

CORE STRATEGY SINGLE POLICY REVIEW:

Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings **Draft Policy**

(incorporating Proposals Map Amendments)



Consultation Period
2 October - 13 November 2009

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**All of the LDF Documents can be made
available in Braille, audio, large print or in other languages.
Please contact 01263 516318 to discuss your requirements.**



Foreword

North Norfolk is very fortunate to have a rich collection of traditional rural buildings. Collectively they provide a sense of local distinctiveness and help to shape and define the District's countryside. These buildings are potentially an important resource at a time when there is a need to provide for new development, particularly new homes.

This document sets out a new policy for the conversion and re-use of rural buildings as dwellings. The policy sets out which types of building and where in the District the Council considers conversion to permanent residential use may be acceptable. It is hoped that the sympathetic re-use of suitable buildings will contribute to the achievement of sustainability objectives, by reducing the need for new building in the countryside and by supporting rural economies and communities. It is important now for anyone affected by this policy or who has an interest in the future of our local area to have their say in order that their views can be considered through the Examination which will be held to consider the policy prior to its adoption.

The process of preparing new planning documents is a long and complex one. We have spent a great deal of time exploring the issues, consulting with a wide range of organisations and considering existing evidence. We are now asking you to comment on the policy and whether you feel it represents the best solution for the re-use of rural buildings in North Norfolk.

I would like to thank all those who have already contributed at earlier stages and look forward to your continuing involvement in planning for the future of North Norfolk.



Councillor Clive Stockton
Deputy Leader of the Council

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, Coastal Management and Economic Development.

Chairman of the Local Development Framework Working Party.

Member of North Norfolk District Council for Waterside Ward.



Core Strategy Single Policy Review: Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Draft Policy



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1 Introduction

1.1 Local Development Framework

- 1.1.1** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 established a new system of local development planning in England, called the Local Development Framework (LDF). As a consequence of this legislation, the North Norfolk LDF is replacing the North Norfolk Local Plan. The North Norfolk LDF will cover the whole of the administrative area of North Norfolk District except that part lying within the Broads Executive Area, for which the local planning authority is the Broads Authority. That part of the District will be covered by the Broads LDF.
- 1.1.2** The North Norfolk LDF comprises a number of documents. The **Core Strategy** sets out the key elements of the planning framework for North Norfolk and includes policies relating to the broad quantities, types and distribution of development together with detailed policies which are used by the Council when reaching decisions on planning applications. It was adopted by the Council in September 2008 and covers the period to 2021.
- 1.1.3** The adoption of the Core strategy has provided the context for the Site Specific Proposals Plan (Draft) which identifies (allocates) specific areas of land for different types of new development. The Proposals Map shows allocations and the areas where policies apply.
- 1.1.4** This document is a single policy review of the Core Strategy and solely relates to the policy for the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings in the district. This document along with the Core Strategy sets out the planning framework for North Norfolk that will be used when considering individual planning proposals. It will cover the period to 2021, but can be reviewed on a regular basis during that time if necessary.

1.2 Purpose of this document

- 1.2.1** During the preparation of the Core Strategy the Inspector, who had been appointed to Examine the document, stated that original Policy HO9 on the Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings should be withdrawn and redrafted following a further period of consideration and consultation. Policy HO9 was therefore deleted from the Core Strategy and Local Plan Policy 29 saved to provide the policy context while a new policy was prepared.
- 1.2.2** This document sets out a single development control policy for the conversion and re-use of rural buildings as dwellings in North Norfolk. The policy (Policy HO9) will be used in assessing planning applications in the District up until 2021 and will replace saved Local Plan Policy 29.
- 1.2.3** Amendments to the Proposals Map are included with this document (Appendix A). The changes include a new designation (Map 1) indicating where the Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings will apply, broadly 1km around 44 specified settlements (see para. 3.0.2 - 3.0.5 of the Background & Methodology document). Map 2 indicates existing boundaries to be deleted, relating to saved Local Plan Policy 29 'Boundaries for the re-use and adaptation of buildings in the Countryside', which will no longer be applicable following the adoption of the new policy.
- 1.2.4** A number of supporting documents have been prepared to support the Draft Policy including;
- Background & Methodology - sets the background to the policy review and a more detailed explanation of the policy approach. In addition detail is provided of the



methodology used in the selection of locations where the policy will apply and the criteria for assessing building type.

