



AREA DESIGNATION NOTICE

LOWER GIPPING VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

To prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, the first formal stage is area designation. The 'qualifying body' must submit an application to the relevant local planning authority, stating their reasons why they wish to prepare such a plan and provide a map of their proposed area.

Under Regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Mid Suffolk District Council received such an application from Bramford Parish Council who, together with Akenham Parish, Claydon & Whitton Parish Council, and Little Blakenham Parish Council, were seeking to have their combined area designated for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Collectively, their project is to be known as the 'Lower Gipping Valley Neighbourhood Plan'

In accordance with Regulation 6; which requires all multi-parish area applications to be consulted on, written comments were invited from statutory consultees and from those who live, work and carry on business in the area between 18 May and 30 June 2026. Nine responses were received. Other than Suffolk County Council, who enquire about the absence of Barham parish, none raise any objections.

Having considered all of the comments made, and in accordance with Regulation 6A(2)(c) and Regulation 7(1) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Mid Suffolk District Council hereby give notice that it has designated the whole of the proposed Lower Gipping Valley plan area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

A map of this Plan area, and a table of the representations made and this Councils response to those are appended to this Notice.

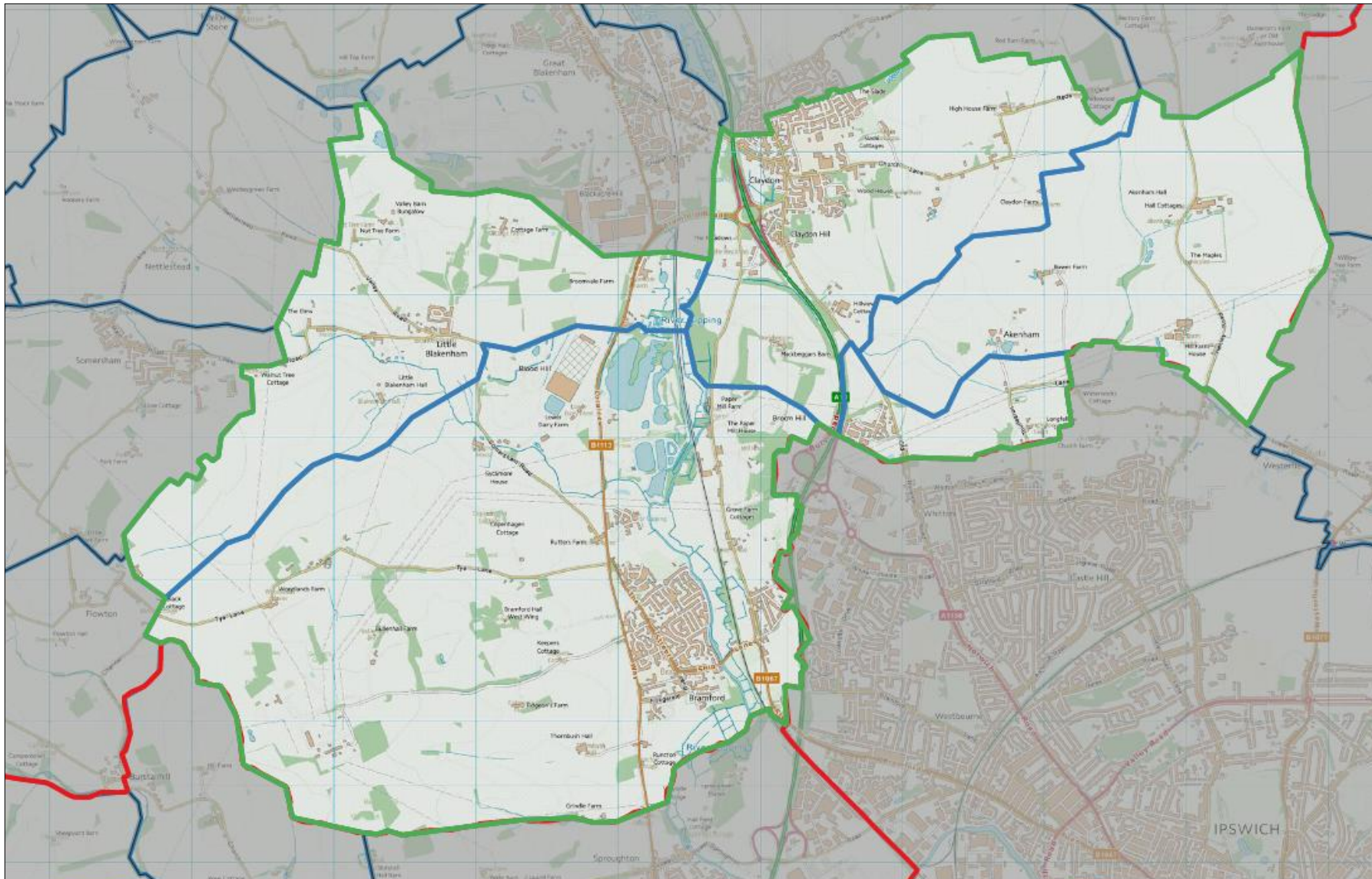
This Notice, and other information on the Lower Gipping Valley Neighbourhood Plan can also be found at: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/lower-gipping-valley-neighbourhood-plan>

Dee O'Rourke
Director of Place
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

Dated: 8 July 2026



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Lower Gipping Valley Neighbourhood Plan Area

- █ Neighbourhood Plan Area
- █ Parish Boundaries
- █ District Boundary

Responses to Lower Gipping Valley Neighbourhood Plan [the LGVNP] Area Designation Consultation

This consultation took place between 18 May and 30 June 2026. Named below are the individuals / organisations who submitted written representations. They are reproduced in full [Suffolk County Council] or a summary is provided, together with this Councils response.

