

South Norfolk VCHAPs Examination

HEARING STATEMENT

**Matter C: Allocations & Settlement Limits – Cluster 2
Alpington, Yelverton & Bergh Apton**

2a Allocation ALP1: West of Church Meadow, Alpington

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Otley Properties (on behalf of the Landowners)**

27 November 2025

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This hearing Statement has been prepared by John Long Planning Ltd, on behalf Otley Properties, the promoters (developer) of Allocation ALP1: West of Church Meadow, Alpington. The Statement provides information and responses to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions For examination published 10 October 2025. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has not been used in the preparation of this Statement, although editing, grammar and spell-checking tools have been used.

2 Response to Inspector's Issues

Matter C: Allocations & Settlement Limits – Cluster 2 Alpington, Yelverton & Bergh Apton

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Question:

a) Has the site been allocated previously or is it a new allocation?

2.1 The site has not previously been formally allocated in an adopted Local Plan. It is a new site allocation proposed in the VCHAPS.

b) Does the site have planning permission and/or are there current applications under consideration?

c) The site does not have planning consent, and there are no current/pending planning applications for the site.

d) What is the land currently used for, what is the ownership position and is the site currently being promoted by a developer? Are there any site occupiers/leaseholders who would be affected, if so how?

2.2 The site is currently in equestrian use (horse grazing). There are no site occupiers, leaseholders, or tenants who would be affected by this proposal. The landowners can confirm that the site is currently subject to a restrictive covenant, which was put in place to secure an overage agreement. The Landowners further confirm that a clear and legally defined mechanism exists, set out in the original purchase documentation, by which the restrictive covenant must be released upon payment of the overage sum.

2.3 Under the governing documents, the restrictive covenant holder is obligated to enter into the agreed form of release to discharge the covenant once the overage payment has been made. The overage sum itself is a clearly defined amount due between the parties. As at the date of this statement, the Landowner is working to a short timeframe to complete the overage payment and, consequently, release the restrictive covenant.

2.4 The site is promoted by a developer on behalf of the landowners, and the intention is to progress a planning application as soon as possible following the site's formal allocation in the Local Plan. Costs for technical work to support an application, and utilities connection costs etc., have been obtained and the utilities companies have confirmed that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional dwellings, subject to (costed) reinforcement in some cases.

e) Is the site sustainably located in relation to village services and facilities? Where is the nearest (a) primary school (b) convenience shop (c) village hall (d) recreation ground (e)

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other key facilities? How accessible are these for walkers and cyclists, in the case of walkers for example by continuous footways?

2.5 The site is on the northern edge of Alpington, adjacent to existing housing and within walking distance of key village facilities. Alpington has a primary school (Alpington VA School), a village hall, and a public house (Wheel of Fortune), all within approximately 800 metres / 10 minutes' walk of the site. The community football pitches lie immediately north of the site, and a new footpath link is proposed to maintain access to the pitch and wider footpath network footpath via footpaths Alpington FP2/Yelverton FP4. The nearest shops/post office are in Hellington, Poringland and Framingham Earl, about 2 km away, all of which are within reasonable cycling distance (under 5 km).

2.6 Pedestrian access is good: Church Meadow has footways on both sides, connecting to Church Road and the wider village. The site is within a five-minute walk of bus stops on Church Road, served by the No. 86 bus to Norwich and Beccles. The village is also served by school bus services.

2.7 Continuous footways link the site to the school, village hall, and pub, making walking practical and safe. Cycling is also viable, with local roads of good standard and a 5 km catchment covering Hellington, Poringland and Framingham Earl for shops and services.

f) Would the landscape and other physical impacts of the housing allocation be acceptable? Would it be acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the area? How does it relate to the existing built-up area of the settlement? Are there any other significant constraints?

2.8 The site is well-contained by mature vegetation and adjacent housing, meaning its development would have limited visual impact. Retention and enhancement of boundary trees and hedges and additional planting will help to strengthen screening. The site does not extend development into open countryside in a visually intrusive way. It is flat, with no significant topographical constraints. Flood risk work previously undertaken at the site confirms the site lies in Flood Zone 1 (low risk), although surface water will need mitigating. Archaeological work undertaken on the site suggests that archaeological potential is moderate but manageable through planning conditions. Previous ecology surveys indicate low ecological value beyond hedgerows, which will be retained and enhanced. The overhead power lines require clearance zones but do not prevent development, they may be undergrounded.

g) Is the access and site acceptable in highway terms?

2.9 Access to the site is considered acceptable in highway terms. Access will be via Church Meadow, which is a Type 3 Access Road capable of serving up to 100 dwellings. The likely internal road is a Type 6 Mews Court Road (5.8 m wide), suitable for up to 25 units. Previous transport work confirms that the local highway network has capacity for the additional traffic (around 18 trips in the AM peak and 15 in the PM peak) and that there are no prevailing safety concerns. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity is good, and bus stops are within five minutes' walk.

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h) Is the estimate of site capacity justified?

2.10 The policy requirement to deliver approximately 25 dwellings on the site is considered justified. This figure represents a density of around 13 dwellings per hectare. Whilst this may be considered low, it takes into account the need to mitigate impacts on the veteran tree and also provide for surface water attenuation.

i) Are the site-specific requirements for development of the site justified, consistent with national policy and would they be effective?

