



Planning Policy

Preamble

P1. This document is adopted to help councillors respond to planning consultations consistently, fairly and transparently, and to help residents understand how the Council approaches planning matters.

P2. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee. It is not the decision-maker for planning applications; decisions are made by the Local Planning Authority and other statutory bodies as appropriate.

P3. The Council does not provide planning or pre-planning advice and will not express a view on the merits of a proposal prior to a formal application being received and considered at a properly convened meeting. Applicants will be signposted to the Local Planning Authority and the Planning Portal for definitive guidance.

P4. Notwithstanding the above, the Council encourages early engagement so it can understand proposals and relevant local context; however, it will only form a view once the application has been received via the Local Planning Authority and considered at Full Council.

1. Purpose

1.1. This Policy & Protocol sets out how the Council will consider and respond to:

- Planning applications and related consultations;
- Planning policy consultations (e.g., Local Plan updates, supplementary guidance);
- Neighbourhood planning matters.

1.2. It aims to ensure the Council's planning work is:

- Consistent, evidence-led and focused on material planning considerations;
- Transparent and properly recorded;
- Timely, so residents' views can be represented effectively.

2. Status and role of the Parish Council

2.1. The Council is a statutory consultee. Decisions are made by the Local Planning Authority (currently Babergh District Council) and relevant statutory consultees such as the Highway Authority (Suffolk County Council).

2.2. The Council will provide comments/support/objection and/or request conditions where justified by policy and material considerations.

2.3. Councillors are not planning professionals. The Council's role is to represent local interests and provide local knowledge, ensuring comments are planning-based and capable of carrying weight.

3. Scope

This protocol applies to:

- Householder and minor applications;
- Major development;
- Reserved matters, amendments/variations, and prior approvals (where consulted);
- Listed building / heritage-related applications where relevant;
- Tree matters where consulted and material to planning considerations;
- Appeals and policy consultations relevant to Brantham.

4. Principles

The Council will:

- Treat applicants and residents with respect and impartiality;
- Avoid predetermination and keep an open mind until matters are considered formally;
- Focus on planning merits, not individuals;
- Declare interests properly and follow the Code of Conduct;
- Record clear planning reasons for any objection and for any requested mitigation/conditions.

5. Overarching aims

5.1. In responding to planning consultations, the Council seeks to protect and enhance Brantham's character and quality of life by supporting development that:

- is proportionate and well-designed, responding positively to local character;
- avoids unacceptable impacts on amenity, highway safety and infrastructure;
- safeguards biodiversity and green infrastructure and supports measurable ecological enhancement;
- addresses flood risk and surface-water management through appropriate SuDS; and
- supports sustainability (including energy and water efficiency), while respecting local context.

6. How planning items are managed (Full Council)

6.1. Planning applications and consultations will be considered by Full Council, unless delegated under section 11.

6.2. The Clerk will:

- maintain a planning log (reference, address, proposal, consultation deadline, Council resolution, date submitted);
- circulate applications promptly on receipt;
- place applications on the next suitable agenda where the consultation deadline permits;
- submit the Council's agreed response to the Local Planning Authority within the consultation deadline; and
- retain copies/links to submissions and decisions.

6.3. The Council may appoint a Planning Lead (Councillor) to support consistent handling and timely briefing. The Planning Lead role is advisory/supportive and does not replace Full Council decision-making.

7. What the Council will comment on (material planning considerations)

Date adopted:

Next review due:

7.1. The Council will comment only on material planning considerations, including (where relevant):

- principle of development and policy compliance;
- design, scale, massing, layout, materials, character, and street scene impact;
- residential amenity (privacy, overlooking, noise, disturbance, daylight/sunlight);
- highways/access/parking/servicing/visibility and pedestrian/cycle safety;
- flood risk and drainage (including SuDS and surface water management);
- biodiversity, trees/hedgerows, ecological impacts and opportunities for enhancement;
- heritage impacts (including the setting of heritage assets);
- landscape and visual impacts, including important public views;
- sustainability and climate resilience measures.

7.2. Cumulative impact / incremental change: the Council will consider whether repeated minor developments or incremental change (boundary treatments, domestication of edges, hardstanding's, outbuildings, external lighting, etc.) may, collectively, erode character, tranquillity, biodiversity or amenity.

7.3. Lighting: where external lighting is proposed, the Council will seek the minimum necessary lighting, appropriately shielded and directed downward, on timers/sensors where possible, with measures to minimise glare, spill and ecological impacts.

