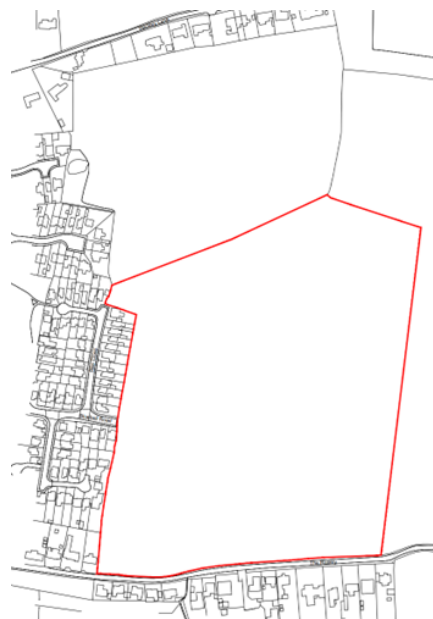


Policy VC MUL1: LAND EAST OF BLUEBELL ROAD AND NORTH OF THE ROSERY, MULBARTON

Land East of Bluebell Road, and North of The Rosery, Mulbarton

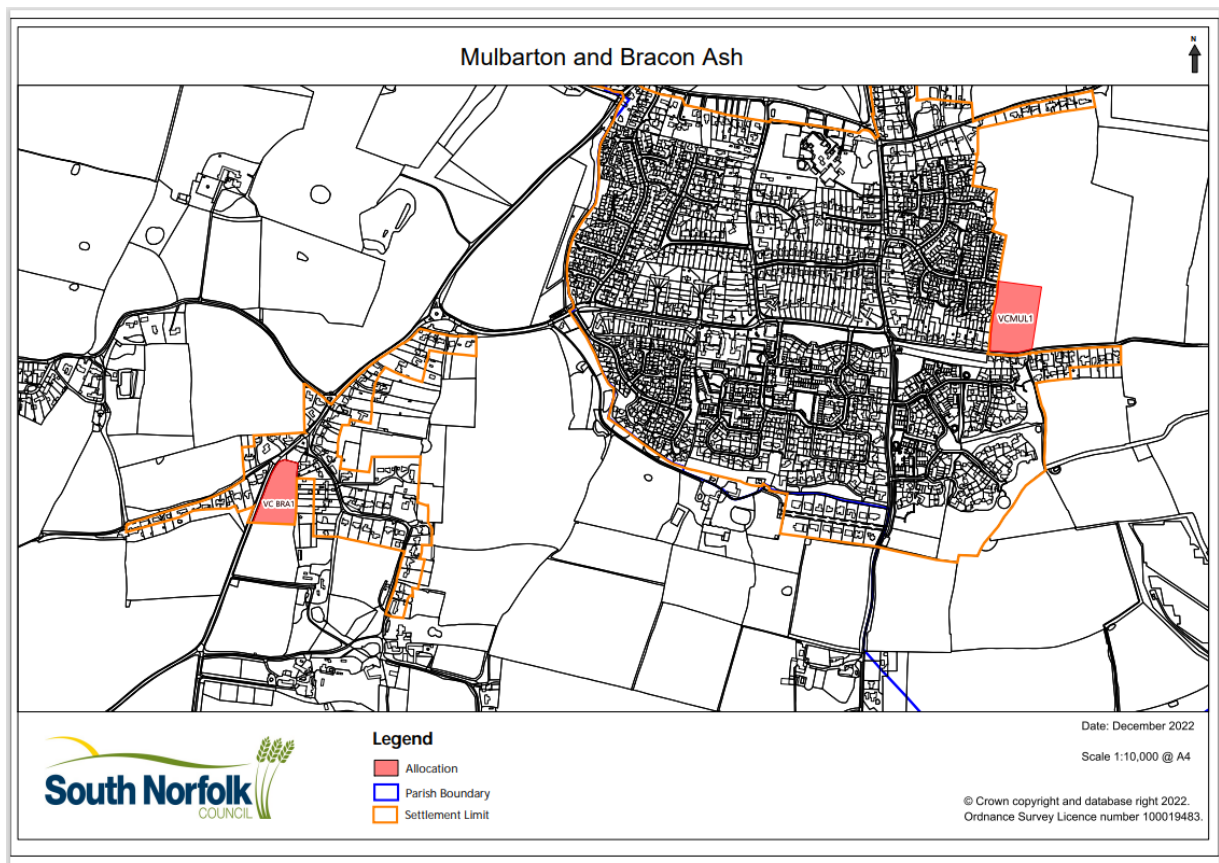
1. Hopkins Homes are providing this consultation response in reply to the Regulation 19 Consultation of the emerging South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Document by the requested site submission deadline of 8th March 2023.
2. Hopkins Homes Ltd is the largest independent house building company in East Anglia with a reputation for delivering well designed, high quality residential and mixed-use development harmonising with its local context. In the past decade the company has succeeded in delivering sustainable developments which improve neighbourhoods, improve local infrastructure and add to local distinctiveness throughout the South Norfolk and wider Greater Norwich area.
3. Hopkins Homes has an interest in the land east of Bluebell Road and North of The Rosery, as identified on the plan below. This site was initially submitted to the 'Call for Sites' consultation held in early 2020, with the representations supported by a Concept Masterplan which demonstrated how the site could deliver a residentially-led development of up to 325 dwellings, together with up to 4.25 Ha of associated public open space and by a subsequent, phased approach that would deliver 200 dwellings over two-phases, alongside substantial areas of new open space.



