

# Welcome

Welcome to South Norfolk Council's virtual exhibition which sets out details on our draft South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan. This is a Local Plan document which, once adopted, will become part of the planning framework for South Norfolk, guiding the focus of development in the district's villages between now and 2038.

## Please take some time to browse the information in our virtual exhibition. You can:

-  View the introductory video, which provides an overview of the ambitions of this Plan.
-  Take a look at the exhibition banners around the room, which provide background and a summary of what we are consulting on.
-  Read the draft Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan and supporting documents, including map booklets, located on the central table.
-  Chat to a planning officer online, using the live chat function (available on Tuesdays between 10am-2pm and Thursdays between 2pm-6pm for the duration of the consultation).
-  Submit your response online using the 'Have Your Say' console, within the virtual exhibition hall.
-  Promote a site for consideration using the site submission form available via the 'Have Your Say' console, within the virtual exhibition hall.

## Where do I find the consultation documents and how do I view them?

You can view the draft Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan and associated map booklets on the central table in the exhibition room. Other supporting documents are also available in this section.

## What do I do when I wish to respond to the consultation?

Once you are ready to submit a response to the consultation, you can click on the 'Have Your Say' console, within the exhibition hall. This will take you to our online consultation system, where you can find the part of the plan you wish to comment on, write your comments and submit them. You will be required to register with the system in order to submit your response.

## Alternatively, you can submit your response by post, to:

Place Shaping Team  
South Norfolk Council  
South Norfolk House  
Cygnet Court  
Long Stratton  
Norwich  
NR15 2XE

The deadline for all responses is 5.00pm on Monday 2nd August 2021.

If you have any difficulty accessing the documents online, or accessing different areas of this virtual exhibition, please contact the Place Shaping team on (01508) 533805 or at [lp@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:lp@s-norfolk.gov.uk)



# Introduction

The Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP) is being produced by South Norfolk Council. Its purpose is to identify land for 1,200 homes across South Norfolk's villages.

Once completed, the VCHAP will become part of the Local Plan for South Norfolk. The Local Plan sets out the Council's policies for new development in the district, including identifying specific areas of land for certain uses or types of development, such as housing. The adopted Local Plan is the main consideration in determining planning applications in the district.

Alongside the VCHAP is the **Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP)**. The GNLP is being prepared jointly by Broadland, Norwich City and South Norfolk Councils and in partnership with Norfolk County Council. The GNLP covers the combined area of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, excluding the area within the Broads Authority. It includes strategic planning policies for the whole of the area, including identifying the number of homes and jobs that should be planned for and the infrastructure needed to support it. In South Norfolk, the GNLP identifies land for future development in the market towns and larger settlements. It also sets out that 1,200 homes should be accommodated in South Norfolk's villages. It does not however identify the specific areas of land that should be developed in the villages, this is the role of the VCHAP.

**The South Norfolk settlements that are covered by the GNLP (and which are therefore not included within the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan document) are:**

- Chedgrave
- Colney
- Costessey
- Cringleford
- Diss
- Easton
- Framingham Earl
- Framingham Pigot
- Hethersett
- Hingham
- Loddon
- Long Stratton
- Poringland
- Redenhall w Harleston
- Trowse w Newton
- Wymondham

**The GNLP also covers:**

- parts of Roydon and Heywood that relate to the settlement of Diss;
- parts of Tharston & Hapton that relate to the settlement of Long Stratton;
- parts of Caistor St Edmund & Bixley and Stoke Holy Cross that relate to the settlement of Poringland/Framingham Earl.

Also making up the South Norfolk Local Plan are the Area Action Plans for Wymondham and Long Stratton, the South Norfolk Development Management Policies Document and those Neighbourhood Plans that have been adopted by the Council. Neighbourhood Plans are produced by local communities and feature a range of planning policies that have equal weight to those in the Council's Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans have already been made in Cringleford, Easton and Mulbarton, and there are several more in progress, including one or two which will be making their own housing allocations, rather than this being done through the VCHAP. These include the Neighbourhood Plans for Diss & District (which includes the villages of Burston & Shimpling, Roydon and Scole) and Dickleburgh. Details of this can be found within the consultation document.





