

5. Access to the countryside and a green belt for Norwich

CPRE Norfolk works to protect and enhance the green spaces and countryside which footpaths enable us to access and enjoy.

Please join with us:

- By supporting our campaign for the creation of a Green Belt for Norwich
- By lobbying for improved funding in order that public rights of way are well signed and maintained
- By campaigning to increase the number of places where people can enjoy the benefits of being in nature

6. Light Pollution and Rural Tranquillity

Norfolk is fortunate in possessing some of the least light polluted and most tranquil countryside in England.

Please help us to:

- Protect the dark skies and dark landscapes of Norfolk from light pollution
- Conserve the tranquil rural landscapes of Norfolk for the health and well being of us all

7. Flooding

Flooding is an increasing problem in towns and villages throughout Norfolk and a major concern to many.

Please support policies that:

- Provide greater financial and practical help to the Environment Agency, local councils and landowners to facilitate the widespread introduction of natural flood management schemes

8. Transport

CPRE Norfolk opposes the construction of a Norwich Western Link Road (NWL) because of the harm it would cause to the landscape, environment, wildlife and ecology in the lovely River Wensum valley. We would much prefer that transport problems are solved by investment in public transport.

Please join with us to:

- Oppose the construction of the Norwich Western Link road
- Lobby for greater investment in public transport solutions

More detailed descriptions and explanations of the key issues identified in the CPRE Norfolk Manifesto are available, including:

- our solutions to fix the broken housing market
- our ideas on planning
- our views on the best ways to accommodate the generation of renewable energy without harming the countryside.

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The countryside charity
Norfolk



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Policies and actions that will enhance
and protect the Norfolk countryside:
our manifesto for the new government



CPRE Norfolk calls on all political parties to recognise the value of the countryside and its essential role in answering the nation's challenges by supporting the common sense and practical policies set out below.

1. Agriculture

Agriculture has always been a mainstay of Norfolk's rural life and has shaped our county. A viable farming community is vital for our rural economy as well as the UK. Over much of Norfolk it is farmers who create the landscape and look after the countryside.

Please support:

- Policies that promote a prosperous farming industry which not only produces food but also improves soil quality and biodiversity including through the planting of new hedgerows and trees
- Improved access to farmland for leisure and education which will increase public appreciation of the value that our farming industry provides
- Policies that protect and prevent the loss of our agricultural land of all qualities

2. Housing

CPRE Norfolk supports new housing of the right type when it is built in the right places in the right quantity. However, excessively high centrally-fixed housing targets cause an unnecessarily large number of Greenfield sites to be allocated in local plans and this leads to a needless loss of countryside. House builders "cherry pick" attractive rural sites while at the same time land banking many others.

Land banking is a huge problem in Norfolk. The emerging new local plan for Greater Norwich (the GNLP covering Norwich, South Norfolk and Broadland) contains a carry over of more than 30,000 un-built commitments from the current plan – i.e. sites for 30,000 houses that developers have not built out. Clearly housing targets are set at too high a level. There should be an insistence that existing sites are built out before new sites can be developed. Furthermore, building on Brownfield sites must be prioritised, as should the provision of social rented housing, because the linking of affordable housing provision to the building of market housing has failed to provide communities in Norfolk with genuinely affordable homes.

Please support:

- Reducing excessive house building targets to prevent unnecessary loss of countryside
- Prioritising the provision of social rented housing
- Ending the link that ties the provision of social housing to the building of market housing
- The creation of small scale rural exception sites for social rented housing in villages
- Increasing occupancy rates in holiday homes and second properties
- The phasing of development in order that current sites allocated for housing are built out before any new sites can be developed (i.e. put an end to land banking – see below*)
- Prioritising development on Brownfield sites
- The regeneration of inner cities by encouraging the conversion of redundant office and retail space in to residential usage
- The introduction of a statutory requirement for all new buildings to be carbon neutral

(*) 161 parish and town councils in Norfolk support us on the phasing of development including many in your constituency

3. Planning

The creation of the planning system is one of the major achievements of post war Britain. It was designed to prevent urban sprawl and is still very much needed in this regard. Unfortunately planners are often unfairly criticised by politicians. In Norfolk we know that the blocking of housing development has not been caused by the planners. It is the builders who are the blockers having failed to develop allocated sites for 30,000 houses in the Greater Norwich area.

It is not a good idea to weaken the planning system, or to reduce the role of local communities in decision making. Proposals in recent years to create growth areas where planning rules would not apply must be resisted.

There is a need for regional planning to be reintroduced in Britain so that the special features of an area are recognised as important considerations in the plan making process. The relatively few remaining parts of lowland England which are still mainly rural in character, e.g. Norfolk, that act as the "green lungs" of the nation deserve better protection. Not everywhere has to be equally suburbanised – that is not good planning.

Please support:

- Reforming and strengthening the planning system to ensure that our countryside, landscape and environment are properly protected
- The retention of community involvement in all planning decisions – local democracy is a key element in the process that must be respected
- The reintroduction of regional planning to better protect the rural character of places like Norfolk

And avoid the temptation to create growth areas where planning laws are relaxed

4. Renewables Done Well

Climate change poses a great threat and CPRE Norfolk supports de-carbonising energy production through increasing the supply of renewable energy. However, this should not be achieved at the expense of the countryside. With good planning and sensible decision making it is possible to deliver a mix of renewable energy solutions of the "right" scale and in the "right" locations.

Please support:

- The CPRE campaign for roof top solar energy production – there really is no need to sacrifice countryside for solar farms
- Small scale and community owned onshore wind schemes involving new micro wind harvesting technologies to avoid the negative impact of large scale turbines on the local landscape
- The retention in the NPPF of the requirement for community support for onshore wind proposals
- Local councils, residents and campaign groups fighting National Grid's proposals to transmit offshore wind energy from Swardeston to Tilbury using pylons. Campaign for a better alternative e.g. offshore grid connections
- Our campaign for all new buildings to be carbon neutral and for substantially greater funding to be made available for schemes to increase the energy efficiency of existing buildings