

# Long Melford Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2036

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## Brief for Public Realm Study



Prepared on behalf of Long Melford Parish Council

Appendix 5

## Brief for Public Realm Study and Action Plan for Village Centre

### Introduction

5.1 Long Melford Parish Council (LMPC) is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the parish. We are about to complete drafting of the NP ready for consultation and examination. During this coming phase when the NP is largely out of our hands, LMPC is commissioning a public realm study and action plan for the centre of the village, the length of Hall Street from St Catherine's Road to the car park just beyond the Old School (consideration should also be given to relevant nearby facilities such as the parking in Chemist Lane). Whilst this exercise is described as a public realm study, it is not a static exercise: the intention is to focus on the functioning of the study area, in particular the movement and parking of vehicles and the movement of people in the context of an important historic setting and of a busy business and shopping centre. We wish to take action and invest as a result of the exercise. The next section of this Brief gives a flavour of the array of features that make Long Melford a distinctive village.

### Long Melford

5.2 Long Melford is identified in Babergh DC's Core Strategy as a Conservation Area and a Core Village serving some 10 Hinterland Villages. This status reflects the attractive array of services in the village, which rely on customers from the village itself, from the surrounding villages and from a wider tourist market. The Parish Council is determined that the varied and attractive character of the village is respected and enhanced through the Neighbourhood Plan. Key features of Long Melford are:

1. It contains about 1,600 houses and a population of some 3,500.
2. It has a very long north-south main street, known as Little St Mary's, Hall Street and High Street, with a historic westerly extension at Westgate. The buildings are mainly Georgian and Tudor.
3. The village has developed over many centuries, mainly through small-scale incremental development.
4. Larger residential developments, for example Roman Way and Harefield, have been integrated into the village by dint of being located on the robust main street (which was the main road from Sudbury to Bury St Edmunds before the bypass was built) and of their sympathetic design which features large greens and varied house styles.
5. Many people are attracted to Long Melford by the opportunity to live in a beautiful village yet be within walking distance of shops, pubs and other facilities.
6. Long Melford is unusual in having not only a fine and very large mediaeval church but also two major country houses, both open to the public.
7. The village is fortunate in having a by-pass, the A134. However, the by-pass appears to divert mainly north-south traffic (e.g. travelling from Sudbury to Bury St Edmunds) but to a lesser extent traffic travelling to the west of the village (e.g. to Clare, Haverhill and Cambridge). Commercial vehicles are however diverted by a weight limit.
8. Partly as a result of this, the main street, which is the focus for the many shops, restaurants, galleries and antiques centres, is very busy and often congested. Its wide margins provide much of the parking for the village centre but off-street parking in Chemist Lane and by the Old School is underutilised.

9. Long Melford attracts large numbers of visitors, to both the permanent attractions and to the many events staged in the village and the country houses. Visitors include both day visitors and overnighting visitors, who stay in the hotels and bed-and-breakfasts in the village.
10. Whilst Long Melford is a popular destination for retirement, it is also a lively working and family community, with some 150 local businesses and a flourishing primary school.
11. Further employment opportunities are provided in the two industrial estates immediately east of the by-pass.
12. Long Melford offers a good choice of shops for day to day needs and for certain more specialist shopping (art, fashion and antiques); it has good access, including by bus and by bicycle/on foot, to a larger range of shops and services in Sudbury, about 5.5 kms to the south. Shops and businesses serving the public are located throughout much of the main street, making it an interesting walk to reach other shops.
13. Long Melford is surrounded by natural features that give the village a distinctive character: the parkland of Kentwell and Melford Halls, the River Stour and its tributary the Chad Brook, the woodland that lines the former railway line on the east side of the village and rolling agricultural and wooded countryside beyond these features.