- Appropriate Assessment - prepared to assess any likely significant effects on the integrity of European sites.
- Sustainability Appraisal - considers the social, environmental and economic effects of the proposals.
- Consultation Statement - states how the community have been involved in the documents preparation.

1.2.5 All documents are available to view or download from our website www.northnorfolk.org/ldf

1.3 Preparation of the Draft Policy

1.3.1 The significant stages in the Council's preparation of this policy document can be summarised as follows:

- Core Strategy - Evidence gathering, development and appraisal of options in consultation with a variety of stakeholders - Regulation 25 (April 2005 to July 2006);
- Core Strategy - Public participation on preferred options - Regulation 26 (25 September to 6 November 2006);
- Submission of Draft Core Strategy to the Secretary of State and public participation on its contents Regulation 28 and 29 (18 June to 30 July 2007);
- Independent Examination of the Draft Core Strategy by the Planning Inspectorate (4 December 2007 to 18 January 2008);
- Receipt of Inspector's Report (Core Strategy) - Policy HO9 deleted and Local Plan Policy 29 saved in the interim (July 2008);
- Commencement of Single Policy Review: Conversion and Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings - April 2009;
- Single Policy Review of the Core Strategy: Conversion and Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings- Public participation on Issues and Options - Regulation 25 (1 June - 26 June 2009)
- Single Policy Review of the Core Strategy: Conversion and Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings - Publication of Draft Policy - Regulation 27 (2 October - 13 November 2009)
- Submission of the Draft Policy to the Secretary of State Regulation 30 - Expected 19 February 2010

1.3.2 Further details of the consultation undertaken is provided in the Consultation Statement.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

1.3.3 All development plan documents must contribute to sustainable development and sustainability appraisal is a process carried out during the preparation of the plan to assess the economic, social and environmental impact of emerging policies. The issues and options report published in June 2009 was subject to this process which has been repeated through the development of the options into a draft policy. The Sustainability Appraisal report for this document is available separately and can be viewed or downloaded from the LDF website www.northnorfolk.org/ldf

Appropriate Assessment (AA)

1.3.4 Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a plan on European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection areas and Offshore Marine Sites)

and a plan should only be approved after determining that it will not adversely effect the integrity of such sites. The Appropriate Assessment can also be viewed or downloaded from the Council's LDF website.

1.4 How to have your say

1.4.1 We are seeking comments on all aspects of this Draft Policy and the associated Proposals Map changes. Reference numbers have been given to each section and these should be quoted when submitting comments (making representations). When making comments you may refer to any of the background documents to support your case. Comments must be made during the six week period commencing midday 2 October 2009 and finishing at 4.30pm on 13 November 2009. Representations made outside of this period will not be considered.

1.4.2 When the Council submits the Policy for independent examination the appointed Inspector will determine if it is:

- Legally Compliant - that the *process* of plan preparation required in regulations has been followed by the Council; and,
- Sound - that the policy approach is justified, will be effective (deliverable), and consistent with national policies.

1.4.3 If you wish to make comments on this policy you must first specify if you think it is legally compliant, and secondly if you think it is 'sound' in relation to one of the tests outlined above. For example, you might consider that the policy is legally compliant but that it is unsound because it is not justified or will not be effective.

1.4.4 Full details on the consultation arrangements can be found in Appendix B of this document.

1.5 What happens next?

1.5.1 Following this consultation the Council will consider all duly-made representations and consider whether it wishes to suggest any changes to the Draft Policy. The Draft Policy will be submitted to the Secretary of State along with a schedule of any suggested modifications for examination in 2010.

