

Hingham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023-2043

**A report to South Norfolk Council on the
proposed modifications to the Hingham
Neighbourhood Development Plan**

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by South Norfolk Council in June 2025 to carry out the independent examination of South Norfolk Council's proposed modifications of Policy HING9 of the Hingham Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood area on 9 July 2025.
- 3 This examination has a very specific remit. As such, this report should be considered alongside my initial report on the Plan (September 2024).
- 4 An appropriate level of technical and public consultation has taken place on the proposed modification to the policy.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the proposed modifications to Policy HING9 meet the necessary legal requirements and, together with the broader Plan, should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum area should coincide with the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
6 August 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of South Norfolk Council's proposed modifications to Hingham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023-2043 ('the Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan was initially submitted to South Norfolk Council (SNC) by Hingham Town Council (HTC) in 2024 in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan. I examined the Plan at that time and produced a report. SNC has considered that report and, based on further work commissioned by HTC, has decided not to proceed with one of the recommended modifications in that report (on the proposed development of land at Ladies Meadow as described in Policy HING9) and has proposed its own modifications to the policy. Section 3 of this report explains the details
- 1.3 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan (or in this case a revised policy), or a potentially more sustainable plan/policy except where this arises as from my recommended modifications to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.4 Within this context, this report assesses whether SNC's proposed modification to Policy HING9 is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.5 This report also provides an updated recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then become part of the wider development plan and be used to determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by SNC, with the consent of HTC, to conduct the examination of the proposed modifications to the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of SNC and HTC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan. For clarity, I examined the Plan in 2024.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have 42 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level and more recently as an independent examiner. I have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the proposed modifications to Policy HING9 of the Plan as submitted should proceed to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the proposed modifications to Policy HING9 of the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the proposed modifications to Policy HING9 of the Plan do not proceed to referendum on the basis that they does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Section 8 of this report. The other recommended modifications to the Plan have already been approved by SNC.

Other examination matters

- 2.6 In examining the Plan, I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report and am satisfied that they have been met.

3 Procedural Matters

- 3.1 The examination is based on an assessment of SNC's proposed modifications to Policy HING9 of the neighbourhood plan. This report should be read in conjunction with my substantive report on the Plan (September 2024).
- 3.2 The SNC report and the proposed modified policy is attached at Appendix A of this report. In summary the report highlights the following matters:

The examiner's report was delivered to South Norfolk Council on 22 September 2024. Shortly after receipt of the report, Hingham Town Council approached South Norfolk Council to request that the decision on whether to approve the examiner's recommendations be postponed until the results of the separate feasibility study, referred to within the examiner's comments above, are available and could be taken into account. SNC agreed to this request on the basis that the results of the study may provide the necessary evidence to overcome the examiner's concerns.

The 'Feasibility Study for Mixed-Use Development at Ladies Meadow, Hingham' was produced by Pinnacle Consulting Engineers in December 2024. It was commissioned by Hingham Town Council using funding secured via South Norfolk Council's 'Pride in Place' grant. The study comprised a transport assessment, a flood risk assessment, and a due diligence report. The study sought to address the following development constraints regarding the proposal at Ladies Meadow (chiefly identified through AECOM's Site Options and Assessment report that was produced in support of the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan):

- potential site access constraints – the suitability of the Ladies Meadow site for development of community uses, with constrained access from Attleborough Road due to the geometric and speed limit constraints along the road;
- safety and capacity of the off-site public road network in the vicinity of the proposed site – at the Fairlands crossroads junction (B1108 Watton Road- Attleborough Road- Dereham Road) and along Attleborough Road in particular; and
- potential pedestrian/non-motorised unit access constraints – narrow and/or discontinuity of footpaths presenting constraints for walking and cycling accessibility and disjointed permeability (connectivity) of walking routes between the proposed site car park through the Fairland crossroads and town centre.

The conclusions of the study address the concerns the point that 'further work needs to be undertaken on the package of uses proposed for the site and securing safe and convenient pedestrian access between the site and the town centre' and providing assurance that the proposal can be delivered in the Plan period.

