

BRAMFORD

PARISH PLAN



and

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

2012

Based on and updating the 2005 Parish Plan and Village Design Statement

BRAMFORD PARISH PLAN

SUMMARY



Bramford Co-op



Paper Mill Lane



The Angel Inn

This Parish Plan is based on and updates the 2005 Bramford Parish Plan. It lists all of the action points and feasibility studies recommended in the earlier plan and shows the action taken and current situation on each. It then lists significant issues that have affected the village since 2005 and makes further recommendations where deemed necessary in the light of recent developments.

Since 2005 there has been no major change in the attitude of the residents of the village. They value the fact that Bramford is a rural community and not a suburb of Ipswich and are keen for that status to remain. Although its proximity to Ipswich and major road transport links are seen to be advantageous, being part of the Suffolk countryside is equally important. It is recognised that development will occur in the village, but to maintain the character it is imperative that it should be sympathetic to the existing setting. New housing should maximise the use of infill and brownfield sites before encroaching on fresh land.

Wherever possible these views have been documented within the body of this report and the new recommendations are made with this in mind.

Bramford village is due to be encircled by major construction and infrastructure works in the next few years: the Energy from Waste Plant and Snoasis to the north, the Offshore Wind Farm Converter Station to the west, Fisons redevelopment to the east, and the Bramford to Twinstead electricity infrastructure works to the south. Developments of this magnitude are significant in terms of the size of the village, its identity and traffic movements in the short and long term.

Bramford will make the best of the situation by seeking Community Infrastructure Levy funding to be used for projects to minimise the effects of the developments on the amenity of the village, by traffic management, and by improvements to the Green Infrastructure including the water meadows so as to enhance the green corridor between Bramford and Ipswich. We will also take advantage of opportunities in the new Planning system for establishing Local Green Spaces to safeguard the village identity. Conservation Area status will be sought for parts of the village. For more details, see pages 7, 16 and 24 of this document.

A PROFILE OF BRAMFORD



Methodist Chapel



Lawn Cemetery



St Mary the Virgin Church

The parish of Bramford lies just within the southern boundary of the area administered by Mid Suffolk District Council and is bordered on the eastern side by the A14 and Ipswich and Ipswich Borough Council.

Bramford village, the outlying hamlet Bramford Tye and some scattered dwellings and farms to the west comprise approximately 1050 houses. The main village is located at the east of the parish, straddling the River Gipping and the railway line connecting Norwich to London.

The land to the south and west is mainly arable farmland with some ancient woods. There are also traditional grazing lands and water meadows beside the river. Archaeological sites exist around the village from Roman, Anglo- Saxon and medieval eras. Some medieval housing remains, but most of the development took place in the second half of the 20th century.

The village has various shops, a post office, a primary school and a public house, but there is little local employment. Bramford has many social and sporting organizations and recreational facilities.

There is a bypass to the village, the B1113, but Bramford is not an isolated rural community. It is fiercely proud of its village identity and has a desire to remain separate from both Ipswich and Sproughton. The expanse of the valley, the natural features of the river and the man-made features of the railway and the A14 keep Bramford physically separated from Ipswich.

In 1568, a comprehensive Survey of Bramford was completed for tax purposes and included the land, housing, other buildings and sources of wealth. The village boundaries are not much changed and 12 of the 23 houses, which then stood in the core of the village, still remain today.

THE PURPOSE OF A PARISH PLAN



Fitzgerald Road

The objectives of a Parish Plan are to:

- consider social, environmental and economic issues including the provision of services and amenities for residents, businesses and organisations;
- identify those amenities, facilities and services that need particularly to be safeguarded or improved for the future;
- define any shortcomings within the village environment that need to be addressed and tackled;
- indicate how the continuance of the distinctive character of the parish and its valued local features can be assured for the benefit of future generations;
- formulate the quality and design standards that any new development should meet and how it might be accommodated within the village;
- present a vision, together with the Village Design Statement, of Bramford's future.



Fisons

The 2005 plan gave the residents of Bramford the chance to say what they liked about the village, what they wanted to improve and what they saw as local issues. The findings were then recorded in a way that is recognised by Local Authorities. This updated version builds upon those original findings and takes into account changes over the intervening 7 years.

BACKGROUND



ByPass Nurseries Site

In November 2000 the Government published a White Paper that launched the concept of Parish Plans. Bramford Parish Council could see clear benefits to having a Parish Plan that could link with the work of District and County Councils but understood that the Plan would have to come from the residents if it was to have credibility. The 2005 plan was based entirely upon the recorded views of residents' answers to a questionnaire. Since then many of the action points have been dealt with and this plan reflects the latest position of those. It also brings up to date the views of parishioners based upon responses to public meetings and other contact. The latest planning requirements are now referred to in the Village Design Statement as is the recent acquisition of the water meadows from Suffolk County Council.

UPDATE ON ACTION TAKEN SINCE PUBLICATION OF THE 2005 PARISH PLAN

Following acceptance and publication of the 2005 Parish Plan, an action group was set up to implement the actions and feasibility studies recommended. This group consisted of volunteers from the village and included two Parish Councillors to provide liaison with the Parish Council. The following table shows the current situation:

Action plan	Action taken	Future action
A1. Set up a Parish Plan Guardianship Team (the Action Group) to advance the planned Projects into active status.	An action group was set up and its function is now managed by the Bramford Community Group which is a working party of the Parish Council.	Continuing
A2. Endorse the Village Design Statement.	Adopted in full.	2012 revision to be approved
A3. Improve pedestrian road crossing facilities in the village.	Zebra crossing in The Street not permissible, but a road narrowing next to the Coop has been constructed.	Completed
A4. Launch a Youth Club.	A meeting was advertised and held to promote the concept and to seek volunteers. Nobody turned up, showed any interest or desire to help. Village Scouts and Guides continue to get financial support from the Parish Council. A BMX track has also been installed recently.	Completed
A5. Organise a Village Activity Day ("The Bramford Show").	This has taken place three times, but has probably outlived its usefulness. Plans underway for the Diamond Jubilee celebration.	Review annually
A6. Publish a Bramford Directory of local businesses and organisations, including Sports and Social clubs, educational opportunities etc.	Completed in 2006 and revised copy issued in 2010 and included on Parish Council website. A page on this site is also offered to businesses free of charge.	Consider update in 2014
A7. Conduct an anti-litter campaign.	Some possibilities explored, but no action to date.	On-going
A8. Organise a Village Centre Redesign competition.	Competition considered inappropriate.	Review
A9.(a) Build a cycle path between Bramford and Claydon. A9 (b) Encourage the building of cycle path to Ipswich.	Look at possibility of crossing the meadows between Bushman's Bridge and Fisons. Sustrans consulted. River path to Sproughton too narrow. May consider cycle path along B1113.	Monitor Fisons development Review – on-going
A10. Purchase Gippingstone Road Public Car Park.	Purchased for £10,000 in 2006.	Completed
A11. Set up a Bramford Security Liaison Group.	Encourage Neighbourhood Watch schemes.	On-going
A12. Improve delivery of Community Newsletter.	Parish Council asked to investigate.	Review
A13. Establish a Business Mutual Interest Group.	Currently working on web site pages for local businesses.	On-going