# The journey so far

South Norfolk Council commenced work on this Plan in early 2020. Before that time, the work to identify potential sites for future housing in South Norfolk's villages was being undertaken as part of the wider Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).

This meant that throughout 2017 and 2018, hundreds of sites in South Norfolk were promoted by landowners and subsequently consulted on with the public and consultation bodies, through the GNLP process.

During production of the GNLP it became apparent to South Norfolk Council that the choice of potential development sites would not result in an appropriate distribution of development across South Norfolk villages. As a consequence, it was decided that South Norfolk would produce its own separate document that would identify land for housing development in its villages. This document has become known as the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan or "VCHAP".

The information gathered through the GNLP was passed to South Norfolk Council in early 2020, this included further sites that were promoted to the GNLP during their winter 2020 public consultation. All sites that have been promoted for consideration have been assessed as part of the production of the VCHAP.

The current stage marks the first public consultation on a draft of the VCHAP. Your views, along with the factual evidence we gather, are invaluable in shaping this plan. This consultation is referred to as a Regulation 18 consultation.

## Next steps

Any comments made on the content of this draft plan, including any new sites promoted during the current consultation, will be taken into consideration when we produce the final version.

There will be a further opportunity for people to make more formal representations on the final plan before we submit it to the Planning Inspectorate, for examination. This further opportunity is known as the Regulation 19 pre-submission publication.

We expect to submit the document in spring 2022 following the publication of the plan under Regulation 19 earlier that year.



# The Need for Growth in Rural South Norfolk

## **Opportunities for villages to grow and thrive**

Due to their rural locations and sense of community the villages and market towns of South Norfolk have long been desirable places to live. To ensure the ongoing vitality of villages and market towns it is important that appropriate opportunities for development continue to be made.

Identifying opportunities for new housing in these locations helps young people seeking their first home in rural locations to meet their needs. It also provides growing families with opportunities to upsize, as well as smaller households and older people the opportunity to downsize to meet their changing requirements. In this way appropriate growth supports social sustainability, supports rural life and helps maintain local services and facilities.

## **Supporting smaller and local house builders**

The provision of appropriate smaller sites for housing development in rural villages will also help to improve the supply of development land for small and medium-sized house builders and those wanting to build their own homes. Increasing the capability of smaller or individual builders to deliver homes, alongside ensuring an appropriate supply of larger sites to support regional and national house builders, is a key intervention that will help tackle current supply problems and ensure enough homes are delivered to meet identified needs and demands.

## **Increasing demand for homes in villages**

People's recent experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has also driven an increased interest in homes in rural locations, which have easy access to the countryside. Changing patterns of work, including an increased desire and understanding of the opportunity for remote home working, enabled by improved communications, mean that this demand for more rural locations could be set to continue well into the future.





# The Strategy for Growth

## The Settlement Hierarchy and Village Clusters

The overarching strategy for sustainable growth across Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, as set out in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), determines how the overall housing requirement of 40,541 homes between 2018 and 2038 should be distributed across the city and urban fringe, the main towns, key service centres, and village clusters. This is known as the settlement hierarchy.

