Date: 05th February 2023

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Our Ref:

South Norfolk Council

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Dear South Norfolk Council,

**South Norfolk Village Clusters Local Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation**

Thank you for consulting Suffolk County Council (SCC) on the Village Clusters Local Plan. Suffolk County Council supports South Norfolk Council’s efforts to put a plan in place to guide sustainable growth.

Generally, SCC supports the draft Village Clusters Local Plan. However, we consider there are some matters that require further evidence for the Plan to be considered sound in accordance with paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This response will set out where SCC considers the Plan not to be sound, explain which of the tests of soundness have not been met and provide details of additional evidence required to make it sound.

The response makes comments regarding cross boundary issues which may result from the chosen distribution of the Village Clusters Local Plan; particularly around the market towns close to the boundary. These towns will serve communities on both sides of the border, such as Bungay, Beccles and Diss.

Transport

We would like to highlight comments made previously related to transport, as no action has been taken regarding undertaking a strategic assessment of cross border traffic impacts arising from the proposed allocations, our previous comments remain.

Regulation 19 response dated 5th March 2023.

*“The Waveney, Suffolk Coastal and emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan have been prepared with the support of the Suffolk Transport Model. The model shows that the areas of Suffolk that may be affected by the allocations in the Village Clusters Local Plan (mainly towns in the former Waveney area along the Norfolk/Suffolk border) are not on especially constrained parts of the Suffolk highway network. It is not expected, given the small size of the sites, that the proposed allocations would have significant impact on the Suffolk highway network.*

*However, in our previous response, dated 2nd August 2021, SCC stated that a high-level assessment of the impact caused by the Village Clusters Local Plan should be undertaken. The current Regulation 19 draft does not appear to be accompanied by any strategic assessment of cross border traffic impacts arising from the proposed allocations and we have had no further engagement with South Norfolk Council following our 2021 response.*

*We are aware that the South Norfolk Village Clusters Local Plan has been developed alongside the Greater Norwich Local Plan. A review of the evidence base for the Greater Norwich Local Plan has shown that no strategic cross border assessment, which addresses the Village Cluster allocations was completed for this Plan.*

*Nevertheless, following recent conversations with Norfolk County Council, we are not anticipating any significant impacts on traffic in Suffolk as a result of the proposed allocations. Though, we would still welcome discussions regarding the creation and enhancement of sustainable, walking and cycling, transport links between Norfolk villages close to the border and key destinations in Suffolk. “*

Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Walker.

Planning Strategy Manager

Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure

Suffolk County Council