## The Brief

5.3 LMPC are asking consultants to submit proposals for carrying out firstly a Public Realm Study and secondly an Action Plan. Key elements to be covered in the Study are:

1. A clear understanding of how the study area works and of defects in how it operates. The focus is on the functioning of the study area, but measures may need to extend further afield if they would improve conditions in the study area.
2. A focus on the traffic using Hall Street, whether passing through or staying, and how it impacts on the experience and safety of Hall Street for other users.
3. The adequacy or otherwise of car parking serving Hall Street; this assessment should include the off-street parking in Chemist Lane and at the Old School.
4. Signage related to Hall Street and its facilities.
5. The viability of shops and businesses in Hall Street inasmuch as it depends on their accessibility and visibility to potential shoppers.
6. The important heritage assets of Long Melford and the overall street scene which are an important part of the attraction of the village.

5.4 Evidence that can be made available to the appointed consultant includes:

1. A parking survey in the main street and the two off-street car parks carried out in 2018.
2. A Residents Survey, which achieved a 75% response rate and which includes questions on traffic, parking and pedestrian safety concerns and preferences, also carried out in 2018.
3. Census data for the parish.
4. Suffolk County Council highways data.
5. A report entitled 'Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils', by Place Services.
6. The outcomes of several consultations carried out in connection with the NP.
7. Introductions to appropriate people in the highway's authority and relevant landowners.

5.5 The diagnosis of the study area which is the outcome of the Study will lead to a Draft Action Plan, which will:

1. Set out clearly the problems and opportunities that need to be addressed, and the evidence behind the problems and opportunities identified, together with an assessment of their significance (do they matter and in what ways?).
2. In each case assess alternative ways in which conditions might be improved, the assessment to cover:
  - The effectiveness of the possible solution, based on experience elsewhere. The Action Plan will need to cover the routing and management of traffic, facilities to enable pedestrians to move safely and congenially, cycle paths, seating in Hall Street, conservation of the historic character of the village, the success and viability of the shops and businesses and the overall attractiveness of the experience of being in LM village centre.
  - The realism of the possible solutions in terms, for example, of broad cost, potential funding sources, maintenance requirements, land required, agency(ies) responsible for implementation etc; this latter point is important as the LMPC is neither owner of nor responsible for many of the assets in the village centre.
  - The impact on other important features of the village centre.
3. Recommendations for the most cost-effective ways forward, based on the evaluation of alternatives.
4. Illustrations of the above.
5. The ways forward need to be drawn together into a coherent and exciting vision for the centre as a whole.

5.6 The study should be informed by consultations with the interested parties. The findings of the Study and the Action Plan should be subject to and informed by public consultations, the nature of which are to be agreed with the client. A member of the NP Committee will be assigned to support the appointed firm with information and guidance to sources of information.

The Study will be reported to a sub-group of the NP Committee within five weeks of the date of an appointment being made. The Action Plan will be reported to the NP Committee within four weeks of the Study being signed off by the client. If you disagree with this programme, you may suggest, with justification, an alternative. Suffolk County Council are being invited to join the sub-group.

## Proposals

5.7 The Parish Council is inviting proposals that cover (you may add more) the following:

1. Set down your firm's experience that is directly relevant to the present task; you may choose to point us to relevant parts of your website.
2. Identify the staff who would be directly responsible for the work together with their relevant experience.
3. Describe how you would tackle the work. We are particularly interested in the opportunities and challenges that you would expect to encounter.
4. Mention any ancillary experience.
5. Confirmation that you can work to the timetable set down above.
6. Set out the cost of carrying out this work.

5.8 Price will be a significant factor in the award of the contract. You are asked to submit your quotation to the email address below by XX. If you have any queries about this brief, please let us have them by email to the same address.

LMPC is not bound to accept any of the submitted quotations. Email address for queries and submissions: [longmelfordnhp@gmail.com](mailto:longmelfordnhp@gmail.com).

## Appendix

Examples of measures that have been considered by LMPC:

Traffic calming, various types

Pelican crossings

Speed limits, active and passive

Signage to divert traffic

Marking of parking spaces

New car park

Better use of existing car parks

Management of existing parking e.g. visitor wardens, encouragement of employees to park off-centre.