4. The south-western-most 1.5Ha portion of the available site was subsequently identified within the Regulation 18 Plan in July 2021 as a preferred allocation for 35 dwellings (Ref: SN2038).

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- The current Regulation 19 Consultation Plan now continues to identify the same 1.5Ha site area as a proposed allocation for 35 dwellings under Policy VC MUL1: Land East of Bluebell Road and North of The Rosery, Mulbarton, as shown below:



- Whilst Hopkins Homes support the proposed allocation and welcome the fact the Council has recognised that this site is suitable for development, we nevertheless continue to suggest that the wider available site could be utilised to provide a greater level of growth, given the acknowledged sustainability credentials of Mulbarton.
- The current strategy of this Clusters Plan to identify sites to accommodate at least 1200 dwellings in total appears to be derived and driven by that of the over-arching Greater Norwich Local Plan, which itself is yet to be Examined, hence is highly likely to be subject to further change. As such, we have serious concerns regarding the lack of transparency or evidence-based assessment as to how the levels of growth proposed to be apportioned to respective settlement cluster were made. To this end, we would strongly recommend that further evidence is provided as to why each settlement cluster has been apportioned the number of dwellings currently proposed, and not more or less.



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8. As we have previously outlined, Mulbarton remains a wholly sustainable location to accommodate new development. It already has a population in excess of 3,500 residents and approaching 1,500 dwellings. The village is well served by local education, sports and community facilities with good transport links to the nearby city of Norwich, approximately 7 miles to the north-east. The current Local Plan, together with the adopted Mulbarton Neighbourhood Plan, would see only 20 or so further homes added to the housing stock over a 15-year period, a paltry figure which must be regarded as disproportionately low in the context of the growth aspirations of South Norfolk and the wider Greater Norwich area.
9. In a similar vein, we therefore consider that through this Village Clusters Plan, the use of the wider site to enable an increased level of growth would further contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development, in a way which is both aspirational but equally deliverable. The NPPF 2021 makes it clear at Paragraph 71 that '*Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services*'.
10. Hopkins Homes would also question the statement within Paragraph 25.14 of the Plan that '*the quantum of development already served via the existing Bluebell Road restricts the scale of growth that could be achieved in this location to a maximum of 35 dwellings at this time*'. There appears to be no adopted technical or policy basis to support such a restriction upon any development in excess of 35 dwellings. We attach our own Engineers Technical Note, which having reviewed the current local road network, similarly arrives at this conclusion.
11. The overall available site area is bordered by existing residential development to the north, south and west, whilst is largely enclosed by strong existing boundary hedging and trees, enabling it to sit comfortably within its surroundings, with little by way of wider visual impact. Previous Ecological and Archaeological Surveys have also found that no major impediments to development exist.
12. As previously indicated, the overall site area could comfortably accommodate a development of up to 200 dwellings, enabling additional benefits to the village including a greater number of affordable dwellings; significant areas of new public open space; a diverse mix of house types and opportunities for biodiversity enhancements, together with proportionate financial obligations.
13. The development could be delivered in phases, with phase one comprising 135 dwellings on 4.5ha of land to the south of the existing public right of way, with a further 65 dwellings on upon a site area of approximately 2Ha to the north, as shown below:-

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14. There are no drainage or physical infrastructure issues which cannot be overcome by standard engineering solutions, thus the site is demonstrably deliverable in a sustainable and technically appropriate manner.
15. In conclusion, whilst Hopkins Homes Ltd remains supportive of the proposed allocation of Site VC MUL1, welcoming that the Local Planning Authority has recognised that this site is suitable for development, we nevertheless continue to suggest that the wider available site could be utilised to provide a greater level of growth, given the acknowledged sustainability credentials of Mulbarton.