A14. Utilise Bramford School buildings for sporting and/or educational activities out of school hours.	Now available for hire.	Completed
A15. Recommend planting of tree screen to reduce impact of the Agilent building on the village horizon.	Investigation proved that this is not a feasible solution.	Completed
A16. Recommend steps to improve awareness of Parish Council and its activities.	Parish Council won "Quality status" in 2009. This includes rigorous tests for informing the public. New improved website started early 2012.	On-going
A17. Recommend the appointment of a voluntary Village Conservation Officer.	Company being formed to manage the water meadows may also have responsibility for other green spaces in the village.	Review
A18. Erect "Welcome to Bramford" roadside signs.	Not considered to be appropriate.	Completed
A19. Organise a voluntary car pool.	No interest shown.	Completed
A20. Request bus routing along Paper Mill Lane.	This was planned under the former development proposals for Fisons, but the site has since been sold. To be put to any new developer.	On-going
A21. Set up a Credit Union.	A meeting was advertised and held to promote the concept and to seek volunteers. No interest shown.	Completed
A22. Set up a Time Bank.	A meeting was advertised and held to promote the concept and to seek volunteers. No interest shown.	Completed



Water Meadows

FEASIBILITY STUDIES

Project	Action taken	Future action
B1. Review of traffic issues including speeding through the village, abuse of weight restrictions, parking in The Street and school drop-off and pick up.	Parish Council fed into meetings the need to reduce noise from the A14. This has now been done. The school now has a travel plan to discourage the use of cars.	On-going
B2. Create a Long Term Traffic Plan.	Under review.	Obtain information from Suffolk Highways
B3. Conduct an investigation into the possibility of a new build Community Centre.	Renovation of Victory Hall was considered to be the most feasible solution. This was completed in 2007.	Completed
B4. Feasibility Study into provision of Health Services in the village.	No action taken. There is currently a proposal to build a health centre on southern edge of Gt. Blakenham.	Completed
B5. Conduct study to develop better liaison between the Parish, District and other councils with regard to planning issues.	This has been tried, but with limited success owing to what each council sees as it own needs. Ad hoc meetings held when issues demand. e.g. Waste tip closure. Covered by Parish Council's quality status.	Completed
B6. Review of Small Businesses in Bramford.	Approach the Suffolk Development Agency (SDA) to consider opportunities to improve business in Bramford. The SDA's objectives are to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract new business investment and re-investment • Build a world class workforce in a learning county • Improve communications • Improve business performance • Strengthen the economy of the rural areas. 	Liaise with SDA as plans for businesses at Fisons develop



Allotments

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AFFECTING BRAMFORD SINCE 2005

Issues arising since 2005	Recommendations for future action
<p>Energy from Waste: The main concern relating to this major development is traffic generation in the area, especially if combined with SnOasis. The finished development will be visible from many parts of the village. There was no strongly expressed public opinion regarding emissions.</p> <p>SnOasis: The planning permission remains valid although the development has stalled. In fighting the plans for the SnOasis development, the Parish Council donated several thousand pounds into a fighting fund to pay for litigation. Bearing in mind the Council's quality status, any future funding of this kind should be subject to more public scrutiny by referendum or public meeting.</p> <p>Offshore Wind Farm Converter Station: An onshore converter station is required at Bramford to convert the electricity to a form which is suitable for transmission to the National Grid. The three converter station buildings will each be housed in a fenced compound expected to measure 145x180metres and up to 25 metres high. Design and colours are yet to be decided. It is proposed that all cabling to the converters will be underground.</p> <p>Bramford to Twinstead Tee: these major infrastructure works are likely to cause traffic disruption.</p>	<p>As a consequence of these developments, there will be adverse effects on visual amenity, tranquillity and quality of life for Bramford residents as well as increased traffic generation affecting the village.</p> <p>The Community Infrastructure Levy will allow MSDC to raise funds from the owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area. The neighbourhoods affected by the development are to be given control over a meaningful proportion of the funds raised.</p> <p>Bramford will apply the available funds to projects aimed at mitigating visible damage to our landscape from developments, and compensatory enhancement of the amenities of the village. We will press for a coordinated Traffic Plan taking into account the combined effects of the developments on the traffic circulation in and alongside the village.</p> <p>Details of schemes will be assembled when appropriate information becomes available.</p>
<p>Fisons development: In March 2012 developers held a public exhibition of their proposals for the brownfield site with its grade 2 listed buildings. The main concern voiced by those attending was the need to control traffic along Paper Mill Lane and concern that any new buildings should not be too overpowering. This mirrors concerns voiced at a public meeting held at the time of the last proposed development.</p> <p>Landmark House: (Formerly the Agilent building, see recommendation A.15). The Parish Council raised strong objection to proposals from Ipswich Borough Council (IBC) to add a further floor to the height of the building. IBC admitted that the siting of the original building might have been a mistake, but nevertheless approved the extension. The building has since been taken over by Suffolk County Council (SCC) and there are currently no plans for an additional floor.</p>	<p>Bramford Parish Council has made a constructive response to the Fisons application and intends to take advantage of all opportunities for consultation. We are particularly concerned about traffic issues and the impact on the watermeadows. We hope to cooperate with the developers of the site in the enhancement of the water meadows which will link their site to the water meadows now purchased by Bramford (see P24), and we will consider seeking funding for a cycle path and pedestrian link across the water meadows between the old village and the Fisons development. Such a project would be in line with the Haven Gateway proposals for Green Infrastructure in our area.</p> <p>Bramford requires to be fully consulted on any future schemes by neighbouring authorities which may impact on our village.</p>
<p>Unitary Suffolk: The 2005 plan stated that villagers were keen to remain separate from Ipswich. The desire of Ipswich to expand was made clear during the campaign for a unitary Suffolk. The coalition Government dropped the idea of unitary councils, but there is no reason to believe that the sentiments of IBC have changed.</p> <p>Land bids: At MSDC's exhibition on Land Bids, strong local opinion was recorded against the use of land along Fitzgerald Road for building. The Parish Council objected to a number of Land Bids on the grounds that they would join the village too closely to Ipswich or Sproughton. Although the process was suspended temporarily by MSDC while Stowmarket was given priority, the consideration of site allocations will resume as the revision of the Local Plan continues.</p>	<p>Bramford villagers will resist any attempt to merge with Ipswich or to change the nature of village.</p> <p>In accordance with the new National Planning Policy Framework, we request that MSDC designate three Local Green Spaces in Bramford when revising their Local Plan. These areas are demonstrably special to the local community and have amenity value, recreational value and are rich in wildlife. Two of them also incorporate public rights of way and access, and two form a buffer against encroachment of Ipswich or coalescence with the nearest village. The three sites are the old Bypass Nurseries, the fields incorporating a public footpath to the south of Fitzgerald Road, and the water meadows alongside the river, which can together form part of the Green Corridor around Ipswich.</p>
<p>Water meadows: SCC made the unilateral decision to close the Local Nature Reserve and picnic site. Bearing in mind the expressed desire of over 80% of parishioners to keep the meadows, a public meeting was held. A good attendance voted in favour of the Parish Council taking over the meadows even at cost to local ratepayers.</p>	<p>Having acquired the water meadows, Bramford will continue to plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of our Green Infrastructure and valued landscape with the benefit of promoting healthy communities. We will seek to obtain Community Infrastructure Levy funding for appropriate projects.</p>
<p>Allotments: These are a valuable asset to the village and have been much improved since 2005.</p>	<p>If Bypass Nurseries becomes available for purchase, consider using Community Infrastructure Levy funds for additional allotments here.</p>
<p>Cemetery: This has been visually improved and is currently being expanded.</p>	<p>Ensure that the upgraded quality is maintained across the whole cemetery.</p>
<p>Angel Inn: Closed as a public house in 2011.</p>	<p>Involve the community in support of local businesses.</p>

