To South Norfolk Council
Planning Department

7th May 2025

RE: Ref: 2025/1150
Land North of Church Road, Aslacton, Norfolk.

Dear Sir,

In reference to the above Aslacton Parish Council object to this proposed based on the following:-

In the main this development is considered too large and in the wrong place in the Village together with the following reasons.

The original development plan, SNC's first preferred site did not extend past the current building line and did not go up as far as Muir Lane. You have now presented this plan that stretches beyond the building line and abuts Muir Lane.

The proposed site is Grade 3 –good to moderate agricultural land. Losing additional farmland in the area taking into account the current Field BESS, East Pye Solar, Pathfinder Clean Energy, Aldeby Solar Park and other schemes is considered detrimental to the overall local and national economy.

1 Size and Design -

New housebuilding should occur in areas experiencing rising employment. This would keep local house prices low and ensure workers in the other parts of the country are able to move there to take advantage of growing opportunities. We consider this housing estate in this location does not meet this criteria of rising employment.

The site assessment for ASL1 was completed in September 2018 and therefore does not include a full assessment of the new development at Coopers Close which is directly opposite this proposed site. To-date properties within Coopers close remain unsold due to the economic decline.

As a minimum the site must be fully reassessed on a number of fronts as outlined in sections A.26 –A.28 of this document (the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan –Reg. 19 Pre-submission draft). A new LVA (Landscape Visual Appraisal) should be completed as per section A.35 of the SNVCHAP Reg. 19 given the properties that now directly overlook ASL1.

Note that this reassessment must take into account both the impact of the proposed site at ASL1 on the current development at Coopers Close, and also the impact of the Coopers Close development on the proposed site ASL1 in terms of affected views, increased traffic, increased light, increased footfall and the number of dwellings required.

This site has increased from 25 residential units to 36 units.

Only 8 affordable homes are shown on the Indicative Site Plan dated 9.4.2025 contrary to the developers Planning statement dated 9.4.2025 of 12 affordable houses. Current planning legislation dictates there should be 11.88 affordable homes on this site as it

currently stands. Concerns exist that the developers have not provided an up to-date Site Plan showing these 12 affordable houses.

Unless policy guidelines have changed, the site for these dwellings is too big based on National Planning Policy Framework guidelines which are quoted in section A.7 of SNVCHAP Reg. 19 as follows: “Paragraph 69 of the NPPF notes the importance of small and medium sized sites up to 1 hectare in size, in contributing to meeting housing needs.” Even taking off 0.4 hectares for a village green of 1 acre (as per the Preliminary Illustrative Zoning Plan drawing number DR-A-1000) this leaves a site of 1.9 hectares of dwellings. Furthermore, the number of dwellings should also be reduced to reflect the 14 dwellings at Coopers Close, Aslacton (planning permission reference 2020/0493), and the granted permission (reference 2020/0751) for 8 dwellings at Orchard Farm, Frith Way, Great Moulton in addition to include the 14 dwellings on land North of High Green, Great Moulton (reference 2020/0130) and the granted planning permission on 26th November 2020.

There is shown Car Parking for mothers to use whilst dropping off and collecting their children from Aslacton School which is further down Church Road.

Following a closed house consultation at the School by the Applicants with the parents, 5 mothers and 1 grandmother attended. The net result is only 2 mothers stated they would use the parking but not when it rained.

The reality is this designated parking will become an overflow parking for the housing estate residents. An example would be workman’s vans, camper vans, caravans and other such vehicle that the limited parking provided on each housing unit could not accommodate.

2 Rural Isolation -

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:-

Ch 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

96. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other –for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages

This application as it currently stands does not meet NPPF Ch 8, 96 policies.
Rural isolation refers to the state of living in a geographically remote area with limited access to services, social connections, and opportunities, often leading to a lack of social interaction and feelings of loneliness. It can impact various aspects of life, including mental health, access to education, employment, and healthcare.

The proposed site has no access to these amenities set out more fully below.

- Geographical remoteness:

Rural areas often have lower population densities and dispersed settlements, making it difficult for residents to access essential services and connect with others.

- **Limited public transport:**
  A lack of investment in public transport can make it difficult for residents to travel to and from nearby towns and cities, further isolating those who cannot afford a car.

- **Lack of essential services:**
  Rural areas may have fewer retail spaces, schools, healthcare facilities, and other essential services, forcing residents to travel long distances to access them.

- **Limited social infrastructure:**

Rural areas may have fewer social and recreational facilities, making it harder for residents to build social connections and participate in community activities.