7.4. Style of response: the Council will normally respond as “No objection” (with comments/conditions where appropriate) or “Object” (with clear planning reasons). Explicit endorsement/support will be used sparingly and only where the planning merits are clear.

8. Non-material considerations (the Council will avoid relying on these)

Non-material matters include:

- loss of private view / effect on property value;
- private covenants, land ownership, boundary disputes, private rights of access;
- party wall matters;
- commercial competition / loss of trade;
- matters controlled under Building Regulations or other non-planning regimes;
- construction nuisance (dust/noise/working hours) unless it can reasonably be addressed via planning conditions;
- moral objections or personal circumstances (unless directly relevant to a planning policy test);
- the fact that development has already been carried out (enforcement is for the Local Planning Authority).

9. Public engagement and participation

9.1. Residents are encouraged to submit comments directly to the Local Planning Authority via the online planning portal.

9.2. Public participation at meetings will follow the Council's standing orders/public participation scheme. The Chair may set time limits to ensure the agenda is managed fairly.

10. Site visits

10.1. Site visits are fact-finding only. No decisions are made during site visits.

Date adopted:

Next review due:

10.2. Councillors will respect privacy and not enter land/buildings without permission. Photographs may be taken from public viewpoints where appropriate.

11. Delegation and urgent decisions between meetings

11.1. Where consultation deadlines cannot reasonably be met by waiting for the next Full Council meeting, the Council may use delegated arrangements.

11.2. Delegated authority: The Council delegates to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Planning Lead (or, if unavailable, the Vice Chair), authority to submit a response consistent with this protocol.

11.3. Any delegated response must:

- be circulated to councillors when submitted (and beforehand where practicable);
- be reported to the next meeting for ratification/record in the minutes; and
- be logged with submission date and content.

11.4. For significant proposals (e.g., major development or high local interest), the Chair may call an extraordinary meeting if time allows.

12. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and planning consultations

12.1. The Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and has established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group operating under adopted Terms of Reference.

12.2. The Steering Group leads and supports Neighbourhood Plan preparation (evidence, engagement, drafting policies). It is not a decision-making body for planning applications.

12.3. The Council's formal planning responses are agreed at Full Council and submitted by the Clerk.

12.4. For major or locally sensitive proposals, the Council may request the Steering Group to provide factual input or relevant evidence (including emerging policy direction) to inform Full Council discussion. Any such input is advisory and recorded as such.

12.5. When referencing the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, the Council will make clear that policies are "emerging" and attribute weight consistent with the plan's stage and supporting evidence.

13. Planning enforcement

13.1. Enforcement is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority. The Council may signpost residents to the enforcement process and/or provide factual information to the Local Planning Authority where appropriate.

13.2. The Council will avoid making determinations on enforcement merits; it will focus on ensuring concerns are passed to the appropriate authority.

14. Training and continuous improvement

14.1. Councillors involved in planning will be encouraged to undertake periodic training (material considerations, probity, heritage, drainage).

Date adopted:

Next review due:

14.2. The Council may periodically review outcomes (Local Planning Authority decisions on key applications) to improve the quality and usefulness of its representations.

Appendix A — Useful links (Babergh)

- A1. Planning, heritage and building control (service home page).
- A2. Search for and comment on a planning application (Simple Search).
- A3. Planning enforcement (including how to submit an enforcement report).
- A4. Planning service hub (includes enforcement, CIL, listed buildings/conservation areas and related links).
- A5. Joint Local Plan review and adoption information (including access to the policies map).

(Note: web links change occasionally. Appendix A can be updated by the Clerk at review without altering the intent of this protocol.)

Appendix B — Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan policy signposting

B1. Source and review (audit trail)

This appendix signposts policies from the Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 (adopted November 2023) and is intended as a quick reference only. Policy titles/numbering and any remaining saved policies will be checked at each annual review against the Councils’ published “Live Policies” list.

B1a. Development Plan context

The Council will have regard to the full Development Plan in force for the area when commenting on applications. This may include the Joint Local Plan (and any remaining “saved” policies), any made Neighbourhood Plan covering Brantham, and other adopted planning documents that form part of the Development Plan, alongside relevant national policy.

B2. How to use this appendix

This appendix does not replace reading the full policy wording or any relevant supplementary guidance. The Parish Council will reference only those policies/material considerations that are relevant to the specific proposal and site context.