The Bramford Community Group will continue to monitor the implementation of outstanding recommendations from the 2005 Parish Plan and the 2012 revision.

BRAMFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



This Village Design Statement describes the visual character and qualities of Bramford within its landscape setting, and discusses how to achieve the aims of preserving, regenerating or enhancing the distinctive features and character of the village.



Bramford lies close to Ipswich, with easy access to the A14 trunk road that links the port of Felixstowe to Cambridge and the Midlands. Bramford is comparatively well provided with services all of which makes it attractive to prospective developers.

The size, appearance and density of any new development in Bramford will affect the character and appearance of the village, and could change the interaction between shapes and spaces, enclosure and openness, scale, settlement patterns, and views into and out of the village, and could affect local distinctiveness.

Bramford's special landscape and heritage, the built environment and the housing, all affect the appearance of the village. This document contains recommendations for design standards, which aim to ensure that any new development would be carried out in such a way as to achieve harmony of buildings, settlement and landscape.

As well as the threat from residential development, there may also be commercial, agricultural or industrial development in the village. Even small incremental changes by householders can affect the street scene.

Any change can be for better or for worse, and is difficult if not impossible to reverse.

What we do now has to be either endured or enjoyed by future generations, and so this Design Statement is relevant to

- every householder and property owner in the parish
- the Local Planning Authority and its officers
- the providers of local services and facilities
- developers, builders, architects, engineers, designers
- the Parish Council and other local community groups.



The two guiding principles of all the "Recommendations" in this Village Design Statement are that: -

1. the landscape, settlement and buildings in Bramford should be in harmony and typical of a Suffolk village in our century;
2. Bramford should not come to look like a suburb of Ipswich.

The village is in three distinct parts, each with its own character: -

Bramford village core, (photographed below), the oldest part, concealing newer residential developments;
The Paper Mill Lane Area, mixed residential, agricultural and industrial;
Bramford Tye, a rural hamlet.

