



The countryside charity
Norfolk

CPRE Norfolk Position Statement

New towns

For the first time in 50 years, there is a national commitment to building a new generation of new towns. A New Town is a planned settlement created by a governing authority with specific guidelines regarding its purpose, location, and characteristics.

The Government is looking to build around 12 new towns in England and will select the sites from the 100 areas that have been put forward for consideration. The South Norfolk MP has proposed that a new town is built in his constituency. Each new town would contain at least 10,000 houses.

CPRE Norfolk supports new housing of the right type when it is built in the right places in the right quantity. However, we do not support the building of a new town in Norfolk because the current housing targets in all the local plans across Norfolk are already unnecessarily high and therefore there is no need for a new town. There are a huge number of sites allocated and available in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) area and elsewhere in Norfolk for new market housing that remain undeveloped. Meeting existing inflated targets (*see Footnote 1*) would already lead to a significant loss of countryside, a reduction in rural tranquillity, increased light pollution and traffic levels and the construction of a new town would cause considerable additional damage to our much-loved landscape.

Historically housing targets in local authority plans in Norfolk have not been met which is an indication that the targets were set at too high a level. This shortfall in delivery is likely to continue. CPRE Norfolk argues that 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.

Suggesting that a new town would be beneficial because the concentration of development in one location could relieve the development pressures experienced by other settlements is deceptive. Under current planning legislation there is no mechanism for removing or replacing an allocated site for housing from an adopted Local Plan. Therefore, the implication that if a new town was built there could be some kind of trade-off whereby some of the allocated sites that make up the current housing target in the Local Plan could be withdrawn is false (*see Footnote 2*).

The building of a new town of 24,000 people (10,000 houses x average UK household size of 2.4) located somewhere in South Norfolk is a preposterous idea. There is no need for a new town in South Norfolk or anywhere else in Norfolk. A new town would consume a large area of countryside and contribute to a further degradation of the attractive and distinctive rural landscape of Norfolk.

March 2025

Footnotes

1. The introduction of new mandatory housing targets has further increased the housing targets in the local Plans of most local authorities in Norfolk
2. For example, if a new town is built in South Norfolk, the 10,000 houses it would contain will be additional to the 45,000 houses identified in the current GNLP target as it is not possible to remove sites already allocated from the plan. As a consequence, a new town would not relieve development pressures on other settlements.