Given that there are clearly sensitivities regarding the delivery of these proposals, including safe site access, achieving pedestrian links to the town centre, and the effects of the proposals on traffic in the town centre, the Council is recommending modifications to the original wording of the policy to ensure that these matters are dealt with accordingly.

Modifications have also been provided to the original supporting text relating to the policy, particularly addressing the delivery of the feasibility study and the conclusions therein, as well as details of the other work relating to traffic issues at the Fairland junction in which the Town Council has been engaged.

In this context, South Norfolk Council propose to retain the allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 3.3 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents which relate directly to the proposed modification to Policy HING9:
- Ladies Meadow Hingham- Feasibility Study Report;
 - Ladies Meadow Hingham- Transport Assessment;
 - Ladies Meadow Hingham- Flood Risk Assessment;
 - Ladies Meadow Hingham- Due Diligence Report;
 - the SNC Decision Statement;
 - the representations received to the proposed modifications
 - HTC's responses to the clarification note; and
 - HTC's responses to the representations received.
- 3.4 I have also taken account of the package of documents which accompany the wider Plan.
- 3.5 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I concluded that the Plan could be examined by written representations.
- 3.6 The NPPF was updated on 12 December 2024 after my initial report on the Plan had been sent to SNC. Paragraph 239 of the NPPF 2024 sets out transitional arrangements for plan-making. It comments that the policies in the Framework will apply for the purpose of preparing neighbourhood plans from 12 March 2025 unless a neighbourhood plan proposal has been submitted to the local planning authority under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) on or before the 12 March 2025.
- 3.7 Plainly the Plan was submitted well before 12 March 2025. On this basis, the examination of SNC's proposed modifications against the basic condition that it should have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State is based on the 2023 version of the NPPF. Where NPPF paragraph numbers are used in this report, they refer to those in the December 2023 version. This approach will continue to apply to the wider Plan
- 3.8 Paragraph 6.1 of this report sets out the full extent of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is examined.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 SNC carried out consultation on its proposed modifications to Policy HING9. This exercise generated representations from the following organisations:
- Water Management Alliance
 - National Highways
 - Norfolk Historic Environment Record
 - Anglian Water
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Hingham Town Council
 - Environment Agency
 - Norfolk County Council
- 4.3 Comments were also received from parishioners. I have taken account of all the representations in preparing this report. Where it is appropriate to do so, I refer to specific representations on a policy-by-policy basis.

5 The Development Plan Context and the visit to the neighbourhood area

Development Plan Context

- 5.1 The development plan for the neighbourhood area is described in Section 5 of the original report (September 2024). I have nothing further to add to the details in that report.

Visit to the neighbourhood area

- 5.2 I visited the neighbourhood area initially as part of the initial examination. I visited the neighbourhood area again on 9 July 2025 as part of the examination of the proposed modifications. I looked at the site off Ladies Meadow, the town centre, and the pedestrian and vehicle routes between these two locations.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

6.1 This section of the report comments about the extent to which SNC's proposed modifications to Policy HING9 of the Plan meets the basic conditions. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
- not breach, and otherwise be compatible with, the assimilated obligations of EU legislation (as consolidated in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023; and
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

6.2 The wider Plan was assessed against the basic conditions in the September 2024 report. I comment about the extent to which the proposed modifications to Policy HING9 meet the basic conditions under the following headings:

National Planning Policies and Guidance

6.4 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). The NPPF sets out a range of land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.

6.5 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that SNC's proposed modifications have had regard to national planning policies and guidance subject to the recommended modifications in this report. It sets out a positive vision for the development of Ladies Meadow and will support the type of community development as set out in Section 8 of the NPPF. It includes a series of criteria on a range of development and environmental matters. It has a focus on ensuring that the development of the site is designed in a positive way and safeguards the setting of St Andrew's Church.

Contributing to sustainable development

6.6 I am satisfied that the modification to Policy HING9 has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, it sets out to provide additional car parking for commercial and residential properties in the town and visitors to the amenities in the town. In the social dimension, it proposes the incorporation of community uses on the site. In the environmental dimension, it positively seeks to protect the natural, built, and historic environment of the Ladies Meadow site.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.7 The initial report considered that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the adopted development plan. I am similarly satisfied that the proposed modifications to Policy HING9 of the Plan are in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan subject to the recommended modifications in this report.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.8 This issue was addressed in the 2024 report. I have nothing further to add to the details in that report.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 6.9 This issue was addressed in the 2024 report. I have nothing further to add to the details in that report.