1.5.2 The Secretary of State will appoint an Independent Planning Inspector who will hold public hearing sessions during which the 'soundness' of the policy will be tested. These public hearing sessions are an opportunity for the Inspector to question the Council and other parties about the merits of the policy being suggested. While anyone can attend and observe proceedings only those that have made representations seeking a change to the policy have a right to appear and be heard by the Inspector, although the Inspector can invite others to appear if he wishes. The Inspector's role is to examine 'soundness' by considering whether the policy complies with a number of tests. The Inspector will consider if due process has been followed by assessing whether the policy is *justified* (based on participation, evidence, and the consideration of alternatives); if the policy will be *effective* (can be delivered, is flexible, and can be monitored); and whether it *conforms to national advice*.

1.5.3 **All** duly made representations in relation to this Draft Policy and the Proposals Map will be made available to the Inspector during the examination process. Comments made during the earlier stages of preparation of this plan will not be taken into account. The Inspector will reach decisions which are binding on the Council, following which the Council will adopt the policy for development control purposes.

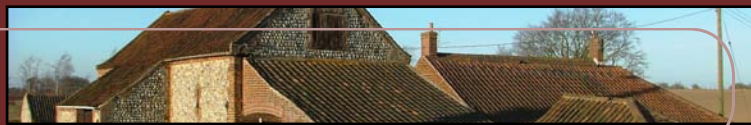


- 1.5.4** The adopted Core Strategy (Chapter 4) includes a framework for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of policies. This section will be updated, with references to saved Local Plan Policy 29 being replaced with the new policy reference HO 9. A decision will be taken about when to review and / or replace the adopted development plan documents in the light of the monitoring results and having regard to changes in the policy context or local economic, or environmental conditions.

Core Strategy Single Policy Review: Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Draft Policy

2 Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings

Draft Policy





2 Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Draft Policy

- 2.1** North Norfolk has a rich heritage of rural buildings many of which are no longer suitable for their original purpose and may be suitable for alternative uses. Housing development across the whole of the countryside, whether in the form of new build proposals or the conversion of existing buildings, would not comply with the Core Strategy. However, it is recognised that there is a balance to be struck between protecting the countryside from development pressure and promoting sustainable rural communities. Many rural settlements have some but not a full range of services / facilities which would be of benefit to and benefit from a modest amount of new residential development. The re-use of good quality existing buildings as dwellings in such locations, would offer the potential of meeting dual aims of supporting the sustainability of rural communities and services and securing the future of traditional rural buildings that positively contribute to the local distinctiveness of North Norfolk.
- 2.2** The Core Strategy Proposals Map indicates the locations in the District where residential conversion may be acceptable. The policy will only apply to buildings of historic, architectural or landscape value that are suitable for re-use without substantial re-build, extension or alteration. These buildings are worthy of retention, often vacant or under utilised, and residential conversion may offer a sustainable future. It is envisaged that the policy would not normally apply to the sub-division of existing residential properties, to outbuildings providing an ancillary domestic function or purpose built holiday accommodation.
- 2.3** In the case of Listed Buildings or buildings that would meet this Council's criteria for Local Listing, residential conversion may be allowed irrespective of location, provided such a use was demonstrated to be the optimum to secure the future of the building. Planning applications submitted on this basis would need to include a supporting statement justifying why the building is of such importance that its retention would be in the public interest and include a robust consideration of why re-use of the building for economic purposes was not viable or appropriate for the building.
- 2.4** In all cases conversion schemes would be expected to be of the very highest quality and ensure that the qualities of the building and its setting are maintained. The North Norfolk Design Guide provides detailed advice on the conversion of agricultural and historic buildings. Where appropriate, a condition may be attached to any planning permission removing any permitted development rights the building would qualify for under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended, following its change of use.
- 2.5** Evidence indicates that there is a significant need for affordable housing across North Norfolk which will continue for some time. Extending the opportunity for residential conversions in the countryside requires consideration of how such development should contribute to the delivery of affordable housing in the District. Although it is recognised that it may be difficult and in some cases not practical for such schemes to provide for affordable housing on site, it is considered entirely consistent with national planning policy and Core Strategy policies to seek a contribution where it is viable to do so. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will provide further guidance on the detailed nature of any financial or other contribution.
- 2.6** It is anticipated that the schemes likely to come forward under this policy will comprise

individual and small groups of dwellings. Development proposals resulting in a level of residential use which would raise concerns over sustainability and the impact of the proposal on the rural character of an area will not normally be supported.