2.11 **A) Access from Church Meadow, with off-site highways widening to Church Road, formalising the existing unmarked Church Road bus stops and improved crossing point to Alpington with Yelverton Village Hall;**

- The Landowners/promoter (developer) consider that the requirement for the off-site highway widening at Church Road could be clearer about the extent of widening needed. However, provided that the amount of widening is anticipated to be proportionate to the predicted additional traffic generated by the development for instance, occasional passing bays rather than widening of significant lengths of the road; and that land required for the works is within public ownership or forms part of the adopted highway, the works would appear to be deliverable. Similarly, provided that the land needed to formalise the nearest Church Road bus stops and improve the crossing point to the village hall is within public ownership or adopted highway, the Landowners/promoter (Developer) consider the requirement to be deliverable. It is also noted that the policy's written justification (para 2.10) states that "...*Alternative highways solutions may be agreed with the Highway Authority at the time of any planning application*", this provides a degree of comfort that an appropriate and viable highways mitigation scheme can be identified. Consideration should be given to include this text within the policy itself. On these assumptions, the requirement is considered to meet the tests.

2.12 **B) A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and strategy to inform the layout/development of the site, including access arrangements. The FRA must have regard to the requirements set out in the Stage 2 VC SFRA;**

- The Landowners/promoter (developer) acknowledge that surface water requires careful consideration and have considered the mitigation measures that would inform the layout/development of the site. These include installing a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), incorporating swales, flow control features and on site attenuation etc., raising finished floor levels, grading external surfaces so that water is directed away from dwellings towards the existing ditch and clearing existing drainage in the southeast corner of the site. The landowners/promoter (developers) remain confident that there are sufficient mitigation options to ensure that an appropriate layout, taking into account surface water can be achieved, and that access and egress can remain safe under all storm scenarios. On this basis, the requirement is considered to meet the tests.

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2.13 ***C) Protection and enhancement of the setting of the Veteran Tree in the north-east corner of the site and of the mature hedges on the site boundaries;***

- The Landowners/promoter (developer) acknowledge that the veteran oak is a key ecological and landscape asset. It will be retained and safeguarded through strict adherence to BS 5837:2012 guidelines, including exclusion zones, phased fencing, and careful site management to prevent root damage or soil compaction. A similar approach will be taken for the site's boundary hedges. On this basis, the requirement is considered to meet the tests.

2.14 ***D) Pedestrian link to footpath Alpington FP2/Yelverton FP4, which runs along the northern boundary of the site;***

- The Landowners/promoter (developer) confirm that a pedestrian link from the site to footpath Alpington FP2/Yelverton FP4 running to the north of the site can be achieved. On this basis, the requirement is considered to meet the tests.

2.15 ***E) Minimise the impact on the residential amenity of properties adjoining the site through an appropriate site layout.***

- The landowners/promoter (developer) acknowledge the need to minimise impact on the residential amenity of properties and remain confident that an appropriate layout can be achieved. However, the requirement repeats other policies in the Development Plan including the South Norfolk Development Management Policy DM3.13 Amenity, Noise and Quality of Life which specifically seeks to avoid unreasonable impacts on neighbour amenities. These requirements may eventually be replaced by nationally prescribed development management policies. However, the landowners/promoter (Developer) have no concerns should the policy requirement be retained.

j) Would development of the site be viable, including the delivery of policy compliant affordable housing?

2.16 The landowners/promoter (developer) confirm that based on the available information, the policy's on and off-site requirements (subject to understanding the extent and costs of off-site highways works); and the aspiration for up to 33% affordable housing can be delivered. This will be confirmed once the technical work to support a planning application have concluded, and there is greater certainty about development costs and sales values.

j) Overall, is the site deliverable within the plan period? When is development likely to commence? Has the landowner/developer confirmed this?

2.17 The land is promoted by a developer with a track record of delivering housing schemes in the local area. The landowners have an agreement in place with the promoter (developer), Otley Properties, to develop the site.

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- 2.18 Costs Utilities connections have been obtained, and the utilities companies have confirmed that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional dwellings, subject to (costed) reinforcement in some cases.
- 2.19 The expectation is that the technical work needed to support a planning application will be completed within 8-12 months of the site's formal allocation (subject to ecology survey periods). Following consent, the Developers anticipating completing the discharge of pre-commencement conditions processes within 6 months following planning consent and with construction likely to commence with 3-6 months of the discharge of Condition applications. Construction timescales will depend on the Housing Market; however, a 2-3 year build out of all units would be achievable.

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3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The land at West of Church Meadow, Alpington (Site ALP1) remains available, suitable for development and deliverable. The allocation represents a sustainable opportunity for growth in the village. The site is well-related to the existing settlement, benefits from good connectivity to local services, and can be developed without causing harm to landscape character or residential amenities. Surface water management, highway access, and ecological protection, including safeguarding the veteran oak and mature hedgerows can be effectively addressed through established best practice and proportionate mitigation and through a carefully designed layout.
- 3.2 The land is in single ownership and actively promoted by a developer with a proven track record, ensuring that delivery can commence promptly following allocation. The covenant matters are being appropriately progressed in the meantime.
- 3.3 With a realistic capacity, policy-compliant affordable housing, and deliverable infrastructure improvements this allocation provides a practical, viable and deliverable opportunity that aligns with national and local policy objectives for sustainable development.
- 3.4 In summary, the allocation of Site ALP1 represents a sustainable, viable opportunity to deliver new homes, including affordable housing, in a location that supports the vitality of Alpington and surrounding village cluster. The landowners/promoter (developer) therefore strongly support the continued allocation of ALP1 within the Local Plan.

APPENDIX 1

Location and Site Plan



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only



 Site Boundary

ALP 1 -West of Church Meadow,
Alpington

APPENDIX 2

Site Photographs





View from the Church Meadow site access looking westwards



View from the Church Meadow site access looking southwards

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