B3. Strategic policies (SP) often relevant to most proposals

- SP01 Housing Needs
- SP02 Affordable Housing
- SP03 The sustainable location of new development
- SP04 Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople
- SP05 Employment Land
- SP06 Retail and Main Town Centre Uses
- SP07 Tourism
- SP08 Strategic Infrastructure Provision
- SP09 Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- SP10 Climate Change

B4. Local policies (LP) commonly relevant

Housing / countryside / domestic proposals

LP01, LP02, LP03, LP04, LP05, LP06, LP07, LP08

Date adopted:

Next review due:

Economy / employment
LP09, LP10

Retail, tourism and leisure
LP11, LP12, LP13, LP14

Environment, heritage, landscape
LP15, LP16, LP17, LP18, LP19

Rural land uses
LP20, LP21, LP22

Design, climate and resources
LP23, LP24, LP25, LP26, LP27

Community, transport and infrastructure
LP28, LP29, LP30, LP31, LP32

B5. "Most used by Brantham" shortlist (recommended)

For many Brantham applications, the Parish Council will commonly consider (where relevant): SP03, SP09, SP10 and LP24, and where applicable LP27/LP26 (flood/drainage), LP16/LP15 (biodiversity/environment), LP19 (heritage), LP29 (transport) and LP32 (developer contributions).



APPLICATION FOR A GRANT OR CONTRIBUTION

Before completing this form, please carefully read Brantham Parish Council's Contributions Policy. Copies of this form must be submitted to the Parish Council along with any necessary supporting document to the address or email detailed above.

General Information for Applicants

It is Brantham Parish Council's intention (subject to budget restrictions and available resources) to support initiatives from local community groups and organisations. Priority will be given to applicants who have not previously received grants from Brantham Parish Council. The size of any contribution is awarded at the discretion of the Parish Council but will not exceed £500 in any one application.

A word copy of this form is available on request to the Clerk. If you have any queries on the completion of this form please contact the Parish Clerk using the details above.

ORGANISATION/GROUP DETAILS	
Organisation/Group name:	Brantham Garage Sale Foundation
Address:	[REDACTED]
Contact Email:	[REDACTED]
Contact Telephone:	[REDACTED]
Registered Charity no. (if applicable):	
If you are part of a larger organisation enter its name:	
Aims and objectives of your organisation/group:	Raise money for St Elizabeth's Hospice and Manningtree District First Responders

DETAILS OF PROJECT/ACTIVITY	
Provide an overview of your project/request:	Advertising leaflets, banners and posters for the Garage Sale Event on June 21 2026



	<p>As part of ensuring the widest support for the Sale event, we produce and distribute approx 1200 leaflets across Brantham and Cattawade. The production of the leaflets last year cost £57.</p> <p>We also paid for the production of three large banners at £132 for the three - these banners go on the roadside near the Cattawade Roundabout and on the main village board at the Junction between Palfrey Heights and Brantham Hill, as well as the fencing on the Wheatsheaf in Tattingstone. In 2026 we will need 4 banners in total – total will be around £180 for the banners.</p> <p>Finally we will need around 40 waterproof A4 posters – This will be approximately £30.</p>
What is the likely number of beneficiaries?	<p>Difficult to quantify – The first responders are called out many times per month into Brantham, And the Hospice provides services to many residents.</p>
Age profile of beneficiaries	<p>From 4 years and up</p>
Provide details of long-term sustainability	<p>The Garage Sale is in it's 23rd year, and our goal is keep it running and run events along side it, including the craft market and tombola events to raise as much money as possible for our chosen charities.</p>

DETAILS OF PARISH COUNCIL FUNDING REQUESTED	
Contribution requested	£267
Received in the last 4 years	2025: £110

Please use this space for any other information about your project or organisation that may be helpful to your application:

I certify that the responses provided are accurate to the best of my knowledge

Signature of applicant  _____

Office held Chairperson : Brantham Garage Sale Foundation _____ Date _____

PROGRESS REPORT ON VILLAGE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER (PCSO) PROPOSAL

I was asked to research the possibilities and options for sharing the costs of a PCSO Brantham and East Bergholt Parish Council, to be employed by the Suffolk Constabulary but dedicated full-time to working within our parish boundaries. The Chair of Brantham Parish Council and myself have:

- investigated the powers of a CPSO
- met twice with Naomi Lofthouse and Georgia Memory from the Suffolk Constabulary who would be the direct employers of our local PCSO to assess how the model might work.
- met with the Chair and Clerk from Thurston Parish Council whose PC has directly funded a CPSO dedicated to their village since 2011.