Human Rights

- 6.10 This issue was addressed in the 2024 report. I have nothing further to add to the details in that report.

Summary

- 6.11 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

7 SNC's proposed modification to Policy HING9

7.1 This section of the report comments on SNC's proposed modification to Policy HING9.

7.2 In general terms I am satisfied that the approach taken is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the neighbourhood area. SNC and HTC have spent time and energy in refining the approach taken in the 2024 version of the Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda. HTC has responded positively to the commentary in the September 2024 report about the proposed development of the site and has produced additional information.

7.3 The remainder of this section of the report addresses the following issues:

- the extent to which the additional information produced to support the development of the Ladies Meadow site addresses the matters raised in the 2024 examination report;
- the extent to which the proposed modifications to the policy would result in the delivery of sustainable development; and
- the extent to which any modifications are required to ensure that the proposed modified policy meets the basic conditions.

7.4 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The extent to which the additional information addresses the concerns in the 2024 report.

7.5 Following the receipt of my report in September 2024 HTC commissioned a package of work on the proposed development of the site. It is generally captured in an overall feasibility report. That report summarises the findings of three more detailed studies as follows:

- a Transport Assessment
- a Flood Risk Assessment
- a Due Diligence Report

7.6 The findings of these reports are summarised below:

Transport Assessment

On the safety and capacity of the public road network and based on the traffic modelling results of the junction capacity analysis (refer to Chapter 7 of Appendix B- Transport Assessment Report), it has been revealed that the Fairlands Crossroads would have sufficient capacity to cater for the proposed development at the Lady's Meadow, having a negligible impact on the operational capacity of the local highway network (i.e. a maximum ratio of flow to capacity or RFC of 0.02 had been predicted, which is way below the 0.85 threshold). In respect of junction safety, the preferred improvement proposal by Norfolk County Council (feasibility study carried out in August 2023) dubbed as Option 1A- Haunching to Improve Visibility, appears to be the

technically and economically feasible solution. It is also recommended to improve signing and lining at the Fairlands junction and at its approaches from the minor and major roads.

On the issue of potential pedestrian/ cyclist/ NMU access constraints, the Aecom 2023 Assessments have identified the development constraint involving a discontinuous footway/ cycleway between Lady's Meadow and the town centre that would be below standard). The existing footways along Attleborough Road are narrow and not continuous, and no formal crossing points are present where needed.

The permeability of a pedestrian access route to/ from the town centre and Lady's Meadow site is considered to be best achieved potentially by utilising an extension to the existing footpath that runs between the vicinity of the Fairland crossroads and Rectory Gardens. This extension would require land currently under the ownership of the diocese to the rear/ west of the Old Rectory. The alignment of the proposed route is presented in Drawing ref. 2405-037/SK02 as part of Appendix B- Transport Assessment.

This extension to the existing footway would provide a minimum 2m-wide off-road pedestrian route connecting the Lady's Meadows site to the town centre via Rectory Gardens and/ or through the Fairlands junction. Improvements to pedestrian crossing points at the Fairlands crossroad junction and provision of a new footway along the southern side of the B1108 Watton Road will be required in order to achieve a continuous link and enhance safety along this route between the town centre and Lady's Lane, and beyond. It is considered that low-level lighting should be provided along this off-road route to ensure that it is safe and usable at night. A pedestrian connection within the site could also be provided to connect to the site access junction, which would allow pedestrians to continue onto the footway on Attleborough Road to the south of the proposed access junction.

Whilst the new pedestrian route would provide a safe route for pedestrians to access the proposed community uses and car park on the Lady's Meadows site, some pedestrians may still choose to utilise the existing footways on Attleborough Road, especially at night. To improve the connectivity of this route, it would be beneficial to provide an additional drop kerb crossing of the B1108 to the east of the Fairlands crossroads and a second crossing of Attleborough Road to the north of the war memorial to link the footways on both sides of the road. This together with the extension of the speed limit to 20mph would improve pedestrian amenity along this section of Attleborough Road. The proposed layout for the pedestrian/ cycle route and junction improvements plans are presented in Drawing ref. 2405-037/SK03 as part of Appendix B- Transport Assessment.

