



August 2016

URGENT: Join us in opposing damaging new housing targets

Dear Parish/Town Council

We are writing to all parish and town councils in Norfolk to share our concerns regarding the unnecessary and damaging development which will happen if new unjustified housing targets, currently under consideration, are included in revised local plans to 2036.

We believe that parish and town councils are best placed to shape the future of Norfolk and we are seeking to enlist your support in a campaign to ensure that no new sites are allocated for house building until all existing allocations have been developed. By working closely together we will be able to influence the key policies and decisions made as part of the current revision of local plans.

In all parts of Norfolk existing local plans to 2021, 2026, or 2030, known as core strategies, already contain inflated housing targets. CPRE campaigned against these, warning that the damage to the countryside would be substantial. This damage is now being revealed as Greenfield developments take place but we have only had a glimpse of what is to come as the delivery of housing has failed to keep up with the targets set, which in itself implies that the targets were set too high, and in many parts of Norfolk less than half of current housing allocations have been completed.

In spite of their failure to meet existing targets local authorities are already seeking sites to accommodate a substantial increase in housing numbers for inclusion in plans to 2036. In our meetings with Norfolk planning leaders and the Housing Minister we have been told that the imposition of these additional housing targets is not inevitable and housing market assessments* need not be slavishly followed if local authorities can present a convincing case that the environmental harm caused by adopting the new targets is serious enough to outweigh potential benefits.

Please join us in an alliance to oppose the inclusion of additional housing targets in the 2036 local plans by signing the enclosed pledge of support. By presenting a strong collective case we can influence decision making at all levels of government and persuade District Councils to produce a convincing case as to why the adoption of increased targets would cause unacceptable damage to the environment and landscape of the county we all love.

Please discuss this matter at your next meeting and we look forward to hearing from you in anticipation of your council joining with us in this most worthwhile of causes.

Yours faithfully
CPRE Norfolk

CPRE Norfolk:

- Supports the provision of affordable housing and sufficient housing for the retired and those needing care - this should be a stand alone provision not dependent on inflated overall targets
- Is committed to prioritizing development on Brownfield sites
- Seeks to protect agricultural land from development
- Is campaigning for a Greenbelt around Norwich and for Greenbelt principles to be applied to all towns in Norfolk
- Is working to prevent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which would make it even more difficult than it is now to influence local planning decisions
- Is concerned that new local plans to 2036 may overrule many neighbourhood plans that have been completed and adopted



THE PLEDGE

_____ Parish / Town Council supports CPRE Norfolk in its campaign aimed at ensuring that no new sites are allocated for house building in revised local plans to 2036 until all existing allocations in current core strategies have been developed.

We consider that unrealistic and unnecessary new housing targets, currently under consideration, would cause unacceptable damage to the environment and landscape of Norfolk.

This council therefore asks that our local authorities prepare cases to demonstrate that the environmental harm caused by slavishly following housing market assessments* is serious enough to outweigh potential benefits and in so doing enable the adoption of local plans to 2036 that do not elevate housing targets beyond existing levels.

We note that the Annual Monitoring Reports of local councils reveal that housing delivery is considerably below target levels and that large areas of land already allocated for development remain available and therefore there is no need for new allocations to be made.

Signed _____

Dated _____

* Furthermore these Strategic Housing Market Assessments, which pre-date Brexit, are now unreliable.

Footnote

Pledging support will not increase your council's workload. We will submit all pledges to the relevant planning authorities.