THE VISUAL CHARACTER AND QUALITIES OF BRAMFORD WITHIN ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING



A river flows through the village



Open spaces within the village



Open countryside views from and to the village



A "backbone" of medieval houses remains on The Street

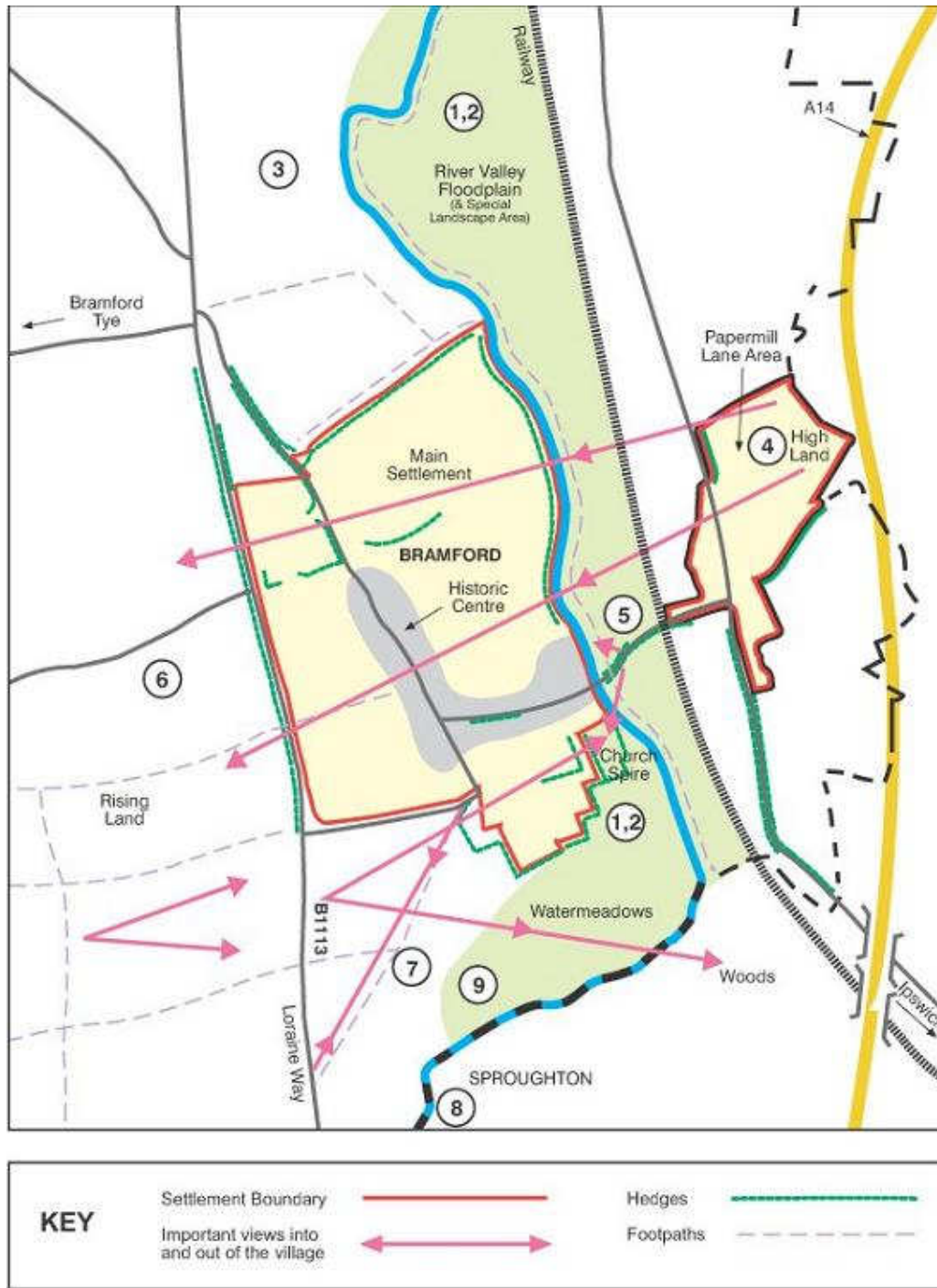


Traditional landscape features:
fields and water meadows



A long established network of roads and lanes, some without pavements, and many footpaths inviting us to explore the wider countryside

LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF THE VILLAGE



LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF THE VILLAGE

Landscape is often valued for its beauty, but even when it is not especially beautiful, it is important as a pleasant environment, and valuable as a habitat for wildlife. Bramford's rural landscape sets it apart as a village, separate and distinct from the nearby town of Ipswich. The rural landscape in Bramford provides people with a sense of identity, well-being, release and inspiration.

1. The geography of the parish is dominated by the broad river valley including the flood plain and the water meadows of the River Gipping. Arable land rises to the west and east extremities.
2. Local Nature Reserves and Special Landscape Areas along the floodplain of the river valley provide a sense of openness and unspoilt nature along a wide stretch of land north to south within the village. They also form a habitat for protected species of flora and fauna.
3. Recycling of the landscape has created a water park from reclaimed gravel pits, resulting in an artificially landscaped northerly approach at the outskirts of Bramford. Loraine Way, the B1113, obscures the view into the village from the north.
4. From high ground on the east, there are views over the settlement, the river valley, and the fields beyond. These are also glimpsed fleetingly from the A14, travelling south.
5. From the river bridge, the visual dominance of the river, the Church and the historic buildings can be appreciated.
6. The west of the main built-up area is fenced or hedged with no view into the village, although the higher ground further west provides a panorama of the village, dominated by the Church, with the southern edge of the village partly concealed by mature native hedging. Ancient woodlands to the far west make a significant contribution to the appearance and character of the landscape outside the built-up area, and also contribute to the rural ambience and tranquil setting of Bramford Tye.
7. The south of the village has a close relationship to open countryside. Significant views into the village of Bramford can be enjoyed from a well-used public footpath that crosses the south field diagonally.
8. Open fields separate Bramford from villages to the north, west and south. The closest village is Sproughton, half a mile to the south.
9. The Countryside Stewardship Area to the south of the village allows enjoyment of the water meadows, hedges, and church spire, and the wide open view into the village.
10. Visually Important Open Spaces of varying sizes and uneven spacing provide a sense of space within the village, and give variation and relief to the built-up areas.

The village ambience of Bramford derives from the views into and out of the village, the sense of enclosure by trees and native hedgerows within and surrounding the village, the rural setting, the open southerly approach, the river flowing through the village, the designated Visually Important Open Spaces, the County Wildlife Site, the Special Landscape Area, the Local Nature Reserve, and the ancient woodlands and the network of footpaths which are hundreds of years old.

ECOLOGY

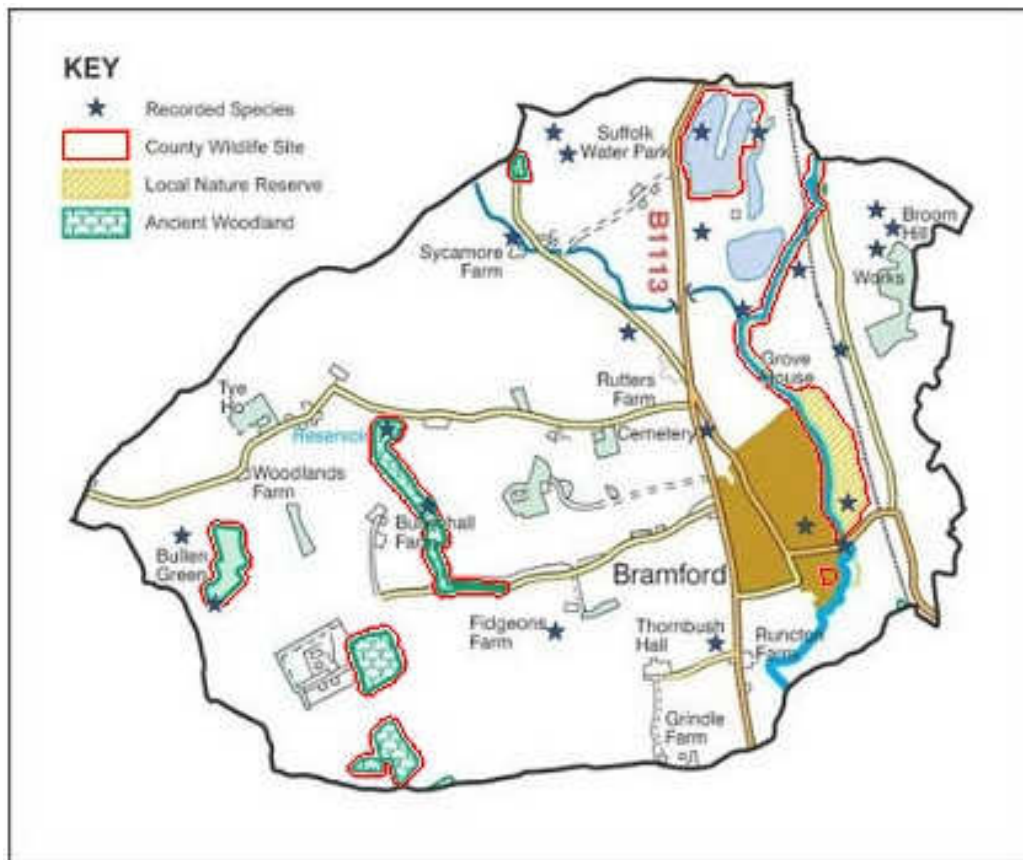
The Parish of Bramford consists of a range of ecologically important habitats. The northern meadows are a designated Local Nature Reserve, and several sections of the River Gipping are of considerable conservation value. The river valley is a Special Landscape Area with hedgerows, dykes and associated flora and fauna. Regionally important County Wildlife Sites and habitats include the ancient woods, river, grazing marsh, meadows, Water Park, and the churchyard. Protected species such as bats and great crested newts are found in Bramford, as well as water voles, otters, damselflies, stag beetles, slow worms, and skylarks, and there is a concentration and wide variety of wild bird life in the hedgerows and meadows in the south of the village.



