

HUNSTANTON CIVIC SOCIETY

Charity Registered Number 1101087

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To the Planning Department
East of England Regional Assembly
Flempton House
Flempton
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk IP28 6EG

Dear Sirs

Re: EERA Consultation Document on Planned Growth up to 2031

Despite several attempts to submit this on line through the Limehouse portal, I failed and was advised to send it via e-mail.

Hunstanton Civic Society is a charity that celebrates the vision of the founder of Hunstanton, Henry Styleman le Strange, as a model town and seaside bathing resort with character and green open spaces. The Civic Society seeks to have a constructive influence on the social and economic growth and prosperity of the town and its surrounding villages and countryside in North West Norfolk, based on sustainable forms of development that give priority to protecting its unique character both as a place that is attractive to tourists and as a place in which to live, work and retire.

The area of North West Norfolk is recognized for its beauty and tranquility and its variety of wildlife. Un-planned or hasty and poor-quality development, not balanced with infrastructure investment and with environmental considerations may jeopardize those very qualities. It is vital to sustain and enhance the quality of the area as a place in which to spend vacations and to live, learn and work.

The Hunstanton Civic Society has a paid up membership of over 250. Between 80 and 100 attend our monthly meetings with guest speakers. A summary was made of the two documents "East of England Plan >2031 – Scenarios for housing and economic growth – Consultation September 2009" and the "North Sub-area Profile" with particular reference as to how they may affect this locality. The summary was circulated with links to the main documents around the committee of nine and a number of other people with active minds.

Response on behalf of the Hunstanton Civic Society

- A. The information provided in the East of England Plan > 2031 – scenarios for housing and economic growth (Consultation September 2009) or in the North Sub-area Profile does not make it plain whether the current evaluation or the future projections take into account (1) the number of homes that are currently unoccupied or (2) the number of homes that are used as second homes. If such information has not been incorporated into the proposals it may make little difference to the overall numbers in the East of England but it will make a vast difference to areas of West and North Norfolk and parts of Suffolk.
- B. As scenario 4 is based on the scale and distribution of growth from the Government projections of new households, it seems that unless definite plans are made to alter current trends, there will be demographic pressure for that type of development to occur. The danger is that such development may be piecemeal and relatively unplanned and not supported by adequate infrastructure. If for various reasons development along these lines is not permitted, the properties that are available in areas subjected to demographic pressure will become scarce and rise in value. Affordable housing in such areas will be in jeopardy. Without affordable housing, young people will be forced to move away to the detriment of the communities and local schools. In addition, service providers including carers, nurses, shop assistants and tradesmen will be forced to travel in from outside the area.
- C. In general, a bottom-up approach (scenario 1) is likely to be more realistic.
- D. If the plan adopted differs significantly from scenario 1 then the constraints of which the local authorities are mindful need to be examined closely.
- E. Presumably scenario 2 takes more account of present infrastructure (road, rail and water) however, scenario 3 is more sensible because it supports regional economic growth and the workers require homes near to their employment to avoid wastage of time and money on travel.
- F. Scenario 4 will have serious impacts on green field land and sensitive areas of biodiversity including the Heritage Coast. It will result in more car dependency and require more investment in flood defences.
- G. No development should proceed without appropriate infrastructure being in place.
- H. It is essential to adopt a high quality of design both for individual units and also for neighbourhoods to generate vibrant communities. There is a danger that this will be overlooked for short-term gains or in an attempt to achieve numerical targets.

In answer to the specific questions:-

1. Yes, we consider that the right growth scenarios have been chosen.
2. Comments on the four growth scenarios as (A) to (F) above.
3. The preferred growth scenario will probably be a compromise between all 4.
4. Most of the regional impacts of the scenarios have been identified but assessments of the impact on schools, recreation facilities, food production and green infra-structure are needed.
5. Yes, the vision and objectives of the current Plan remain viable but note (A) above.
- 6a. Policy WAT 4, needs to be reviewed and the possible benefits of a Wash Barrage in terms of flood defence and generation of green power from the tidal water flow need to be thoroughly evaluated against the effects it may have on the environment. I was surprised that it has not been on the EERA radar. The shoreline management team have not given it proper consideration and their assertion that it would increase erosion and flood risk along the North Norfolk Coast by holding back the water is probably unfounded because the water would still flow into and out of the Wash generating electric power as it does so. Approximately 9100 properties in the Great Ouse area could be at risk from a 1 in 100 years flood event.
- 6b. If scenario 4 occurs, either as a result of default or by planning, policies T7 Transport in rural areas, T8 Local roads, WAT 2 Water infrastructure will need to be reviewed.
7. The comments made in (4) above also apply to the North sub-area profile. As far as Norfolk is concerned, the results for scenarios 1, 2 & 3 would be very similar but much more growth is indicated for scenario 4. The table shows numbers of completions per year.

	Scenario 1,2 or 3	Scenario 4
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	660	1050
North Norfolk	400	650
Norwich	720	850
Breckland	640	1000
- 8a. The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal should note that there is particular concern about King's Lynn being a growth point because of the congestion in the town centre, Gaywood and London Road as well as difficulties of access and parking. Recently a fast bus service has started linking the Coast Hopper service along the North Norfolk Coast and Hunstanton with King's Lynn and the train service on to Cambridge and London. Certainly, this is a big step in the right direction.

- 8b. It is now recognised that the hasty withdrawal of the rail line to Hunstanton in 1969 was a great mistake. An alternative concept to (6a above) is that of managed retreat by building a flood defence embankment around The Wash, which would be capable of carrying a railway line. This would restore the rail link between Hunstanton and King's Lynn (in the short term) and offer a much more direct rail link to the North and the Midlands for passengers and freight. Travelling south to Ely before heading west or north is not efficient in economic, or environmental terms.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Murray
Honorary Secretary
Hunstanton Civic Society