Flood Risk Assessment

The proposed site is located within Flood Zone 1. This means that there is a very low risk of flooding from all sources during the extreme design storm event.

The Assessment recommends that the building FFL is set at least 150mm above the existing or regraded surrounding ground level (immediately adjacent to the building)

which will offer a level of mitigation to prevent floodwater incursion into the building, and/or mitigate by site layout to prevent floodwater from reaching the building.

Depending on the outcome of the later groundwater surveys, if the site is found to be at risk of prolonged flooding due to rising groundwater (and/ or in combination with river flooding), then the building FFL should be set in accordance with the EA's planning policy of setting the FFL to a minimum 300mm above the predicted peak flood level for the 100-year storm event plus the appropriate allowance for climate change for fluvial flooding.

Due Diligence Report

The Due Diligence (DD) desktop exercise has identified various existing geo-environmental and geotechnical site conditions, an inventory of the existing statutory utilities and services present within proximity of the site, flood risk data obtained from the EA and BGS, and other information about potential development constraints. However, there is no utility constraint that is anticipated to be encountered on site, however, further utility mapping and GPR/ EML surveys data, together with topographical surveys information, are recommended to be collected on-site and off-site prior to the preliminary/ detailed design stages.

Apart from the (list) already enumerated on the DD report, it is also recommended that BRE365 infiltration tests and CCTV drainage surveys are carried out in due course at the appropriate design stage.

- 7.7 Plainly a significant amount of work has taken place since the September 2024 examination report was considered by HTC. The various assessments have been undertaken in a professional and comprehensive way.
- 7.8 Based on the findings of the Flood Risk Assessment and the Due Diligence Report, I am satisfied that there are no flooding and utility issues which would otherwise prevent the development of the proposed allocation.
- 7.9 The Transport Assessment provides detailed and helpful advice on the safety and capacity of the public road network and potential pedestrian/cyclist access constraints. I note that detailed discussions have taken place involving SNC, Norfolk County Council and HTC.
- 7.10 In its representation Norfolk County Council (in its capacity as the highways authority) comments that:

'since the Examiner's report of September 2024, the further work asked for by the Examiner to develop the pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to the site has been carried out. That work has been shared with the Highway Authority and there have been detailed discussions with South Norfolk Council to consider proposals to provide safe highway, pedestrian and cycle access to the site.

Despite the detailed discussions the Highway Authority has been unable to agree a safe access solution that meets the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. Therefore, the Highway Authority agrees with the Examiner's findings as set out in

paragraphs 7.63 and 7.64 of his report as no safe deliverable solution has been found. It is the view of the Highway Authority that there is no suitable policy wording for HING9 (sic) resolve the situation.'

- 7.11 In part of its response to this representation HTC advised that:

'this comment ignores the specific purpose of Policy HING9 and the evidence behind it which is to provide a site-specific solution to the problems of parking identified in the town. The work undertaken AECOM in 2023 (and NCC's previous work) makes clear that there are no easy or obvious alternative sites or solutions which would satisfactorily address the issue and the Ladies Meadow site is the only realistic opportunity available. The comment also ignores Policy HING10 which is already a criteria-based policy in the Neighbourhood Plan which covers the issue. The representation indicates that NCC will continue to work with Hingham Town Council and SNC to bring forward land for community uses but does not offer any alternative solutions or sites. With impending Local Government review for Norfolk, the Town Council feels it is more important than ever to ensure the Hingham Neighbourhood Plan positively provides for community infrastructure (not just car parking) over the coming years (through the lifetime of the plan) to ensure the community is well provided for beyond the Neighbourhood Plan.'

Including the policy within the Neighbourhood Plan (rather than working outside the plan making process) commits Hingham Town Council (as a body) to following through with the policy, as membership to the Town Council changes over the years.

- 7.12 I have considered these issues very carefully. I note that the Transport Assessment identifies that there are residual issues which need to be addressed. Plainly there are challenges to the proposed development of the site. Nevertheless, these challenges are very similar in principle to the development of other allocated sites in neighbourhood plans where there are technical issues to be resolved. They are traditionally pursued further and addressed through the development management process. Plainly SNC will be able to determine development proposals based on their details, the information available at that time and the extent to which they relate to development plan policies.

