

Could Honingham Thorpe be the location for new 1,000-home Norfolk village?



The fields around Honingham Thorpe could be home to a new village.

Picture: NICK BUTCHER

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The possible location for a new village in Norfolk has been revealed, ahead of the public being asked for their views on where 8,900 homes should be built over the next 20 years.

About 48,500 new homes need to be built in Greater Norwich - the area covered by Norwich City Council, Broadland and South Norfolk - by 2036, according to consultants brought in by council bosses.

While the sites for nearly 40,000 of those homes has been established through various blueprints, that leaves sites for 8,900 yet to be identified.

The public will, in October, be asked to help decide where the others should go.

Among the options likely to be consulted upon are the possibility of a new 1,000 home village.

And land at Honingham Thorpe, between Honingham and Easton, has emerged as a possible site.

The various councils had asked landowners, developers and the public to put forward possible sites for development.

Brown and Co, on behalf of clients, has put forward 892 acres of land in Honingham Thorpe.

A potential 534 acres could become housing, while 35.5 acres could be used for employment, with a 200 acre country park and a nature reserve of just under nine acres.

Council officers stressed that, although the site has been put forward, it does not mean homes will be built there. And they said other options could come forward.

At a meeting yesterday, council leaders and officers looked at a string of options of where 8,900

houses could be built.

An extra 1,500 are likely to be in Norwich, on top of the 7,700 already allocated, with a further 200 in Sprowston and Thorpe St Andrew.

A further 1,000 are likely to be spread among towns such as Diss, Aylsham, Wymondham, Long Stratton and villages such as Hetherset, Poringland, Blofield and Brundall.

A further 1,200 could be allocated for smaller villages, but that still leaves 5,000 homes to be allocated.

Options include: concentrating all 5,000 near Norwich; along the Norwich to Cambridge tech corridor (such as in areas near the Norwich Research Park and the proposed Food Hub at Easton); along other key transport routes or spreading them out among numerous towns and villages.

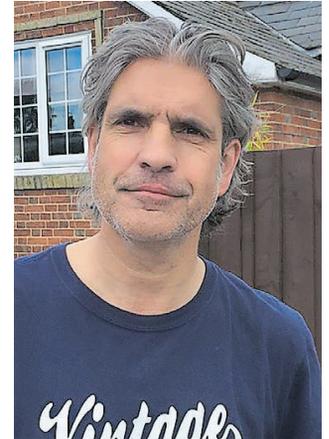
Public consultation is likely to take place in October.

Factfile

Local views



Residents are concerned about infrastructure in Easton if new homes are built. Pictured are Mrs Hill and Martin Butcher.



Picture: STEVE SHAW

Mrs Hill, a retired resident living in Easton, said: "If they are going to build new houses they need to also put some infrastructure into this village. It's no good building any new houses if there is not the infrastructure to support it.

We need a new post office and a shop that sells some essentials because older residents can't reach the big supermarkets. We also need a doctor's surgery because some people can't reach the closest one because you need

a car."

Martin Butcher, who lives in Easton but travels into Dereham for work, said he sees traffic problems every day. "The idea of new homes is not good. There appears to have been no discussion on transport. We have long tailbacks on the A47 already and Longwater can't cope with the traffic as it is. I don't think they have conducted a traffic study and yet we really need one before planning new homes. There are also very few places at a doctor's surgery."

Factfile

'Massive dilemmas' over where homes should go

There will be "massive dilemmas" choosing where 8,900 new homes should be built, council leaders admit.

A meeting of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership - which includes Norwich City Council, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council - yesterday provided a glimpse into differing views.

John Fuller, leader of South Norfolk Council, is keen to see development further afield. He said people no longer needed to head to the city for work, highlighting a man who created music for video games from his home in Brockdish.

But Alan Waters, Norwich City Council leader, said wider dispersal of homes could require costly infrastructure and delay getting homes built.

He added technology companies tended to cluster in urban areas.



John Fuller, leader of South Norfolk Council.

Andrew Proctor, leader of Broadland District Council, said: "There are massive dilemmas around trying to make a choice."

Factfile

What will happen next?

The public will get a say on where they think the homes should be built - on on specific sites later this year.

In the months leading up to consultation in October, members of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) will need to reach a consensus on what options - and how

many - should be put to the public.

At the moment, officers have put seven options forward:

1. Urban concentration close to Norwich.
2. Focus development on transport corridors.
3. Focus development on the Cambridge to Norwich tech corridor.
4. Dispersing houses to

villages with limited growth on Norwich fringe and A11.

5. Dispersal and one new settlement.

6. Dispersal and urban fringe growth.

7. Dispersal, urban fringe growth and new settlement.

The individual councils which make up the GNDP will also have to agree to launch public consultation.