This report updates councillors on our findings to date.

Powers of a CPSO

The details of the government guidance on powers of a PCSO are linked from this page.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-community-support-officer-powers>

The Suffolk Constabulary guidance on the work of a PCSO can be found from this link

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/suffolk/policies/police-community-support-officers-policy.pdf> and is provided at Annex 1.

In brief the CPSO has more limited powers than a police officer. They do not have the direct powers of arrest that a police officer has but they do have some specific powers to issue fixed penalty notices; to require name and address of people they perceive to have committed an offence; and the power of influence good behaviour through the regular local visibility of a uniform and a marked patrol car. See the documents in the annex for their full powers. They also are part of a community policing team and so backed up by police officers and managers who they can quickly call in to assist them.

The detail of a PCSO's powers are outlined in the Annex 1.

How a joint CPSO could work in East Bergholt and Brantham.

In discussion with Naomi Lofthouse and Georgia Memory of Suffolk Constabulary we have learnt that a PCSO would be employed to work for the Suffolk Constabulary and would be managed by Naomi Lofthouse's community policing team. The PCSO's work would be directed according to priorities set by Naomi and the Clerks of the 2 parishes working together. The Clerks would have a large influence on directing their day-to-day work and the local police priorities would be informed by the PCSO's local intelligence reports which they would report back to the police intelligence systems on a daily basis.

The working week would be 37 hours (40 hours with breaks included), within the core hours of 8.00-18.00, spread in shift patterns over Monday-Sunday, but with some flexibility for working later and at weekends for special events. At the start of each day the PCSO would take briefing reports from the local community team and at the end of each day report back local intelligence into the police information systems. They would wear a police uniform and

could patrol the villages on foot, by bicycle or in car, whichever is most appropriate for the current task.

The formal powers of the PCSO are outlined in the attached annex. However in discussion with the police and with Thurston Parish Council we understand that their main impact is the prevention of crime and bad behaviour. They can also quickly facilitate the presence of the whole police team in the event of an incident that exceeds their powers. As examples of their preventative work they can help set up speed watch groups; neighbourhood watch groups; build relationships with intensive time in the schools to help students with road safety briefings; patrol hot spots and assist with problems such as parking and speeding outside schools and other hot spot areas such as the Gandish road/B1070/Straight road crossroads; and they can help with local house checks if required to assist vulnerable local residents. Their preventative role deterring crime and other unsocial activities, is enabled by a visible and local police presence.

In the case where we are jointly funding (50:50) a PCSO, then the PCSO would spend 50 percent of their time in each village. The times would vary to avoid predictability, but their time, work and locations would be recorded and provided to the clerks on a regular basis so that we could check the 50:50 presence is fairly split.

On very rare occasions the PCSO could be called to help the police with an urgent and very major incident elsewhere, but on these occasions the cost of the PCSO would be credited back to our parishes. We tested that point with both the police and with Thurston Parish Council and concluded that the incidence of this would be very rare. For instance it might be acceptable for a very short time during the immediate response to an incidence such as the murder at Brantham a year ago. On the other hand when Thurston PC were asked if their PCSO could help with crowd control of a Christmas market at Bury St Edmunds it was very easy for them to resist this request.

Naomi Lofthouse explained that when recruiting for a PCSO that she would be looking for a strong character, someone who can work on their own, and can set expectations from the start, and clear in communications with the villages. She would be meeting them once per month. She would be looking for a system to monitor their work and their priorities every month. Anyone appointed would be fully trained by the police, at their expense, before they commenced the role.

Experience of Thurston Parish Council

Thurston is a parish 4 miles to the east of Bury St Edmunds and north of the A14. It has a population of around 3867. In many respects similar to East Bergholt and Brantham as it has a high school, a village hall, sports hall and grounds, 2 pubs, 1 hotel, and an active community.

To quote Thurston Parish Council website

“Policing in Thurston

The policing team is based at Stowmarket Police Station, from where the officers cover a large part of the Mid-Suffolk District. This is the Community Policing Team which is the team

covering Thurston and works with the parish of Thurston and partner agencies in our community to identify and address local concern.