2.7 The objective of creating and maintaining sustainable rural communities will be the primary consideration when assessing individual planning applications. Safeguarding employment opportunities is integral to achieving such aims. Where buildings were last or presently used for commercial purposes and provide a significant number of jobs, residential conversion will not normally be supported.

2.8 Planning proposals will need to comply with all other relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

Policy HO9

Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings

The conversion and re-use of suitably constructed buildings in the countryside for permanent residential purposes will be permitted provided that:

1. the building is located within an area identified on the Proposals Map for that purpose, and
2. the building is worthy of retention due to its historic, architectural or landscape value, and
3. the building is structurally sound and suitable for conversion to a residential use without substantial rebuilding or extension and the alterations protect or enhance the character of the building and its setting, and
4. the scheme is of an appropriate scale in terms of the number of dwellings proposed for the location, and
5. where it is viable to do so, on all schemes resulting in two or more units, not less than 50% of the total number of dwellings proposed are affordable⁽¹⁾, or an equivalent contribution is made in accordance with the requirements of Policy HO2.

Outside the locations identified, residential uses will not be permitted unless the building is of exceptional historic, architectural or landscape value⁽²⁾ and it is demonstrated that a residential use would best secure the future of the building and the above criteria 3 to 5 are met.

Proposals that would result in the loss of a significant number of jobs will not normally be supported.

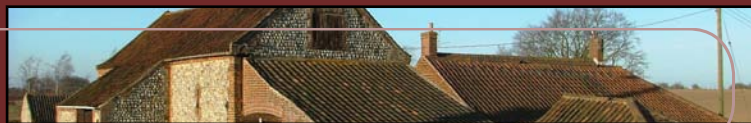
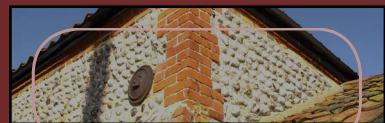
1 This may take the form of a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision to ensure the required number of affordable dwellings can be built without the need for public subsidy.

2 Listed Building or a building that would meet North Norfolk criteria for Local Listing. The key objective would remain that of identifying the optimum viable use, compatible with the fabric, interior, and setting of the historic building. In this context, optimum refers to the conservation of the building. The optimum use may not be the most profitable use if that would entail more destructive alterations than other viable uses



