

# **Written Statement: South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (SNVCP) Examination**

## **Submitted by:**

Councillor Richard Elliott, Wicklewood Ward

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## **Barnham Broom (Cluster 5) - MIQ C5a-C5d**

As the District Council Ward Member representing cluster 5, which includes Barnham Broom, I have a responsibility to reflect the views and concerns of my constituents in this submission to the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (SNVCP) Examination. Nowhere in my Ward have these concerns been more pronounced than in Barnham Broom, where the process of early community engagement faced particular challenges.

Due to the timing of the consultation and the impact of Covid-19 regulations, many residents in Barnham Broom felt that their opportunity to engage meaningfully with the proposals was limited. While South Norfolk Council made every effort to facilitate engagement under difficult circumstances, the restrictions on public meetings and the complexity of the VCHAP process meant that many in the community struggled to access clear information or fully understand the implications of the proposed allocation at BB1.

This has resulted in an unprecedented show of public concern. The proposed allocation at Bell Road (BB1) has generated a petition opposing the allocation

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signed by over 600 local people—a remarkable demonstration of unity and strength of feeling in a rural community of this size. Many residents have expressed frustration that, due to the lack of accessible information and the constraints on early engagement, they were unable to make their concerns known at an earlier stage in the process.

Drawing on site assessments, census data, and the evidence base, I will demonstrate that the SNVCP, as currently drafted, departs from the GNLP's intent for balanced, sustainable rural growth in this cluster. I will highlight the disproportionate allocation in terms of quantity and density, the lack of robust justification for site selection and settlement limit changes, and the risks posed to rural character, infrastructure, and community cohesion. The submission concludes with recommendations for a more balanced, evidence-led, and community-focused approach to ensure the plan is sound, justified, and consistent with both local and national policy.

### **Allocations: 40 dwellings (BB1: 40)**

**Site Assessments:** The site is centrally located but requires major junction realignment and loss of hedgerows. The village lacks a recognisable "heart," and the allocation would create a nucleated centre at the expense of rural character.

**Infrastructure:** School is already near capacity; highways improvements are costly and not fully funded. Delivery statement notes uncertainty about developer interest and delivery timescales.

**Disproportion:** Allocation is among the highest in the district, with many clusters receiving far fewer dwellings.

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### **Disproportionate Allocations: Quantitative Comparison of Existing and Proposed Homes**

Based on Census data 2021 the village of Barnham Broom accounts for only 300 homes or just 1.30% of all existing homes in the South Norfolk village clusters, yet it is allocated 40 homes, 3.03% of the expanded 1,320 total, more than double for its relative size of all new homes proposed in the VCHAP.

This demonstrates the inequality and disproportionality of the allocation, with Barnham Broom being required to absorb a far greater share of growth than is justified by its current scale, character, or infrastructure.

The combination of high absolute numbers and an unjustified buffer results in Barnham Broom being subject to a scale and intensity of development that is not only disproportionate within the district but also inconsistent with the GNLP's vision for rural clusters.

### **Extremely High Density and Site Constraints**

The proposed allocation for Barnham Broom (BB1: 40 dwellings on 1.44 hectares) results in a headline density of approximately 27.8 dwellings per hectare. This is exceptionally high for a rural village cluster and is out of character with the surrounding settlement pattern, which is predominantly low-density, edge-of-village, or linear development.

However, the actual density will be even higher in practice. The full 1.44 hectares will not be available for housing development because:

A significant portion of the site must be set aside for green space to meet policy requirements and to provide a buffer to existing properties and the rural edge.

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The allocation is contingent on the realignment and replacement of the existing Bell Road/Norwich Road junction, which will require land take from within the site for new road layout, visibility splays, and associated infrastructure (as confirmed in the site assessment and highways comments).

This means the net developable area for housing will be substantially less than 1.44 hectares, pushing the effective density well above 28 dwellings per hectare—potentially approaching or exceeding 35 dwellings per hectare on the land actually available for homes.

**Comparative Context:** Most other clusters with allocations have densities in the 10-20 dph range, and many rural allocations are even lower. The density in Barnham Broom is not only disproportionately high in absolute numbers but also in terms of dwellings per hectare, further exacerbating the impact on local character and infrastructure.

**Visual and Social Impact:** Such a high-density, nucleated development is out of keeping with the established rural character of Barnham Broom and risks creating an urbanized enclave, undermining the GNLP's intent for small-scale, proportionate, and dispersed rural growth.

## **Conclusion**

The SNVCP allocation for Barnham Broom is fundamentally unsound in its current form. The plan requires the village to absorb a scale and density of development on a single site that is wholly disproportionate to its existing size, character, and infrastructure. The evidence shows that Barnham Broom is being asked to accommodate more than double its fair share of new homes, on a site that is both highly constrained and deeply valued by the community.

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The proposed development at BB1 would result in an urban-style density that is out of keeping with the established rural pattern, eroding the village's character and placing pressure on local services, roads, and school capacity.

The loss of green space at the heart of the village, combined with unresolved infrastructure and deliverability challenges, further undermines the suitability of this allocation.

Crucially, the plan fails to justify why alternative, more appropriate sites have been overlooked in favour of a single, high-impact development. The use of an unjustified buffer inflates the allocation, compounding the risk of overdevelopment and under-delivery.

If adopted as drafted, the SNVCP would not meet the requirements of GNLP Policy 7.4 or national policy on sustainable rural development. It would expose the Council to the risk of undeliverable allocations and lasting harm to the character and sustainability of Barnham Broom.

A more balanced, evidence-led, and community-focused approach is urgently needed to ensure that future growth is genuinely sustainable, proportionate, and supported by those most affected.