View of the Church from the river



View of the settlement from the south



HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF LAND USE

Bramford is rich in archaeological sites, with remains from the Bronze Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval eras. A settlement grew up in Bramford in prehistoric times because of its location in the river valley, but it was the Romans who influenced the size and shaping of the village by constructing the Roman road (now the B1113) which sandwiches the main part of the village between the road and the river.

The village was wealthy in Tudor times, and locally grown timber gave rise to the construction of the timber frame houses at the core of the ancient village centre remaining today. Clay was extracted locally to produce bricks and tiles, and lime was produced in Bramford for use in rendering and mortar. Flint was found on the chalk to the west of the village, and was used in construction of the Church and some other buildings in the village. Building materials used historically in Bramford were available from the land. The use of local materials produces a building that sits well in the landscape.



Church Green



Brick and flint

In the last years of the twentieth century, the imposition of an industrial/office building overlooking Bramford from high land within Ipswich focused concern on how the use of land could threaten the character and appearance of the village.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built-up area of Bramford is mainly concentrated in the south east corner of the parish, and is a compact settlement which developed from the linear plan of The Street, and spread sideways with 20th century development. It is still constrained by the B1113 on the west and the River Gipping on the east. On the west bank of the river, the old core of the village runs north to south. Bramford also includes the smaller settlement in the Paper Mill Lane area on the east bank of the river, and the hamlet of Bramford Tye on the rising land to the west.

In the centre of the village, at the junction of The Street and Gippingstone Road, there is a poor quality open space which offers significant opportunities for upgrading. On high land to the west of the village, there is large electricity substation with pylons and overhead cables which dominate the skyline and continue down the river valley.



Most of the agricultural buildings and scattered farms are located to the west of the main settlement, across the B1113 bypass. Bramford's industrial area is to the north east near the A14 and includes a fairly well concealed landfill site. The largest Listed industrial building in Suffolk is the former Fisons warehouse on Paper Mill Lane.

EXISTING HOUSING

Bramford is notable for its mix of houses of different sizes, ages and values, on varying plot sizes, catering for a range of family sizes, ages and incomes.

The village has approximately 1050 houses, most of which were built in the second half of the twentieth century, when the village expanded rapidly. The essential character of the village is defined by the late medieval and Victorian houses in the village core. Twelve of the 23 medieval houses remain around The Street and the Church, and there are 29 Listed houses in Bramford.

The Street is a linear development, with most of the houses fronting the pavement. Roof pitches are generally steep, but varied, as the frontages include Victorian terraced houses, medieval one-and-a half storey buildings with dormer windows, and the imposing former Angel Inn with its symmetrical frontage. There are jettied frontages, large tall chimneys, and only a few gables facing The Street. Rendered walls are painted in soft pale or earth colours. Black plinths and matchboarded doors are unifying features of the medieval and Victorian houses. Most of the older houses abut each other on The Street.



Most of the older houses, including those on Church Green and Mill Lane, rely on their beautiful proportions, their orientation and spacing to provide a harmonious visual effect, rather than relying on ornamental features. Because of their proportions, these houses have a vertical emphasis that draws the eye upwards to appreciate the steep roofs, the roof shapes, and the chimneys.

The Victorian terraced houses established uniformity and a modest scale with narrow frontages.

By contrast, the estates built between the 1960s and 1980s have filled the shape of the land allocations available to them, producing a compartmentalised effect. The bungalows have a horizontal emphasis in the rooflines, proportions, and glazing, which draws the eye along rather than upwards.

There are also several larger individual properties standing in larger grounds, some with more formal architecture, which give relief to the generally compact layout of the village.

The newest development at Gippingstone Road avoids rigid layouts and car domination, and shows an appreciation of the visual importance of spaces between buildings, orientation, scale, compatibility with surroundings, and key design elements appropriate to Bramford. Unfortunately, this effect has not been achieved with the Housing Association properties on the same site, which lack a "sense of place".

Two of the mid-to late 20th century developments incorporate central greens that provide punctuation and contrast to the housing, as well as a reference to the countryside beyond the village boundaries.

The Paper Mill Lane area consists of groups of Victorian terraced houses and a piecemeal development of houses of varying sizes on land rising to the east.

Housing at Bramford Tye consists mainly of barns and farms, with a few large individual houses.

Away from the built-up area, there are Listed farms, scattered houses and agricultural dwellings.

THE VILLAGE ROADS

The village is bypassed by the B1113 on the west. The approach from the north west is via winding, hedge-lined roads. The approach from the north east is via a relatively narrow road with a bottleneck on Paper Mill Lane, leading to a straight stretch of road, its width constrained by parked cars. From Ipswich on the east, the approach road passes below the stark concrete bridge carrying the A14 and under a canopy of trees, then meets the access from Paper Mill Lane and sweeps round under the hard angular form of the railway bridge before revealing views of the river, the Church, and the old village houses. Approaching Bramford from the bypass on the south, there is a contrasting and distinctive, long open view towards the village, and this openness gives the southern approach a distinctively pastoral appearance.

The traffic flow in the village is restricted by limited access to the bypass to the west. The residential roads feed into the main Street.

ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE VILLAGE

Bramford contains many beautiful and historic buildings as well as some very pleasant street scenes, some incorporating riverside views. However, because of the urban nature of the pavings and street lighting and parking arrangements, the eye is not drawn to these characteristics of the village, and the unsympathetic urban style of the street furniture positively detracts from the village setting. We have a duty to future generations to ensure that the character of the village is not lost.