- 7.13 On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the additional information addresses the issues raised on the proposed allocation in the 2024 report. I have also noted HTC's comments about its ongoing discussion with the Diocese about land acquisition. Plainly the allocation of the site in the Plan would provide a degree of assurance to both organisations.

The extent to which the proposed modifications to the policy would result in the satisfactory development of the site

- 7.14 The 2024 report on the Plan assessed the extent to which the wider Plan would contribute to the local delivery of sustainable development. Plainly SNC's proposed modifications to Policy HING9 provide the context for the delivery of an innovative community project. In the round I am satisfied that it is precisely the type of project that a neighbourhood plan should be delivering. In addition, it has regard to Section 8 of

the NPPF. Furthermore, the proposed masterplanning process will ensure that a clear process is in place to secure a structured development of the site.

- 7.15 I have commented in paragraph 6.6 of this report that I am satisfied that the proposed development will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- 7.16 The policy and the supporting text properly comment that the development of the site should safeguard the setting of St Andrew's Church. I have noted the comments from Historic England about the conservation area, and address this matter in the following section of this report.
- 7.17 In the round I am satisfied that the policy and the supporting text provide the context for the positive development of the site.

The extent to which any modifications are required to ensure that the proposed modified policy meets the basic conditions

- 7.18 The proposed package of modification proposed by SNC is very comprehensive and has been underpinned by the various technical reports.
- 7.19 Based on my own assessment of SNC's proposed modifications and the comments from Historic England, I recommend the following additional modifications to the policy and the supporting text to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SNC to apply the policy through the development management process:
- the recasting of criteria d and f of the policy so that they describe the desired outcome rather than the process of preparing a report/information to demonstrate that the outcome has been achieved;
 - consequential modifications to the supporting text; and
 - the inclusion of an additional criterion to ensure that the development of the site preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the adjacent Hingham Conservation Area.
- 7.20 I have carefully considered the representations received from parishioners on the development of the Ladies Meadow site. I am satisfied that the approach taken in the policy will allow SNC to safeguard the amenities of people who live close to the site as part of its determination of development proposals.

- 7.21 Otherwise I am satisfied that the modified policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development

Replace d) with: 'ensure that the significance and setting of the adjacent St Andrew's Church and any other designated heritage assets are safeguarded and, where practicable, enhanced.'

Insert an additional criterion after d) to read: 'ensure that the development of the site preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Hingham Conservation Area.'

Replace f) with: ‘ensure that the layout of the car park includes measures to mitigate potential pollution impacts caused by surface water run-off.’

At the end of paragraph 8.27 add:

‘In this context development proposals should be accompanied by a detailed heritage statement that identifies any heritage impacts and mitigations as appropriate including on the significance and setting of the adjacent St Andrew’s Church and any other designated heritage assets. Such work should also identify the way in which development proposals have responded positively to the adjacent conservation area.’

Include an additional paragraph to read ‘8.28.

The development of the site should also respond positively to its interface with its hydrology profile. Development proposals should provide proportionate details of the layout of the car park including measures to mitigate potential pollution impacts caused by surface water run-off and to address the potential flood and surface water drainage

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 South Norfolk Council's proposed modifications to Policy HING9 positively address the matters raised in my original report on the Ladies Meadow site (September 2024). The proposed modifications are distinctive in addressing the matters relating to this site in the September 2024 examination report.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination of this matter, I have concluded that South Norfolk Council's modifications to Policy HING9 of Hingham Neighbourhood Development Plan meet the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood development plan subject to a series of recommended modifications. This conclusion supplements that set out in Section 8 of the September 2024 report on the Plan.

Conclusion

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report, I recommend to South Norfolk Council that, subject to the incorporation of the additional modifications on Policy HING9 as set out in this report, the Hingham Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Other Matters

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore reaffirm the view I took in 2024 that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved in September 2021.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth manner. As with the 2024 examination, the responses to the clarification note were detailed, informative and delivered in a very timely fashion.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
6 August 2025