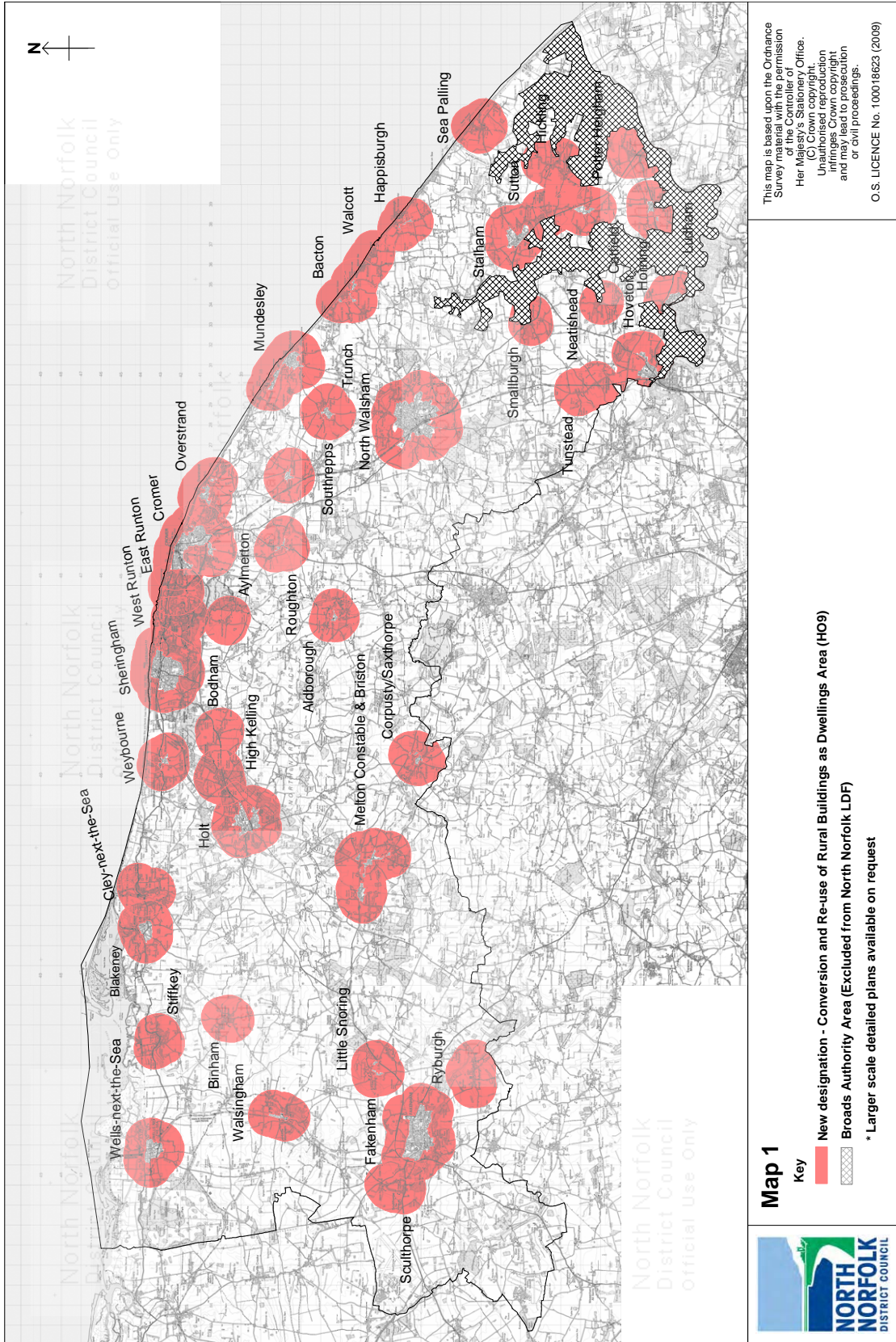
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Appendix A Proposals Map Amendments