If the special characteristics were emphasised by environmental improvements, this would reveal the best parts of the village. These improvements would include traffic management, parking arrangements, landscaping, upgrading of buildings, better design and siting of signs and lighting, the choice of appropriate road surfacing materials, the use of well designed street furniture and the removal of overhead cables.

Conservation Area status is anticipated for parts of The Street and Ship Lane, Mill Lane, and Church Green and Vicarage Lane. This status should bring environmental improvements including better street lighting and higher quality pavings in The Street. A meeting or resting area for villagers could be formed by installing seats and improving pavings in the two large tarmac areas on The Street, near the Co-op and the fish shop.



River bridge: ugly balustrading and wall, lighting, and pavings

The anticipated Conservation Area includes Church Green and Mill Lane and part of Ship Lane. The countryside area within the village could also be made into a more attractive feature, enhancing the village identity. The approach to the riverside area, with its picnic site and walks, could be improved by refurbishing the bridge wall and installing improved balustrading and pleasant street lighting at the bridge, repainting tubular metal fencing near the railway bridge, and repairing broken timber fencing.

TRADITIONAL VILLAGE FEATURES IN BRAMFORD

Certain individual buildings and groups of buildings in Bramford have a “village feel”. The building features that form the village architecture can be preserved if owners come to appreciate their visual value, which could be enhanced by expenditure on environmental improvements. The relevance of the features to the distinctiveness of Bramford can be enhanced if they are selectively replicated in new developments in order to provide a more cohesive village style and avoid urban sprawl, creeping suburbanisation, or anonymous styles that do not distinguish Bramford as a Suffolk village.

Bramford shows traditional Suffolk village features and also some special distinctive features of its own:



The photo of Mill Lane from the river bank shows interesting configurations of roof lines and house shapes



The Street: roof profiles, tiles, steep pitched roofs, contrasts of shape, play of light and shade



Bargeboards, overhangs, large chimneys, one-and-a-half storeys with dormers, strong colours for highlighting timbers



Smooth render, soft colours, dark plinths, vertical boarded doors, varied roof formations and building shapes



Black weatherboarding to garages, interesting landscaping and parking arrangements



Flint, brick arches, varied frontages and variety of roof pitches

TRADITIONAL VILLAGE FEATURES continued



Modern interpretation of traditional village architecture, with overhanging upper storey, and gable details



Varied road surfaces, and road layouts inviting exploration



Affordable Housing in Bramford: good quality easy to maintain construction, but lacking a "sense of place", and showing no traditional Bramford features. These houses bear no relation to Bramford village architecture



St Mary's Close, where open spaces and greens form part of the ambience of the development



An individual and beautiful building



Piers and cappings are a strong village feature



Contrasting bricks, formal architectural details, arches and overhanging roof giving contrast of light and shade



Vertical emphasis of fenestration, arches, painted brickwork, black painted plinths

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Bramford beyond the settlement boundary is defined as the countryside for planning purposes by Mid Suffolk District Council, but planning policies for villages apply within its settlement boundary. Yet Bramford is also a Key Service Centre (a hub for outlying villages), and it is part of the Ipswich Policy Area, an identified growth point for housing and jobs.

The challenge for the future of Bramford is to balance the environmental, social and economic aspects of development with the need to protect the identity of Bramford and its benefits, and make it a more pleasant place to live.

Special features of Bramford should be taken into account in development proposals: the physical confines of the village, its vulnerability to flooding, its situation as a village close to the county town, and the opportunities for countryside recreation that it offers.

Changes to the landscape and the built environment – housing, extensions, commercial and industrial buildings and the appearance of streets – should be carefully considered and well designed so as to provide maximum benefit to the well-being of people who live in Bramford now and in the future.

BRAMFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS

LANDSCAPE

Every proposal that requires Planning Permission must seek to ensure that the essential character of the landscape of Bramford is retained and that any development should enhance the village for future generations.

To preserve visual amenity, the landscape and the distinctiveness and separation of Bramford, future development should respect and not compromise: -

- the views into and out of the village (see plan on page 11)
- the sense of enclosure that derives from the trees and hedgerows within and surrounding the village
- the rural setting – particularly where this is designated Visually Important Open Space or a Special Landscape Area
- the soft boundary between the settlement and existing agricultural land.

Development proposals should aim to enhance their setting through: -

- the use of native species in appropriate planting schemes
- the incorporation of suitable boundary treatments such as native hedging
- improvements to the local ecology (see page 13 and below).

To improve the local ecology, individual landowners and developers are encouraged to seek advice from MSDC on how to attract wildlife onto land and how to protect existing habitats and species. This can be achieved by creating ponds, grassland and woodland connected by mature hedges and ditches and native trees. The Suffolk Biological Records Centre should also be consulted, as it holds information on protected species in Bramford.

The rural ambience and character of Bramford Tye should be protected from intrusive development.

RECOMMENDATIONS continued

NEW DWELLINGS

To redress the balance in favour of good design in the village: -

- developers should give careful consideration to the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas while still current, and the Manual for Streets, supplemented by design guidance from MSDC to reflect local distinctiveness
- the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application should demonstrate how these documents, and this Village Design Statement, have been considered in the proposals.

To promote the village identity and avoid Bramford coming to look like a suburb of Ipswich: -

- there should not be reliance on standard house types or materials that do not reflect the traditional buildings of Mid Suffolk.

To produce buildings that enhance the village: -

- developers should use high quality imaginative and sympathetic designs, respecting and reproducing the proportions of traditional village architecture
- developers should not rely on pastiche or the incorporation or addition of inappropriate architectural features in an attempt to achieve character or individuality.

To achieve harmony with the traditional buildings in the village: -

- designers should reproduce the proportions, the variations in building shapes (simple rectangular forms extended by side or rear wings), the varying roof formations, pitches and heights, and the typical building details to be observed in the traditional village architecture of Bramford.

To achieve the aim of Bramford looking like a typical Suffolk village: -

- external facing and roofing materials should be of a high quality and respect the vernacular types of materials that prevail within the village. Large chimneys, clay tiles (plain or pantiles) with steep roof pitches, and colourwashed rendered walls in colours traditional to Mid Suffolk are typical features of the village architecture, as are black painted plinths
- these traditional features produce a visual effect which is preferable to the hard, angular effect and brighter colour of massed brickwork.