- **Digital connectivity:**
  Rural areas may have unreliable or limited access to internet services, further isolating residents who rely on technology for communication and information.

- **Mental health:**

Rural isolation can lead to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and stress, as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation.

- **Access to services:**
  Residents may struggle to access essential services like healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, impacting their overall quality of life.

- **Economic challenges:**
  Rural isolation can create economic challenges, such as limiting access to employment opportunities and increasing the cost of living due to higher transport costs.

- **Social isolation:**
  Rural isolation can lead to reduced social interaction and feelings of loneliness, impacting social well-being.

2 **Access & Highway Safety** -

Access is shown to be off Church Road which is a single track country lane which joins Muir Lane again a single track lane. The impact on the environment during the construction process will damage the verges and ditches which will be detriment to the current eco balance that currently exists.

Pedestrian safety is key. There is a bus stop on the corner of Church Road and Muir Lane just where construction vehicles will be turning. This stretch of road is 60mph and is one of the main routes out of Aslacton for all vehicles including School buses and Coaches. Should construction traffic meet oncoming traffic the road is not wide enough for either to pass.

The two lanes (Church Road and Muir Lane) leading to the development for construction traffic and in the future increased vehicle traffic from the development of a minimum of 72 vehicles will create an increased high risk for cyclists, walkers and horses due to it's width and bends.

Church Road junction exits onto Muir Lane which is a 60 mph speed limit. Looking to the south of the junction exit is a blind corner due to the curvature of the road and hedgerows. Cars do travel at 60mph down towards the Church Road junction heading to Forncett/Long Stratton which will lead to accidents.

3 **Education** -

Aslacton Primary School currently has very limited space for providing and meeting the current educational needs in the area. This applies to Forncett and Tacolneston Schools resulting in young people travelling to Long Stratton for their schooling.

To compound the school intake it is calculated based on recent granted and current planning applications around the area that this could result potentially in an extra 108 school children.

The current public transport infrastructure which consists of school buses and public buses are unable to deal with this particular age group. This will leads to additional highway traffic at key times during the week on roads unsuitable for high traffic volumes.

4 **Flora and Fauna** -

Natural England's directive on flora and fauna, as part of the Nature Recovery Network, focuses on protecting and restoring England's natural environment, with commitments to halt species decline, increase species abundance, and restore habitats by 2030 and 2042. This development conflicts with Natural England's directive.

It has been observed skylarks, hares, kestrels, buzzards and roe deer across the proposed site. Consideration should be given to the provision of a wildlife corridor through the site and biodiversity net gain should be clearly detailed in any plans. Issues such as lighting will need to be addressed given the dark spot that Aslacton occupies and so as not to be detrimental to existing bat populations.

5 **Visual Impact** –

Due to the site location this will make a major impact when approaching Aslacton Village and destroy the openness rural villages are known for.

Reviewing the aspect of locals public view of the proposed site. A "public view" refers to a place or situation where something is openly accessible and visible to the general public. It is considered the current outline planning application does not take into account this principle in that taller residential units are across the whole estate where visually they should be at the far north side to mitigate their impact.

The current landscaping proposals do not meet SNVC Objective 3 which aims to "protect the character of villages and their settings". Further landscaping measures will be needed to mitigate the effect of loss of open views for other dwellings and road users on Church

Road. Section A.24 of the SNVCHAP Reg. 19 demands that “appropriate landscaping measures are delivered as part of new development”.

6 Light Pollution –This site will cause Light Pollution in an area where non exists.

Light pollution in the countryside, caused by excessive artificial light, can disrupt natural ecosystems, impair stargazing, and negatively impact wildlife and human health, blurring the distinction between urban and rural areas. To expand further:-

What it is:

Light pollution, or "obtrusive light," refers to the unwanted or excessive artificial light that can disrupt the natural environment and interfere with the enjoyment of the night sky.

Sources:

Common sources of light pollution in the countryside include road lighting, security lighting, residential lighting and poorly designed or excessive lighting in villages and towns.

Impact on wildlife:

- Nocturnal animals:
- Artificial light can disrupt the natural behaviours of nocturnal animals, such as migration patterns, foraging, and breeding.
- Migratory birds:
- Light can confuse and disorient migrating birds, potentially leading to collisions and fatalities.
- Insects:
- Light can disrupt insect behaviour, affecting pollination and other ecological processes.

Impact on humans:

- Sleep and health:
- Exposure to artificial light at night can negatively affect human sleep patterns and potentially contribute to health problems.
- Reduced enjoyment of the night sky:
- Light pollution obscures the view of stars and other celestial objects, diminishing the natural beauty and wonder of the night sky.
- Blurring the countryside character:

Excessive lighting can blur the distinction between urban and rural areas, reducing the sense of remoteness and natural beauty in the countryside.

