

Policy Statement:

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership's Joint Core Strategy

Background

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP), consisting of Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council, has produced a Joint Core Strategy (JCS) which aims to promote major growth in the period up to 2026. It includes proposals for 37,000 new houses. The majority of these, around 33,000, are to be built in the Norwich Policy Area bringing a population increase of around 50,000 people. 10,000 houses are planned for a growth triangle north east of Norwich; Long Stratton is due to become a town the size of Diss and Wymondham and Hethersett will have to accommodate at least an additional 3,200 houses.

Key Points

- **By UK standards South Norfolk and Broadland have relatively low population densities and are remote from large industrial urban conurbations.** Settlements are generally compact and separated from each other and the rural setting of Norwich - a relatively compact city surrounded by countryside - is unusual in England. These factors underpin the area's rural nature and give it a different landscape from the suburban, homogenised appearance typical of much of England. In our overcrowded country this difference should be cherished and not threatened with demolition by the massive housing growth and associated infrastructure development envisaged in the Joint Core Strategy.
- **The housing targets in the JCS are incompatible with CPRE core objectives to protect and enhance the rural environment.** The high level of development envisaged, much of it on greenfield sites, will lead to a severe erosion of the features that make the countryside surrounding Norwich so special. Rural areas will be suburbanised and tranquillity will diminish as population density, traffic congestion, light and noise pollution increase considerably.
- **The only way to effectively protect the countryside around Norwich is to lower the growth targets.** A recent GNDP monitoring report revealed that new housing delivery has fallen well below the strategy's target levels and that this trend is likely to continue until at least 2017. We welcome these findings and urge the GNDP to reduce considerably its overall target for new house building up to 2026.

What CPRE Norfolk is campaigning for:

- **Lower projected housing targets:** CPRE fully supports the provision of an adequate level of new housing to satisfy local demand. However these needs do not justify a housing target as high as 37,000. They can be met with a much lower number than this. The total number of applicants on the housing registers of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk councils is approximately 14,000 but only around 30% are defined as inadequately housed - just over 4,000. League tables provided by Shelter show that these councils are in total currently providing a more than adequate supply of affordable houses. The reality is the JCS is not about local housing need. The GNDP has admitted it is a plan based on inward migration. The 33,000 extra houses planned for the Norwich Policy Area are mainly to facilitate a population expansion of 50,000 people.
- **Re-use of empty housing:** There are currently 1,470 empty properties within the territory of the 3 GNDP authorities. If these homes were brought into use this could help reduce the target for the number of new houses needed.
- **'Brownfield first' approach.** Damage to the countryside should be minimised through the strict prioritisation of 'brownfield' sites for new development before greenfield sites are considered.

How you can help

You can join us in our campaign to prevent urban sprawl spreading from Rackheath to Wymondham, and support our efforts to reduce housing targets by:

- writing to your MP and your local council highlighting these issues
- responding to local council consultations on planning proposals
- becoming a member of CPRE Norfolk

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The Norfolk branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE Norfolk) exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural Norfolk by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. As an independent voice for the landscape, we engage with local and regional planning systems and campaign locally for positive solutions that will support the long-term future of Norfolk - one of England's most rural areas.