To achieve a “sense of place”, with the landscape, settlement and buildings in harmony: -

- house designs should be based on an understanding of each site in Bramford and its surroundings, with special attention given to the design of properties on corner plots and other prominent sites
- new buildings should be envisaged as part of the village scene and not as shapes drawn on an extract of a map.

To make effective use of space and to assimilate new buildings in the village: -

- the relationships between buildings and the use of spaces between the buildings are to be carefully considered
- designs should incorporate an ever changing pattern of small and large spaces, enclosure and openness, colours and textures of materials, play of light and shade, extent of planting, and size and spacing of buildings, which will produce character and ambience.

To avoid problems of unneighbourly, dominant, subservient and inharmonious design: -

- the scale of new buildings should be judged against existing buildings and the space around them
- designs should complement the surrounding buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS continued

To balance the density of developments: -

- on sites of an appropriate size, there should be a mix of house types, sizes and affordability with densities appropriate to a village, and recreational open space and amenity areas should be provided
- proposals for predominantly small dwellings should incorporate compensatory open space such as landscaped squares or greens.

To enhance the village identity and improve driver behaviour and pedestrian safety: -

- street design in Bramford should have two functions: to allow the movement of the full range of users, and to create places of local distinctiveness with visual interest and amenity, incorporating views and focal points to produce a sense of place and to encourage walking and social interaction
- design considerations for new developments include a layout incorporating natural surveillance for safety, and a well connected network which does not disrupt the existing movement framework of an area
- pedestrian linkages to local facilities should be pleasant in appearance, well lit and overlooked.

To protect visual and residential amenity and avoid an urban appearance: -

- varied traditional paving materials should be used in preference to uniform tarmac or asphalt, and impermeable surfaces should be minimised to reduce the risk of surface flooding. Street furniture should provide amenity but avoid clutter, and should not be an impediment. Street lighting should be of an appropriate style for a village, avoiding light pollution
- to avoid dominance of vehicles, parking facilities for new developments should be adequate for modern needs, and parking of vehicles should be arranged in small groups
- well designed garages should be used to provide relief to two-storey massing and to vary the roofscape.

To preserve Bramford's environment and visual amenity: -

- new developments must give high priority to landscape design, incorporating wherever possible the use of native species of trees and other planting
- landscaping of rear boundaries facing the countryside is especially important as it is necessary to ensure that existing and new development sits well in its landscape setting
- native hedging is preferable to fencing in proximity to open countryside, as hedging maintains the sense of the village merging into farmland
- landscaping schemes must be fully implemented before the site is handed over.

To preserve and promote interest in the village heritage and archaeology: -

- efforts should be made to avoid similar mistakes to those of the 20th century, when many of Bramford's buried archaeological remains as well as the park landscape were obliterated by housing, the road network, and mineral extraction. All reasonable efforts should be made to retain or record our remaining archaeological features for future generations
- the character of the listed buildings and their settings in the village should be protected or enhanced in the context of new development
- the remaining historic buildings and water meadows, ancient woodlands and transport routes such as the river and footpaths network contribute significantly to Bramford's distinctiveness, and the conversion to new uses of any historic buildings such as the listed former Fisons factory or Angel Inn is an opportunity for good design to allow the remaining heritage to contribute to the vitality of the village while retaining the character of the buildings. The unique Fisons site offers an opportunity for imaginative and innovative design in the new housing which should complement the listed building.

RECOMMENDATIONS continued

To conserve energy and resources: -

- design can make a positive contribution to energy and resource conservation by the orientation of buildings, the use of highly insulating materials, and the incorporation of materials manufactured as locally as possible
- schemes for the adaptation of buildings for reuse, as at Rushbrook Mill, are encouraged as they conserve the energy and materials already used in creating the original building.

To preserve visual and residential amenity, and promote sustainability: -

- Affordable Housing developments must be subject to exactly the same requirements for design and landscaping as will apply to private housing developments, and affordable housing should be dispersed within mixed developments to produce variety rather than uniformity.

EXISTING DOMESTIC BUILDINGS: ALTERATIONS, EXTENSIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The publication "Planning – a guide for householders" is available from Mid Suffolk District Council. Householders and builders are advised to refer to the document when considering future maintenance, alteration and extension works. The Council can advise on Planning, Listed buildings, Tree Preservation Orders, wildlife protection and Building Regulations.

Doors and windows: they form the "face" of a building, and can make a house look pleasant and well-balanced or odd and ugly. A certain proportion of the window area must be openable for ventilation and safety. The most pleasing proportions for windows are achieved by dividing window panes into equal sizes. Window styles should not be mixed on one elevation of a house. The appearance and style of replacement doors should be in keeping with the proportions, age and architectural style of the house, and in keeping with the immediate neighbourhood.

Porches, extensions and conservatories: Permitted development rules have made planning permission unnecessary for porches, extensions and conservatories which fit within certain dimensions, take up less than a certain proportion of the site, and are suitably located. Householders are encouraged to consider the impact of the porch, extension or conservatory on the original building, the living conditions of neighbours, the character and appearance of the immediate street scene, and the area as a whole, to avoid overdevelopment, harm to nearby listed buildings, or adverse consequences for road safety.

Front boundaries: the treatment of front boundaries depends on the type of property. The covenants which prohibited front boundary walls, fences and hedges on the open plan estates have established a spacious, light, unenclosed ambience favourable to small plots. Trees can overshadow bungalows and small front gardens. In the built-up parts of Bramford, brick boundary walls are a common feature, and are attractive if maintained. In the more rural parts and on the edge of the village, native species hedges provide a softer effect than walls, they can enhance the village identity and are very valuable in encouraging wildlife, but require maintenance.

Rear and side boundaries: there is a height limit generally in force for fences and walls. Native species hedges are preferable to conifers, which can soon grow out of control, look oppressive and alien in our landscape, cast long shadows, and annoy the neighbours.

RECOMMENDATIONS continued

Parking, drives and hardstandings: the village estates were laid out in anticipation of relatively few cars per household, and now appear car-dominated. Vehicles are now parked on driveways, roads, footpaths, and on front gardens and grass verges. If front garden areas over 5 square metres are to be paved over without planning permission, permeable paving must now be used, such as gravel, permeable pavements or other pavings which allow rainwater to seep into the ground, reducing surface water flooding. In all paving schemes, such materials allow for easy repair and varied layouts and designs, but these advantages do not apply to tarmac or imprinted concrete.

To retain and enhance the traditional architecture: existing buildings should be maintained as far as is practicable using original or sympathetic materials.