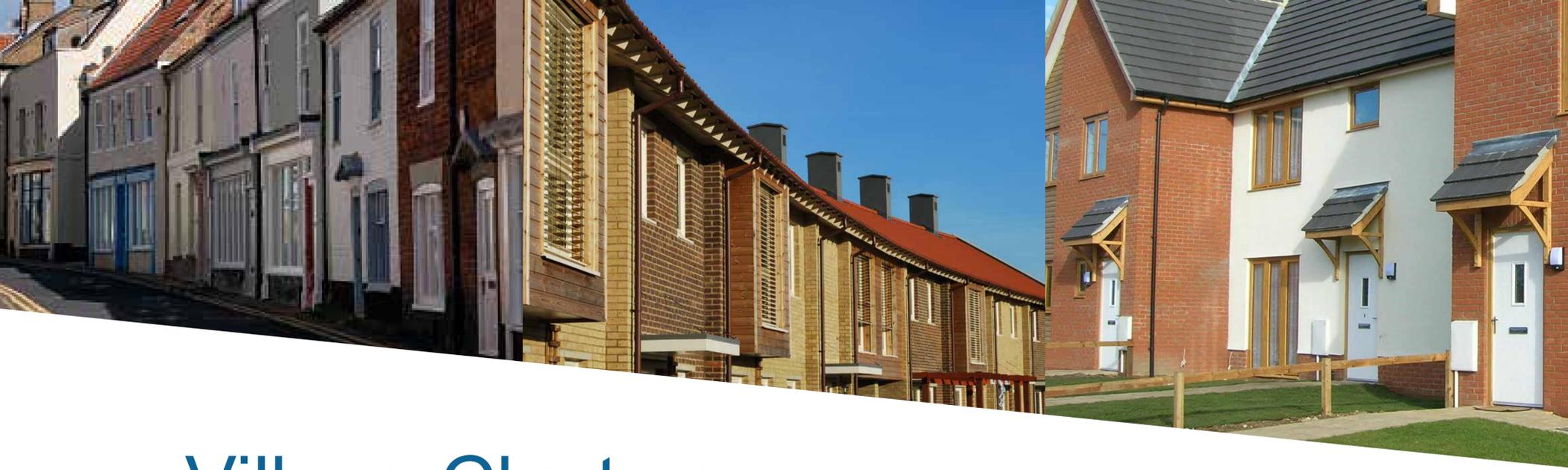
The Village Clusters are defined in the GNLP as a group of villages which share services and facilities. In practical terms, the extent of an individual Village Cluster in South Norfolk was based on primary school catchment areas, although typically the clusters contain a wider ranges of services.

The GNLP explains that, 'Locating this level of growth in village clusters aims to promote social sustainability by supporting rural life and services. The provision of several relatively small allocation sites as required by the National Planning Policy Framework means this approach also has the benefit of supporting small-scale builders, providing choice for the market and helping to ensure the delivery of housing in popular village locations. The policy also aims to provide a range of sizes and tenures of new homes to meet needs in village clusters.'

The GNLP Settlement Hierarchy

Level in Hierarchy	Settlement
Norwich urban area	Norwich; Built-up parts of Colney, Costessey, Cringleford, Drayton, Easton, Hellesdon, Old Catton, Sprowston, Taverham, Thorpe St. Andrew, Trowse, remainder of the Growth Triangle
Main towns	Aylsham; Diss (incl. part of Roydon); Long Stratton; Harleston; Wymondham
Key service centres	Acle; Blofield; Brundall; Hetherset; Hingham; Loddon/Chedgrave; Poringland/Framingham Earl; Reepham; Wroxham
Village clusters	Remainder of the GNLP area





# Village Clusters in South Norfolk

## How many new homes are being planned for?

South Norfolk parishes (apart from those listed in panel 2) have been divided into 48 different clusters, based on primary school catchment areas. In accordance with the requirements of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP) seeks to identify sites for a minimum of 1,200 new homes. These are distributed across as many suitable settlements as possible.

A variety of factors play a part in determining how the 1,200 new homes should be spread between the cluster areas. Further details of the site assessment criteria used throughout this process are set out on Panel 8.

## Site Allocations and Settlement Limit (SL) sites

The sites that have been promoted to us have been broadly separated into two categories:

- a) Sites over 0.5ha and capable of accommodating a minimum of 12 dwellings, including affordable housing; and
- b) Sites that fall below this size threshold.

Sites in category (a) have been assessed to establish whether they are suitable for housing development. A choice is then made about which of the suitable sites should be identified for development in order to meet the overall housing requirement. Sites identified for housing development in the plan are referred to as allocation (or allocated) sites. The final version of the plan will include a specific allocation policy that sets out how much development should be accommodated on a particular site and any specific issues that will need to be addressed.

