

Concluding Report on the Step 1 Review of the Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Review

The Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan (RNP), which was made (adopted) in July 2022. The purpose of this review has been to assess whether the Plan remains up to date, effective and compliant with the current national and local planning policy framework, and to identify the scale and nature of any changes required.

This review represents Step 1 of the neighbourhood plan review process: a full, chapter-by-chapter assessment of the existing Plan, with written reports prepared and circulated to councillors in advance of formal consideration. The review has focused on changes to policy context rather than reopening policy objectives unless required by new legislation, guidance or evidence.

2. Overall Findings

The overarching conclusion from the review is that the Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan remains fundamentally sound. Its vision, structure and locally distinctive policy approach continue to be robust, defensible and consistent with national planning policy. The Plan has stood up well to scrutiny despite significant changes in the planning system since 2022.

Across the Plan as a whole:

- Most chapters require only minor updating, primarily to:
 - refresh references to national and local policy;
 - update factual statements to reflect that the Plan is now made;
 - align wording with current planning practice and guidance.
- No chapter has been identified as fundamentally flawed or in need of wholesale replacement.
- The Plan continues to demonstrate strong community support, a clear local evidence base, and a proportionate policy approach appropriate to a rural parish.

3. Chapters Requiring Minor or Straightforward Updates

The review concludes that Chapters 1 to 6 inclusive, and Chapters 9 and 10, fall into the category of relatively simple updates. These chapters generally require:

- Updating references to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) and relevant Planning Practice Guidance;
- Updating references to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, reflecting adoption of Joint Local Plan Part 1 in November 2023 and the current status of the Local Plan review;
- Minor wording changes to improve clarity, accuracy and tense;
- Confirmation that monitoring, delivery and governance arrangements reflect current practice.

Importantly, the policy intent and direction of travel in these chapters remain valid, and the review has not identified the need for new policy themes or significant restructuring. These chapters are therefore well suited to a light-touch update, rather than a full rewrite.

4. Chapter 7 – Housing

Chapter 7 requires the most significant updating of any chapter in the Plan. This reflects the scale of change in national and local housing policy since 2022, including:

- Revised housing targets and distribution following changes to national policy and local plan evidence;
- The adoption of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1;
- Emerging pressures from future local plan reviews and changes to the standard method;
- Updated guidance on housing mix, affordability and rural housing delivery.

While the underlying objectives of Chapter 7 remain appropriate, the review concludes that:

- Policy wording will need to be substantially revised to ensure conformity with current strategic policy;
- The justification and evidence base will need refreshing, including updated demographic and housing-need data;
- Greater clarity is required on the relationship between neighbourhood-level housing policies and district-wide housing strategy.

As a result, Chapter 7 should be treated as a priority workstream within the next stage of the Plan review.

5. Chapter 8 – Environment, Landscape and Heritage

Chapter 8 will require substantial revision, though for different reasons to Chapter 7.

The review confirms that the chapter’s aims—to protect landscape, biodiversity, heritage and local character—remain fully aligned with community priorities and national objectives. However, the policy and regulatory context has evolved significantly since 2022, including:

- The strengthened environmental focus of the NPPF (December 2024);
- The introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain;
- The Environment Act 2021 and the roll-out of Local Nature Recovery Strategies;
- Updated approaches to landscape sensitivity, local green spaces and heritage settings.

While nothing in Chapter 8 is non-compliant, the review identifies a need to:

- Update references and paragraph numbering;
- Strengthen policy wording to reflect statutory requirements and current best practice;
- Clarify monitoring and evidence, including potential re-engagement with the community on certain designations;
- Update sections where circumstances on the ground have changed (for example, recreation spaces).

This chapter will therefore require careful redrafting, but it builds on a strong foundation and does not require a change in overall policy direction.

6. Process and Next Steps

Step 1 of the review process has now been completed:

- All chapters have been reviewed;

- Written assessments have been prepared;
- Reports have been circulated to councillors in advance of consideration.

The next stage will be to determine:

- Whether the Plan proceeds as a light-touch update with focused revisions, or
- Whether specific chapters (notably 7 and 8) are taken forward as more substantial modifications within an otherwise limited review.

This concluding review provides a clear, evidence-based basis for that decision.

7. Conclusion

In summary, the Redgrave Neighbourhood Plan remains a strong and effective document. Most chapters require only modest updating to reflect changes in policy and context. Two chapters—housing and environment—will require more substantial work, but this reflects external policy change rather than shortcomings in the original Plan.

Overall, the review demonstrates that Redgrave Parish Council is well placed to undertake the next stage of plan updating in a proportionate, targeted and examination-ready manner.