Repointing of brickwork should be carried out with an appropriate profile, texture and mortar. This is particularly important for the Victorian terraced houses. Cladding is to be avoided.

Paint colours should be muted rather than bright on the rendered walls and woodwork of Listed buildings and buildings in a Conservation Area. Black painted plinths are a strong feature in the traditional domestic architecture of Bramford.

COMMERCIAL, AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

In the interests of economic health of the village: -

- small scale enterprises (of a commercial, agricultural/horticultural or light industrial nature) may be welcomed if in a suitable location and provided that they do not detract from the rural appearance and character of their surroundings
- redundant agricultural buildings in a sound condition provide scope to locate businesses within the village
- conversion to business uses which do not adversely affect visual amenity, may be supported
- working from home is favoured as a sustainable form of employment, but the additional space required may impact on house design

In the interests of visual, residential and environmental amenity: -

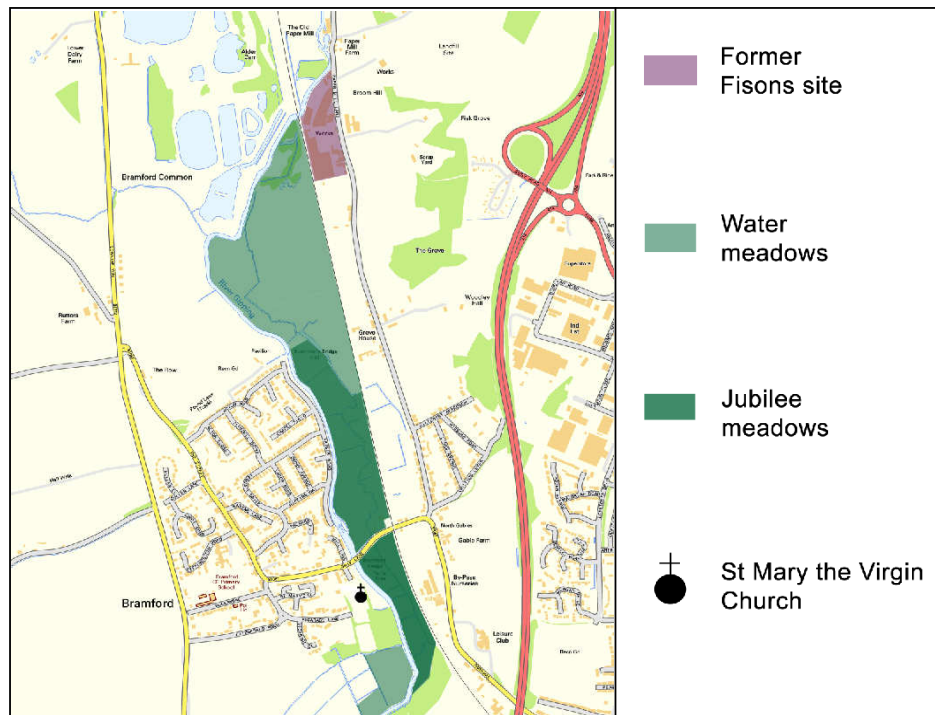
- if new commercial, agricultural or industrial buildings are constructed, converted or extended, they should avoid intrusion on the skyline, and developers should consider scale, proportion and grouping of buildings. Unobtrusive colours and materials should be used, and screening and landscaping should be implemented. Traffic generation should be minimised, and there should be adequate space for access and parking
- visually intrusive open storage, noise pollution and light pollution are to be avoided
- all reasonable measures should be taken to avoid or minimise adverse impact on the environment.

THE JUBILEE MEADOWS

Bramford Parish Council acquired the Jubilee Meadows, part of the northern and southern water meadows in 2012, allowing for environmental regeneration and improvement and producing enhanced opportunities for recreation. This project links the two most iconic buildings in Bramford: St Mary the Virgin Church and the former Fisons factory, and emphasises Bramford's special features and distinctiveness.



Fisons factory & warehouse



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St Mary the Virgin Church from the southern water meadows

OUR VISION OF WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THE VILLAGE

The following views were expressed by the residents of Bramford in the Public Meeting relating to the Parish Plan.

These positive comments relate to the present:

The countryside is easily accessible, and the footpaths, river walks and recreation areas are appreciated by many.

The wide variety of recreation facilities, which are free of charge, allow people to appreciate the traditional features of the countryside.

Bramford is self-contained, safe, friendly and unspoilt.

Properties are generally well maintained.

The industrial areas are mainly out of sight.

There is a lot of history in the village .

The village is viable as it can house a variety of family sizes on a range of incomes.

Bramford is a village on the edge of countryside but has convenient access to town.

Good design features include wide verges and building around a central green.



These negative comments relate to the present:

The village is becoming compartmentalised into different estates.

There is no real village style in the housing because of the volume of 20th century construction.

There is suburban uniformity, particularly with gardens, renovations and new housing.

There are ugly extensions and inappropriate alterations to some houses.

There is a general lack of landscaping of public areas.

There are some neglected areas of public space.

Street lighting is urban and outdated.

Bypass Nurseries has been an eyesore for years.

Planning in Ipswich has a total disregard for its effect on Bramford.

These are suggestions from the residents:

Better promotion and management of the countryside areas would lead to better appreciation of these facilities and features.

Clarify the village identity.

Protect the village boundaries.

Install wicket fences with Bramford signs at entry to the village as at Sproughton.

The village streets should be humanised with trees and traffic calming.

The area around the fish shop and the Co-op should be improved.

There should be trees, shrubs and a seat in the centre, with the aim of giving a central focus to The Street.

Varied paving schemes would break up monotony on The Street and could calm traffic.

Repaint or renew the railings at the bridge and railway bridge.

Overhead cables should be diverted underground.

Appreciation of the village heritage could be improved.

Too much new development would make Bramford seem like an extension of Ipswich.

We are in danger of losing village identity and should resist at all costs becoming part of Ipswich.

Bramford residents are united in wanting to retain and enhance the village identity. They also enjoy the advantages of the open countryside and the proximity to Ipswich.

The documents that framed the 2012 Revision of the Bramford Village Design Statement

- Heritage and community-led planning in the countryside (English Heritage and ACRE, 2011)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2011-2012)
- Saved policies from Mid Suffolk Local Plan of 1998
- MSDC Core Strategy (2008)
- Focused review (2012)
- Planning Portal
- Localism Act (2011)
- MSDC Planning website
- Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas website
- Manual for Streets (Central government) (2011-2012)
- How to shape where you live: a guide to Neighbourhood Planning (CPRE 2011-2012)