Those sites in category (b) have been assessed to establish whether they should be included as an extension to the existing development boundary (or settlement limit). Further development on sites inside settlement boundaries would, in principle, be acceptable in planning terms. The appropriate scale and form of development is however determined through applications for planning permission rather than set out in a specific allocation policy. Development on unallocated sites is known as windfall development. It is not intended that windfall development enabled through this plan would contribute to meeting the future housing requirement, but once delivered would be taken into account when deciding if the authority has built enough homes.

All category (a) and (b) sites have been assessed using the same criteria.

## Adjusting existing development boundaries

Since the last Local Plan was adopted a number of houses have been built or granted planning permission adjacent to, or close to, existing settlement limits in villages.

Where appropriate the VCHAP will include extensions of the settlement limit around these sites so that it reflects what has been or will be built. These extensions may also include small groups of existing dwellings that bear a strong relationship to the amended settlement limit.

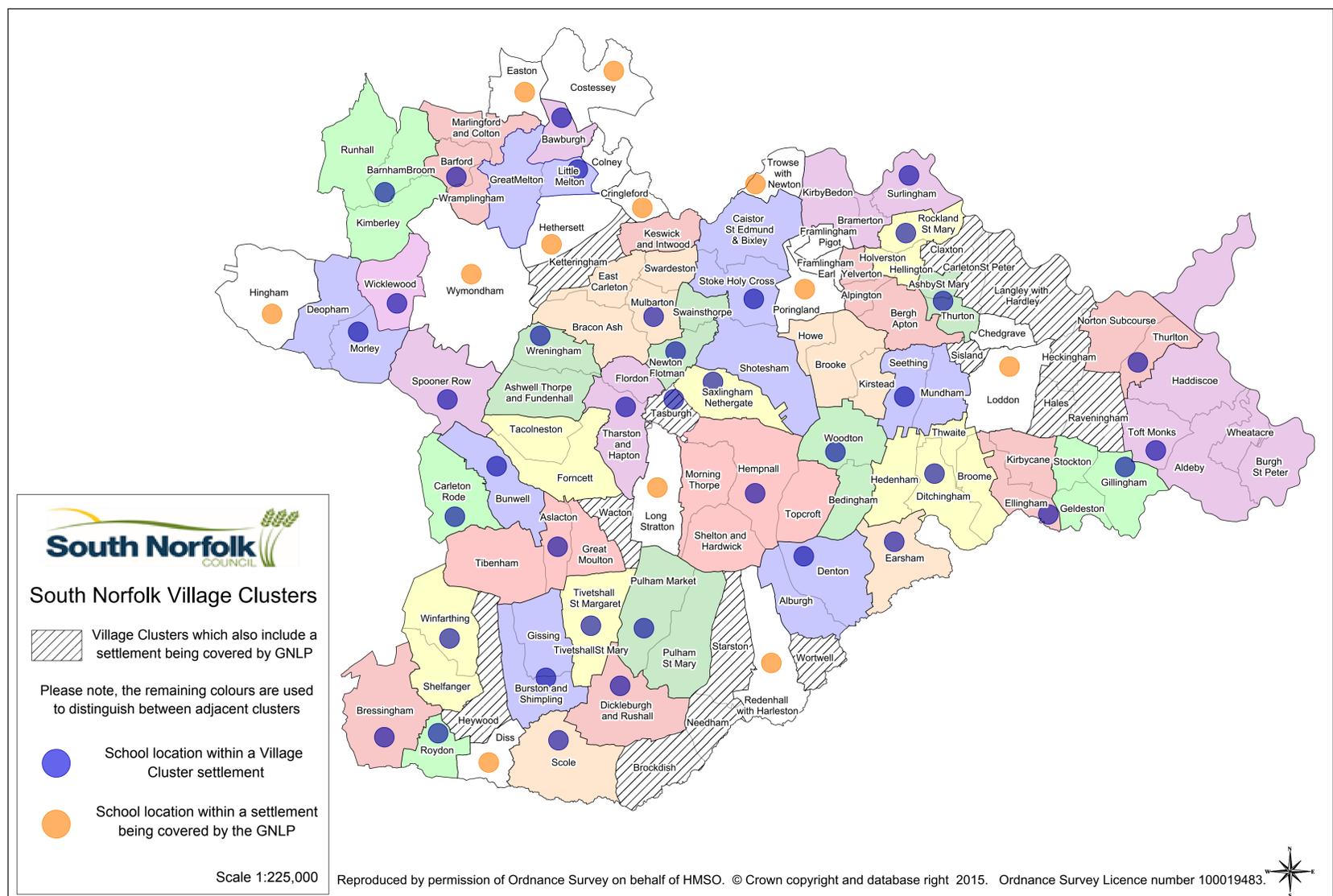
In amending these boundaries, it is possible that opportunities for further infill development will also be created within a settlement. Whilst not assessed as individual sites, adjustments to settlement limits are shown on the consultation maps.





