

STAGE 1

- **Designation of the Neighbourhood Area** - only a Town / Parish Council in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk area may make an area application as a 'qualifying body'. The application must be publicised for four weeks and determined within eight weeks.

STAGE 2

- **Preparation of draft Neighbourhood Plan** - this stage requires a considerable amount of research, community engagement and effort by the Neighbourhood Planning Group. The District Council has a duty to provide support.

STAGE 3

- **Pre-submission Publicity & Consultation (Reg 14)** - the Town / Parish Council consults on its draft Plan for six weeks. The District Council responds to the consultation highlighting any concerns. This stage may have to be repeated if there are significant gaps.

STAGE 4

- **Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan (Reg 15)** - the District Council checks that the Plan is legally compliant, and undertakes formal consultation for a minimum period of six weeks. At this stage the Plan has some status for decision-making purposes.

STAGE 5

- **Independent Examination (Reg 17)** - organised and funded by the District Council. The Examiner will consider whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions and EU obligations. The Plan may be accepted, accepted with modifications, or rejected.

STAGE 6

- **Referendum (Reg 18)** - organised and funded by the District Council. At least 28 working days notice is required. The question asked is ... 'Do you want [n] Council to use the neighbourhood plan for [n] to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

STAGE 7

- **Making (Adoption) of the Neighbourhood Plan** by the District Council (Regs 19 & 20). If the Referendum is successful then the Plan formally becomes part of the Councils Development Plan Framework and be used for decision-making purposes.