Proactive reaching out and building connection with Voluntary, Community, Social and Faith (VCSF) organisations to facilitate conversations with Seldom Heard communities

INVOLVE

Residents and Communities

Exploring through collaboration with relevant VCSE organisations the perspectives of seldom heard groups across Babergh and Mid-Suffolk. Exploration of thriving communities through their lens and alignment with draft priorities

BMSDC Staff

Working with staff to understand the wider implications for ways of working based on draft priorities and early insights from community engagement sessions.

Partners

Working with BMSDC's partners (business, towns and parish councils, VCSFs) to understand where their work is aligned to priorities and implications for future working and collaboration across Babergh and Mid-Suffolk.

Seldom Heard Voices

Group	Avenues to engagement
Young people	Suffolk Family Carers
People living with mental health illness	Suffolk Mind, Suffolk Libraries, Coffee Caravan
Low-income residents / families in hardship	Big Local, Homestart Suffolk
Residents with a physical or sensory disability	Community Action Suffolk, Volunteering Matters, Suffolk Community Foundation
LGBTQ+	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion champions, Suffolk County Council's LGBTQ+ network
Unpaid carers	Suffolk Libraries, Volunteering Matters
Persons experiencing homelessness	Homestart Suffolk, Crofton House
Ethnic minorities	BSC Multicultural Services, Volunteering Matters

Umbrella / anchor VCSE organisations

- Suffolk Libraries
- Suffolk Community Foundation
- Community Action Suffolk
- Volunteering Matters

By the end of the engagement, BMSDC will have:

- Better understanding of seldom heard resident perspectives around thriving communities and about priorities to inform the development of the Corporate plan
- Garnered ideas about how to implement some of the priorities to feed into the plan, and what is already happening in communities to support those priorities
- Built relationships with and understanding of challenges faced by seldom heard communities and groups which support them.
- Built awareness among communities they currently don't have much contact with.

Partner Engagement

INVOLVE

Town and Parish Councils

- 2 x workshops to understand perspectives on draft priorities

Business Community

- Business lunch with councillors
- Tailored online survey

VCSF organisations

- Lunch with councillors
- Facilitated workshop for VCSF organisation working directly with communities

INFORM

Neighbouring councils & Public Sector Institutions

- Regular updates on activity and what we're learning



Staff Engagement

New Local will provide ongoing updates and support for the engagement process with wider BMSDC staff – including corporate managers and officers who will be delivering key initiatives within the Corporate plan and linked to priorities.

Corporate Plan Network and Working Group

Build momentum around community engagement and later on, consensus around priorities

BMSDC Staff

Understand relevance of community engagement process and Implications for Corporate plan (ways of working, culture, priorities, collaboration etc.)

CEO and key sponsors

Ongoing guidance and direction on the engagement approach and delivery

What the engagement will cover:

- Understanding current ways of working
- Understanding what needs to change in order to meet opportunities and ambitions of new priorities
- Identifying opportunities for more collaborative ways of working – in between council teams and with partners and the community
- Exploring community strengths to enable community power to flourish



Engagement Planning

Where possible, integrating councillor involvement to facilitate connections and amplify relationships between council and communities.

What next?

- Finalising the engagement calendar – invites to come for those sessions where it would be useful for councillors to attend
- Invites for sessions with business and VCSF

Our asks:

1. Promotion of engagement opportunities to residents and communities you're interacting with
2. Identifying routes into conversations, particularly with those seldom heard groups

Our offer:

1. Bespoke session with councillors of the administrations to help facilitate conversations about the engagement work and encourage participation
2. Insights and highlights from engagement to be provided on an ongoing basis

Progress to date:

- Consultation period set for 4th Oct – 15th Nov
- Sessions in progress:
 - Community sessions [24]
 - Towns and Parish councils [2]
 - Staff sessions [2]
 - VCSF [2]
- Umbrella organisations / Anchor institutions
 - Enthusiastic leads at Suffolk Libraries
 - Community Action Suffolk – leads into many groups as well as strong network of VCSE orgs
 - Volunteering Matters – strong links to young people