# Extent of Village Cluster Areas

This map shows the extent of the 48 village cluster areas across South Norfolk district. It also shows (using a blue dot) the approximate locations of primary schools within those areas (the catchments of which define the cluster areas). Parishes shown in white are not part of any village clusters and are being dealt with through the Greater Norwich Local Plan (schools are shown using orange dots in these locations).





# Identifying Suitable Sites

## Site assessments

Each of the approximately 450 sites that have been put forward for consideration to date have been independently assessed for their suitability as allocated sites (including those previously assessed by the GNLP). Factors involved in the assessments include:

- Previous consultation comments
- Environmental constraints (e.g. site within SSSI, Ancient Woodland, Local Green Space etc.)
- Access to the site
- Transport and road impacts
- Accessibility to local services and facilities
- Availability of utilities and infrastructure, as well as capacity (e.g. water, electricity, foul drainage)
- Availability of Broadband
- Ground contamination and stability
- Flood risk (including areas of identified flood risk and surface water flooding)
- Landscape character impacts
- Townscape character impacts
- Biodiversity and geodiversity impacts
- Impacts on the historic environment
- Protection of open space
- Neighbouring land uses
- Site availability and achievability

The assessment of each of the sites concludes whether a site is preferred, shortlisted or is unreasonable.

## Preferred Sites

Preferred sites are those sites which are deemed to be most appropriate for development based on the assessment that has been carried out. This does not necessarily mean that there will be no negative impacts in terms of the factors listed above, but that they are deemed to have the least harmful impacts (which can also be reduced through mitigation measures).

## Shortlisted (or Reasonable Alternative) Sites

Shortlisted sites have been assessed as being suitable for development, but are not a preferred choice for allocation.

## Rejected (or Unreasonable) Sites

Rejected sites are those that for various reasons have not been assessed as being suitable for development.

The consultation on these three types of site provides the opportunity for the public or other stakeholders (including developers, site promoters and agents) to put forward further information that may change the conclusions on particular sites. For example further constraints on preferred or shortlisted sites might be identified. Alternatively further evidence provided that an unsuitable site could overcome an identified constraint.

**You can view details of the Preferred Sites in the documents available on the central table in this virtual exhibition. You can also find a summary of all of the site assessments that have been undertaken, including those for Shortlisted and Rejected sites.**





# We Would Like Your Views

This consultation offers you the opportunity to comment on the sites that have been assessed by the Council, whether sites are correctly identified as preferred, shortlisted or unreasonable and if the development of a site needs to address a specific issue e.g. a footpath link back to the main part of a village.

You can also promote new sites, if you wish, as part of the consultation.

In addition, the consultation asks for your views on whether the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan should include some general policies that will apply to all allocated sites (for example on housing, design, landscaping etc.) and, if so, what they should look like.

There are other documents which support the VCHAP and on which we would also welcome your views. These are located on the central table and include:

- The draft **Sustainability Appraisal** – an assessment of the proposed Plan against sustainability objectives;
- The draft **Habitat Regulations Assessment** – whether the proposed Plan is likely to have any significant environmental impacts on Natura 2000 sites in the proximity;

To make comments, please visit the **'Have Your Say'** console, within the exhibition hall. This will take you to our online consultation system, where you can find the part of the plan you wish to comment on, write your comments and submit them. There will also be instructions on how to submit any new sites for consideration. You will be required to register with the system in order to submit your response and you will be able to view details of the Council's Privacy Notice in relation to this consultation.