



BURES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

This communication and engagement strategy is designed to keep all village residents, organisations and businesses informed about and involved in the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). It should be read in conjunction with the Project Plan and the Communication and Engagement Log.

In more formal terms, having a strategy will ensure the delivery of a ‘Consultation Statement.’ This strategy meets with the definition of such a document as set out in Regulation 15 of the NP Regulations which make a consultation statement a statutory part of the package to be submitted for examination by an independent inspector towards the end of the process.

Regulation 15 states:

15 (2) In this regulation “consultation statement” means a document which—

- (a) contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- (b) explains how they were consulted;
- (c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- (d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

The area of consultation is the area designated as Bures Neighbourhood Planning Area and comprises the parishes of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary. This is the village of Bures and the outlying clusters and solitary dwellings. It crosses county and district council boundaries.

According to the Braintree District Council Key Housing Needs Statistics Snapshot: January 2021, Bures Hamlet has a population of 749 in 325 households. 25% of the population are over 65 years old, 56% are aged 16 to 64 years old and 19% under 16 years.

According to Babergh District Council Housing and Population Data Profile October 2019 Bures St Mary has a population of 918 in 401 households. 21.9% of the population were over 65 years old at this point. 60.9% were aged 16 to 64 years old and 17.2% over 16 years.

This communications and engagement strategy has been developed by the NP Steering Group and identifies key stakeholders and interest groups in the parish. The aim is to engage as widely as possible to demonstrate effective and meaningful participation in the Neighbourhood Plan’s development, and to help achieve a positive outcome at the referendum which concludes the NP process.

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to:

- To create local planning policies for Bures to which development proposals should adhere
- To protect against inappropriate and speculative development and to provide greater control over development
- To inform the Parish Plan regarding action on facilities and improvements, which are needed by the village

Key stakeholders and interested parties

Our key stakeholders and interested parties fall into three broad categories residents, businesses and organisations. We see it as particularly important to engage younger residents as they are the future of the village but the experience of the older residents is also very important. In addition to the village organisations and businesses there are organisations such as the Dedham Vale AONB and businesses such as Greater Anglia.

Purpose of Communication and Engagement

For the adopted NP to reflect the views of those living and working in Bures, it is important that all who wish to get involved have opportunities to be consulted on key issues, options and proposals; this will then feed into the process of its development. A fundamental aim of the NP is for it to belong to those living and working in the area.

Consultation runs throughout every stage of the NP process. Adopting an agreed communications and engagement strategy should make the most of existing capacity within the NPSG and the wider group to effectively manage consultation requirements, both statutory and non-statutory. This is particularly important at pre-submission stage of consultation, which must accord with Regulation 14 of the NP Regulations. It is also essential for a robust Consultation Statement to accompany the final Plan to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 15.

The NPSG will be responsible to the Parish Councils for ensuring that this strategy is followed and the log kept up to date. The NPSG is also responsible for recording the outcomes of the different events, along with feeding these into the next stages of consultation. Whilst the plan has room for some flexibility, it is designed to provide a firm foundation to build on for all stages of consultation.

Principles of Communication and Engagement

The NPSG will seek to be as inclusive as possible, providing all residents and workers in Bures with every opportunity to input into and help shape the NP. Specifically to:

- Ensure those who might be considered “harder to reach” are a focus of attention in engagement. This will include going out to residents in more remote parts of Bures and not to expect everyone to come to central events.
- Maximise the potential for volunteer involvement in the process
- Make the most of all available channels of communication
- Plan consultation activities to deliver the best outcomes for the NP
- Engage those with any concerns about the policies in the NP to keep them informed and involved

Channels of communication and engagement

1. Public meetings

The Neighbourhood Planning process was launched at public meetings/workshops. These meetings will be held at key points in the process.

2. Bures Neighbourhood Plan website and Bures Parish Councils website

The NP website will be regularly updated and will contain information about the NP and process. It will provide on going information, event notifications, consultation results and draft documents as they are produced. Agendas and minutes for the Steering Group meetings will be posted on the website.

The Parish Councils website will have a clear link to the NP website on the home page.

3. Leafleting and surveys

Where it is really important that **all** residents are aware of particular NP matters, all households will be leafleted. Surveys may be blanket or targeted.

4. Bures Parish Magazine

The Bures Parish Magazine is a monthly publication. It does not go to all households. The appeals to the community, event notices and key news will be submitted to the editor.

5. Other periodicals circulated free of charge to village properties

The appeals to the community, event notices and key news will be submitted to the editor.

6. Facebook

The Beautiful Bures Facebook page is a key source of information in the village. Signposts to the website and notices about events will be posted.

Bures Parish Councils Facebook page

7. Notice Boards

There are notice boards in the village which are regularly viewed by the community for village updates, including information on the NP. Information provided through notice boards will include details of events and give the link to the website.

8. Bures Market

The monthly market held on the second Saturday of the month from March to December is an important village social event. The Parish Councils have previously used the markets to share information and collect views and also to gather residents' thoughts on issues of concern. It is therefore an area where residents would expect to hear about NP matters and be consulted on them.

9. Bures School

The school is a focus point for part of the community and engagement will follow liaison with the headteacher. The school publishes a weekly newsletter for parents.

10. Community groups, clubs and organisations

Community groups are a good way of reaching people who might not usually respond to consultations. They can provide a forum for informal and relaxed discussion, leading to valuable input into the NP process.

Bures Youth Club and Bures Explorers (part of the Scouting organisation) will be important sources of views held by the younger generation.

Community groups for all ages include, St Mary's Church, Bures Baptist Church, The Horticultural Society, Transition Group, History Society, Craft Group, Cricket Club, Football Club, Tennis Club, Pickleball, Carpet Bowls, Boxercise, Yoga, Women's Institute, Mothers' Union.

The Friday Club, Solos on Sunday and Wednesday Open Door are all groups where the older generation gather.

Consultation events will be advertised in all of the communication channels. Residents will be encouraged to participate and volunteers sought to support the process.

11. Neighbouring parishes

As a matter of good practice, the NPSG will inform neighbouring parishes of key stages of consultation.

The following groups and others working in the parish and in the surrounding area will also be contacted during consultations:

12. District and County Councils

Councillors and officers will be kept informed and asked for advice as necessary.

13. Area and National Organisations

Dedham Vale AONB
Patient Participation Group
Essex and Suffolk Police
Essex and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts
The Environment Agency
Natural England
English Heritage

Any public body will be approached if, during the process, it becomes evident that the issues contained within the NP policies make it appropriate to do so.