

South Norfolk VCHAP Briefing Note for the Inspector following Week 1 Hearing Sessions (13th-15th January 2026)

1. The following note covers the Inspector's questions on:
 - The capacity of an extended site area at VC DIT1REV, Ditchingham
 - The capacity of a reduced, frontage only development at VC ROC1, Rockland St Mary, and
 - Suggested alternatives for the development of VC BRO1, Brooke, avoiding the need for development on both sides of Norwich Road.

Cluster 13: Ditchingham, Broome, Hedenham & Thwaite

VC DIT1REV – Land at Thwaite's and Tunneys Lane

Summary of potential revised allocation numbers: **approximately 70 dwellings (a possible uplift of 25 dwellings).**

2. VC DIT1REV currently proposes up to 45 dwellings on a site of approximately 2.53ha. VC DIT1REV is greenfield site located to the northeast of the village and to the north of existing residential development at Hamilton Way and Waveney Road. In its current form, VC DIT1REV allocates a section of a wider agricultural parcel that is bound by Thwaite Road to the west and Tunney's Lane to the northeast.
3. The Inspector has asked the Council to consider how many dwellings may be accommodated on an extended area of land, comprising the remainder of the field but excluding the established tree belt that extends to the west, north and east of the top section of the field.
4. The potential site area (excluding the tree belt and an area of identified flood risk within the site boundaries) has been assessed as being circa 3.95ha. Further details relating to the identified area of flood risk can be found in the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (and Addendum) (documents [B9.1-B.9.27](#) in the evidence library).
5. The Council estimates that the site could reasonably be expected to accommodate in the region of 70 dwellings at a density of approximately in the 17.8dph (a density similar to that proposed for VC DIT1REV).
6. The Council has identified a number of matters for consideration relating to a proposed extension to the existing allocation for VC DIT1REV. For reference these are set out below:

- Landscape impact: The site is well contained and would have limited landscape impact due to the existing established tree belt that restricts views into the site. The Council would request that the tree belt is not substantially altered as a result of an extended allocation, as it is considered to contribute positively to the local character of the area, particularly along Tunney's Lane.
- Site access: Sole access to the site is currently proposed via Hamilton Way to the south. Whilst Norfolk County Council Highways has supported this for an allocation of 45 dwellings, it is not clear whether further dwellings could be accessed via this route. A second point of access would either impact on the existing landscaping belt on Tunney's Lane, or the existing vegetation on Thwaite Road. This would need to be explored further in consultation with the highways authority.
- Anglian Water infrastructure: Following earlier technical discussions, the Council is aware that Anglian Water infrastructure crosses beneath the site. This may be a limiting factor on the final site capacity but would need to be explored in detail with Anglian Water through the site design process. Anglian Water has also advised that the existing Water Recycling Centre (WRC) that serves Ditchingham currently has limited remaining capacity. As a direct consequence, phasing of development connecting to this WRC may be necessary. Neither of these matters are considered to prevent allocation of a wider site area but are brought to the attention of the Inspector for information purposes.

Cluster 29: Rockland St Mary, Hellington & Holverston

VC ROC1: Land south of New Inn Hill

Summary of potential revised allocation numbers: **in the region of 5-10 dwellings, dependant on the final housing mix.**