7 Noise Pollution –

Currently there is no noise created by this green field. This will increase from the noise arising from the construction works from traffic, plant or machinery used in the construction of this proposed housing site and thereafter from the actual housing estate itself.

8 Fire –

Electric cars are becoming more widely used. It has been identified that Battery charging points will be introduced into the housing units by future residents in order to charge their car. Lithium-ion batteries can become unstable and need to be kept cool.

The impact of Global warming is causing the UK's climate to become warmer, with all of the UK's ten warmest years on record occurring since 2002, and heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense. The UK has already warmed by 1°C since the 1950s, with the most recent decade (2012-2021) being 1.0°C warmer than the 1961-1990 average.

Heatwaves have increased, like the one in summer 2018, are now 30 times more likely due to climate change, and by 2050, such heatwaves are expected to occur every other year. Summers are projected to become hotter and drier. Winters are projected to become warmer and wetter on average, although cold or dry winters will still occur sometimes.

Linked to the UK’s weather warming can give rise to More frequent and intense heatwaves.

The local Fire Station in Long Stratton has one tender. We have concerns as to it’s effectiveness due to the nature of Lithium-ion battery fire. Lithium battery fires require specialized extinguishing methods, as traditional methods like water or foam are often ineffective and can even worsen the situation.

9 Air Pollution & Public Health -

Lithium battery fires cause significant air pollution spikes, exceeding World Health Organisation guidelines for particulate matter (PM2.5) and posing health risks to local communities

When these batteries catch fire, they release a range of harmful chemicals, including toxic gases and heavy metals, into the atmosphere. These emissions can have long-term health implications for nearby residents, contributing to respiratory issues and other health problems.

10 Flooding –

Surface Water - The site proposed location in on a slope. The fact that 3.15 hectares will be concreted will cause high levels of surface water, (which would normally be absorbed

into the ground) to run off down to the bottom of Pottergate Street and Muir Lane. Flooding already exists at this junction when heavy rain takes place.

It is noted that the outline planning design tries to mitigate surface water problems through the use of permeable driveways and attenuation ponds.

This design does not negate Natural England's directive on Neutral Neutrality.

Surface water is easily contaminated from oil, cleaning products used by occupants of housing estates.

The attenuation ponds and absorption are lower than the proposed development which will filter polluted surface water into the River Tas. The River Tas joins the River Wensum and then the River Yare which feeds directly into the Norfolk Broads. The River Yare is one of the main tributaries running directly into the Broads.

Such pollution is contrary to Natural England's directive.

Having researched the Environment Agency Flood risk management plans for England to cover the period from 2021 –2027. The flood risk in this area of NR15 states the highest risk of flooding in this location is from surface water. Currently the yearly chance of flooding is Medium. However it has been identified by the Environment Agency that in the years 2040 to 2060 the year chance of flooding will rise to High. These facts are based on the proposed site remaining agricultural and the land absorbing excess surface water.

Foul Water – Currently Anglia Water in their letter dated 24th December 2024 stated " that the current 150mm sewer within Church road does not have sufficient capacity to accept the foul flow from this site. The current pumping station located off The Street is running at maximum capacity based on the current know catchment area it is serving."

Great Moulton Village's foul water together with Aslacton's all run to the current pumping station off The Street, Aslacton. Great Moulton is currently having a high level of new residential units being built which will increase the foul water placing greater pressure on the system which is stated to be at maximum capacity.

Linked to this is the regular occurrence (evidence can be provided if requested) that when it rains surface water from Great Moulton runs into the foul sewerage network which in turn overloads the foul water system resulting in high levels of detritus being discharged across The Street, Aslacton. The Street, Aslacton has a ditch running beside it leading into a stream that feeds into the River Tas. This detritus/foul pollution runs down into the River Tas which is direct contravention of Natural England's directive on Neutral Neutrality relating to the Broads, as stated above.

If SNDC are required to show development in Aslacton, then following Aslacton's growth over many years as a ribbon development, (no housing estates) the Parish Council can show several infill sites, a brown field site and reduced numbers on the proposed site to meet and/or exceed the proposed quote of new houses whilst keeping within the character of Aslacton Village.

To enable us all to reach the right conclusion to meet everyone's objectives, Aslacton Parish Council would welcome a meeting at your convenience on this matter.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Nicole Ollett
The Clerk to Aslacton Parish Council.