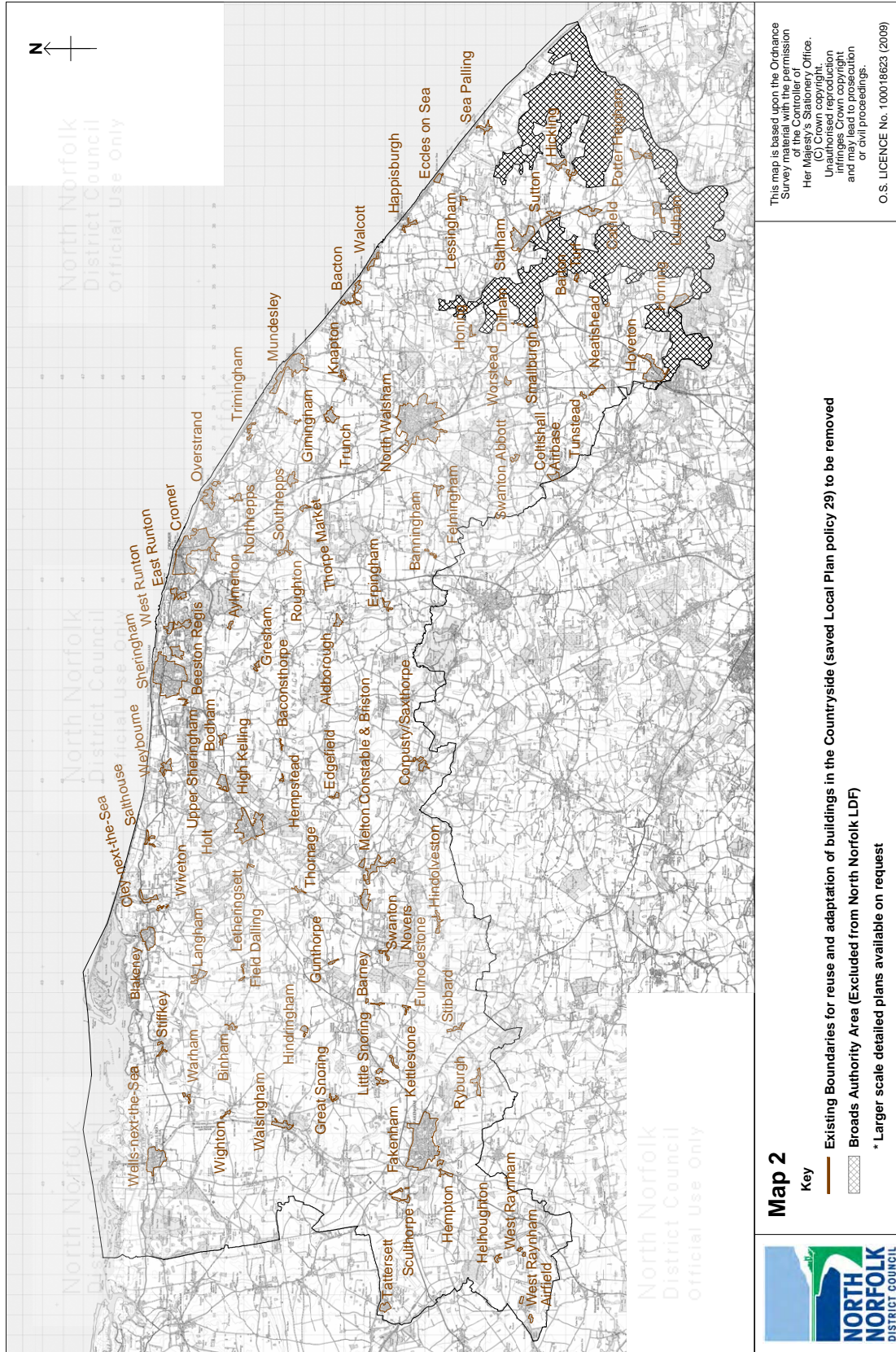


Appendix A Proposals Map Amendments

Map 1 Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings - Proposed Designated Policy Areas



Map 2 Re-use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Countryside (Local Plan Policy 29) - Existing Policy Boundaries to be Removed



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Appendix B Submitting Your Comments





Appendix B Submitting Your Comments

From 2 October to 13 November 2009 the following Draft Policy document is available for inspection and comment:

- **Core Strategy Single Policy Review: Conversion & Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings (incorporating Proposals Map Amendments)**

The following supporting documents will also be available to view:

- Background & Methodology, Sustainability Appraisal, Appropriate Assessment and Consultation Statement.

Representations should be made via the Consultation Portal at <http://consult.north-norfolk.gov.uk/portal> or alternatively in writing using the Representation Form. Forms are available from the contacts listed at the bottom of this page and can be downloaded from the website.

Comments must be received no later than 4.30pm Friday 13 November 2009.

Representations may be accompanied by a request to be notified at a specified address; that the documents have been submitted for independent examination, of the publication of the recommendations of the Inspector appointed to carry out the examination and at the adoption of the documents.

All documents can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at www.northnorfolk.org/ldf and are available for inspection at the following locations:

- District Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN.
- District Council Offices, Fakenham Connect, Oak Street, Fakenham, NR21 9DY (Opening hours for both Offices are 8.30am - 5.00pm Monday - Thursday, Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm).
- Local Libraries: Aylsham, Cromer, Dereham, Fakenham, Holt, Mundesley, North Walsham, Norwich (Forum), Sheringham, Stalham, Wells & Wroxham (please contact individual libraries for opening hours).
- Mobile Libraries operating from Dereham, North Walsham and Wells.

For further information please contact the Planning Policy Team:

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