7. The Inspector has asked the Council to consider how many dwellings could be accommodated at VC ROC1 if the site boundaries were reduced to accommodate road frontage development only.
8. For context, Eel Catcher Close lies adjacent to the west boundary of this reduced site area. Eel Catcher Close comprises 10 dwellings on a site area of approximately 0.37 hectares. This mix includes flats and equates to a density of circa 27dph.
9. However, the development at Eel Catcher Close includes a large area of open space along the road frontage, and as a rural exception site comprises 100% affordable dwellings. The housing mix within this development is therefore made up of smaller homes, and the Council is concerned that it would not be justifiable to repeat this housing mix on the adjacent site via the VCHAP.
10. With regards to amended boundaries for VC ROC1, the Council has assessed the section of the site originally referred to as SN2007 at the starting point of assessment. This area is in separate ownership, and is clearly distinct from the wider agricultural field. The approximate site area for this parcel of land is 0.55ha. However, following a similar layout to Eel Catcher Close and retaining an equal area of open space at the front of the site, the developable area is reduced to approximately 0.29ha.
11. The Council considers that in this location, and continuing the linear pattern of development to the west, the site could deliver another 8-10 dwellings of a similar scale to those at Eel Catcher Close.
12. However, the Council is concerned that this would not deliver an appropriate mix of housing, as required by the Greater Norwich Local Plan, or that smaller dwellings could be insisted upon as either part of an allocation or settlement limit extension. It is therefore reasonable to assume that development of SN2007 would deliver a lower number of homes at a reduced density, as an appropriate mix of market housing. It is therefore reasonable to consider that the site numbers may consequently be reduced to 5-7 dwellings (with open space closest to the road frontage).
13. The Council has set the minimum allocation number at 12 for the VCHAP. This reflects the approach taken in the Greater Norwich Local Plan, as well as the

findings of the Viability Appraisal (doc. ref. [B.6.1](#)) which recognises that the smallest sites in the VCHAP will be operating closer to the margins of viability, and that those below 12 dwellings will find the delivery of policy compliant schemes more challenging to achieve. This would be a particular concern in this instance, as the site area (0.55ha) would mean the development would still be classified as major development, and therefore be required to make an affordable housing contribution under the requirements of the NPPF.

14. Within this context, the site would fall below the threshold that would deliver a VCHAP allocation and it would be considered as a windfall site through a settlement limit change instead.

Cluster 8: Brooke, Kirstead & Howe

VC BRO1: Land east and west of the B1332, Norwich Road

Summary of preferred location for VC BRO1: **west side of Norwich Road**

15. Following the week 1 discussions with the Inspector regarding VC BRO1 (Cluster 8), the Council has given further consideration to a possible amendment to the boundaries of its preferred allocation at Brooke.
16. In liaison with the site promoter, the Council has reviewed the possibility of concentrating the proposed allocation to either the east or the west of Norwich Road (rather than a single allocation bisected by the Norwich Road as is currently proposed).
17. The site promoter has advised that their preference would be to consolidate the preferred allocation wholly within a revised boundary to the west side of Norwich Road.
18. A number of options have been proposed demonstrating the capacity of three parcels of land to deliver between 50-150 dwellings, either entirely through the VCHAP allocation or in future phases.
19. The Council is generally supportive of this approach recognising that development to the west will have the least landscape impact and offers opportunities for comprehensive development proposals to be delivered in the longer term.
20. The natural field boundaries to the west provide a framework that would contain the development organically, rather than necessitating the introduction of artificial boundaries to define the site area (as would be required to the east). Furthermore, to the north there exists extensive tree cover that would further restrict longer views into the site on the approach south along Norwich Road.
21. The trees to the north are within the grounds of a designated heritage asset, Brooke Lodge. In combination with an appropriate site layout and design, the dense vegetation is likely to reduce impacts on the significance of both the heritage asset and its setting. However, this would need to be considered in more detail within a revised Heritage Impact Assessment.
22. Development to the west of Norwich Road will also avoid impacts on the Brooke Conservation Area. The Conservation Area lies further to the south and, on the west side of Norwich Road, would be separated from the allocation by intervening modern estate development as well as the remainder of the agricultural land (depending upon the scale of the final allocation).

23. Informal discussion with the Council's Senior Heritage and Design Officer have indicated that development to the west would be his preferred option.
24. It is anticipated that access could be achieved in accordance with the earlier discussions with the highways authority for VC BRO1 (although this would need to be confirmed). In addition, it is noted that a field access has been retained further to the south. In the event further development is proposed in this location this could offer potential pedestrian/ cycle connectivity into the existing village.
25. In summary, the Council considers the west side of Norwich Road offers a reasonable option for allocation within Brooke and would support an amendment to the boundaries of the proposed site allocation, subject to the preparation of an updated evidence base.

South Norfolk Council
23 January 2026