Further information about the local team, updates on policing issues in the local area and details on how to contact Stowmarket SNT can be found by following this

link>> ([https://www.suffolk.police.uk/area/your-](https://www.suffolk.police.uk/area/your-area/suffolk/stowmarket/stowmarket/about-us/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area)

area/suffolk/stowmarket/stowmarket/about-us/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area)

Thurston currently has an agreement with Suffolk Constabulary for a fully funded Police Community Support Officer for a contract of 1 year commencing 1 April 2025.

PCSO 3362 Matthew Brown is the PCSO with dedicated responsibility for covering certain duties within the parish of Thurston.

These duties will cover the following roles:

- Vulnerability and safeguarding: e.g. domestic abuse, victim support, hate and cyber crime, supporting those with additional needs.*

- Community Engagement: e.g. local issues and concerns, schools and youth engagement, speed watch schemes.*

- Demand management: e.g. Mental health, Suffolk family focus, antisocial behaviour, licensing.*

- Crime reduction: e.g. retail crime, rural crime – including shop and farm watch, business crime*

- Specific, appropriate roles in the village as requested by the Parish Council on behalf of the electorate.*

This fully funded PCSO is in addition to the current establishment of local SNTs and help to strengthen not only the teams, but also the partnerships that exist between other organisations and the police. They are deployed to serve the community but also have specific duty to meet the requirements of the partner agency/business.

Should you need to get hold of PCSO 3362 Brown or Stowmarket SNT please call 101 for assistance.”

The Chair and Clerk of Thurston were very generous with their time with us and very enthusiastic about their PCSO. They have had a contract for their own dedicated CPSO since 2011. We established that the cost and terms and conditions applying to a local PCSO would be the same as for Thurston.

They explained that Thurston is not a high crime area, the important feature for them in considering a PCSO and their main expectation was the visibility of a police presence to prevent crime. Their PCSO uses a car, a bike or on foot to patrol the village.

Their PCSO's task list includes: Neighbourhood watch; Business watch; Farm watch; visits to building sites including safety issues and managing the builder's activities; Speed watch. He also flags up issues to the police teams and gets more attention for the village from the police because of his higher profile.

In practice he undertakes a street-a-week awareness schedule; 2 Wednesdays a month he is open for public to call in to talk to him at the PC offices; checks in daily with the Clerk and deputy to raise any issues; does reassurance visits for elderly vulnerable residents; acts as a kind of safeguarding officer; deals with parking issues outside the school;

They have had 5 PCSOs over the 15 years of the contract. They emphasised that it is important that the Clerk builds a relationship with the PCSO and their manager and the PCSO is clear about the needs of the village and the tasks they expect the PCSO to cover.

We asked about any difficulties due to a CPSO not having powers of arrest, but they said this was not a problem as the PCSO was well supported by his police team. They gave us an example where the PCSO had stopped a vehicle speeding, had apprehended and called in their police team to arrest the person speeding. The PCSO is very good at getting experts into the village for local briefings, such as safety officers and regular visits from speed awareness teams as they are in an informed position to raise the profile of local hot-spots to the police teams.

Thurston currently fund the PCSO 50% from CIL and 50% from precept. They are aware that they will need to move the funding all to precept soon.

Their key message to us was “the PC needs to firmly manage the agreement, this ensures the PCSO is visible and doing the right things. It is important that the Clerk and PCSO’s sergeant have a close working relationship to manage the contract well.”

Contract, Cost and Management Arrangements

Key points in the contractual relationship are:

- Suffolk Constabulary employ the PCSO, the PCs buys the services of the PCSO
- The core role is agreed with a T&Cs contract
- They would wish for a 2 year contract to start, with review points. The termination clause is 6 months
- Absences (sickness or otherwise) are not charged, we would only pay for the hours actually worked
- The PCs can be prescriptive about what the PCSO does, as long as the work fits around the shift times or exceptions are planned well in advance.
- Would charge for planned overtime
- We can agree monitoring requirements
- We would need to provide maps of the parish (the working area)

It is expected that in 26/27 the cost of a full-time PCSO is £52330 pa. If a police car is needed to do the work this will cost a further £5000 pa. With a 50:50 split in funding with Brantham parish council this would be a cost each of £26165 pa, plus £2500 if a car is required.

Next Steps

We are waiting for a terms and conditions contract draft from the Suffolk Constabulary to establish the details of the above expectations and costs. I expect that either at April or May’s council meeting we will be in a position with all the relevant information to make a decision on whether to go ahead or not with this proposal.