Respondent	Representation [or summary], and Response from Mid Suffolk District Council
<p>Cllr Adrienne Marriott MSDC Ward Member for Blakenham</p>	<p>Cllr Marriott records that she was aware of / has attended meetings where the LGVNP proposal has been discussed and that: <i>“As the Parish Councils are adjoining and form a distinct area [she] feels that it makes sense for them to work together to produce a plan which satisfies their mutual and individual goals“.</i></p> <p>Response: Comment noted. As a statutory consultee, Cllr Marriott will be notified at the appropriate consultation stages, etc.</p>
<p>Suffolk County Council</p>	<p>Suffolk County Council responded as follows:</p> <p><i>“The Area Designation boundary includes Claydon Parish but does not include Barham Parish, however the settlement of Barham and Claydon extends across both parishes. SCC therefore queries how Neighbourhood Plan policies relating to the settlement of Claydon will be effective in planning decisions where they apply to only part of the settlement. This will impact the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies.</i></p> <p><i>A reserved matters application has been granted at Land North West of Church Lane, Barham (DC/22/03231) for 269 dwellings. As part of this development, a new primary school and early years provision will be secured. Due to the close proximity between the settlements of Claydon and Barham, it is expected that children from Claydon may attend the new school. Therefore, from a school planning and transport perspective, there will be a lot of cross boundary impacts.</i></p> <p><i>The Neighbourhood Plan will [...] need to take account of these cross-boundary relationships and work collaboratively with Barham Parish Council to ensure that policies align with current local strategies and infrastructure provision. It is suggested [that] the Neighbourhood Plan Group [..] revise their Area Designation application to include Barham Parish within the Area boundary.”</i></p> <p>Response: The complexities of bringing forward multi-parish neighbourhood plans are understood.</p>

	<p>Discussions on a multi-parish neighbourhood plan (now named the Lower Gipping Valley NP) date back to mid-2025. Present at that time were representatives from Barnham, Bramford, Claydon, Great Blakenham, and Little Blakenham parish councils. Also involved have been the relevant Mid Suffolk Ward Councillors, and council officers. Matters discussed included a need for positive cross-boundary working, the plan making process, and the need for effective community engagement.</p> <p>In October 2025, Great Blakenham Parish Council sent notification of their decision to withdraw themselves from the project. In November 2025, Bramford Parish Council announced that they too were withdrawing from the project, explaining that they felt that they did not have the support of the village to be involved. Also to note here that November 2025 saw Whitton Rural join the group, and that a decision was made by the remaining parishes to bring Akenham onboard in spring 2026.</p> <p>As the relevant local planning authority, Mid Suffolk District Council could refuse to accept the area designation application. That would require us to publish a statement clearly setting out our reasons for doing so. While it is disappointing that both Bramford, and Great Blakenham took decisions not to be part of this project, that in itself is not seen as sufficient reason to refuse the application.</p>
East Suffolk Council	<p>East Suffolk Council advised that: <i>“[they] do not have any comments to make in response to the Lower Gipping Neighbourhood Plan area designation.”</i> but have asked that they be kept informed about future stages in the neighbourhood plan’s development, including the opportunity to comment on further consultations.</p> <p>Response: Comments noted. As a statutory consultee [East Suffolk Council share a common boundary with the LGVNP area via Akenham], they will be notified at the appropriate consultation stages, etc.</p>
Historic England	<p>Historic England’s response records that: <i>“Having reviewed the proposed boundary, [they] confirm that [they] do not have an issue with this designation and do not wish to make a comment.”</i></p> <p>Response: No further action required.</p>
Natural England	<p>Natural England stated that: <i>“they do not wish to make comment on the suitability of the proposed plan area or the proposed neighbourhood planning body”</i> but their letter does contain both helpful advice and highlights some of the potential environmental risks and opportunities that neighbourhood plans may present.</p> <p>Action taken: Copy of full response passed on to the LGVNP Group for information.</p>

<p>National Highways</p>	<p>National Highways are responsible for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England on behalf of the Secretary of State. Within and in the vicinity of the proposed LGVNP area, they have responsibility for the A14 trunk road. Their response concluded that: “ ... <i>the designation of the combined neighbourhood area would not have a significant impact on the Strategic Road Network.</i>”, and that “ ... [they have] <i>no objection to the proposed designation.</i>”</p> <p>Response: Comments noted. No further action required.</p>
<p>Sport England</p>	<p>The Sport England response provides general information connected with their responsibilities and ways in which the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities</p> <p>Action taken: Copy of full response passed on to the LGVNP Group for information.</p>
<p>Suffolk Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>SWT’s response explains that: “<i>Where biodiversity and nature recovery are to be considered, [they] raise no issue with the proposed Lower Gipping Valley Neighbourhood Plan area. The similar landscape which unites the parishes means similar species and biodiversity features will occur across the plan area. The opportunity to improve connectivity for wildlife is therefore amplified by the proposal.</i>” They also ask that they be kept informed of this plans progress.</p> <p>Response: Comments noted. As a statutory consultee Suffolk Wildlife Trust will be notified at the appropriate consultation stages, etc. Their full response has also been passed on to the LGVNP Group for information.</p>
<p>Water Management Alliance</p>	<p>A short response which confirms that: “ ... <i>the WMA has no comments on the combined area designation for the Lower Gipping Valley Neighbourhood Plan.</i>”</p> <p>Response: No further action required.</p>

[Ends]