

# Horringer Neighbourhood Plan FAQ's

## Housing Requirements

A new Local Plan for West Suffolk will be adopted next week. It provides for housing growth to 2041 based on the previous government's growth forecasts. That amounts to 13,000 additional homes between 2024 and 2041. Of that requirement, 8,700 new homes already had planning permission in 2024 and so the Local Plan only had to allocate sites for 4,300 (these figures are rounded).

However, the new government requirements for West Suffolk up the requirement from 765 homes a year to 1,195, a 56% increase. It means that, just to get to 2041, another 6,800 homes will be needed.

## Local Plan

Although the new Local Plan will be adopted next week, the Council has given a commitment to commence work on a new Local Plan as soon as possible. In reality, this will probably be early in 2026 as the government is promising new regulations to simplify the way on which local plans are prepared.

## Location of development

The Local Plan defines a "Settlement hierarchy" for West Suffolk based primarily on the level of services present. In order of size, these are:

- Towns
- Key Service Centres
- Local Service Centres
- Type A villages
- Type B villages
- The countryside

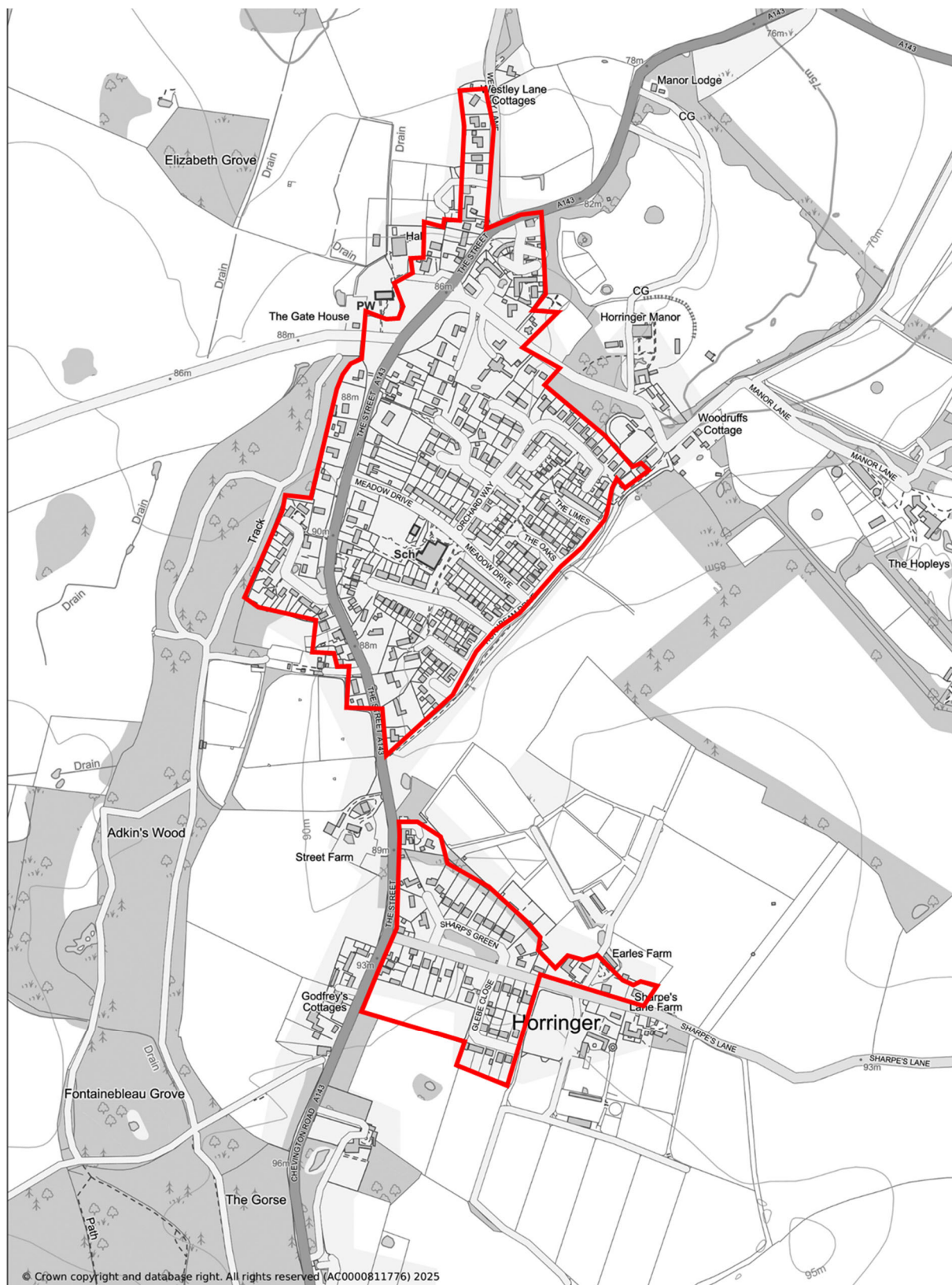
Horringer is classified as one of 16 Type A villages.

## Housing Settlement Boundaries

Most settlements, except the very smallest, have Housing Settlement Boundaries identified in the Local Plan. Horringer's is illustrated on the next page.

Settlement boundaries are a planning policy tool that help to manage the spread of towns and villages into the open countryside. Where they are defined in a local or neighbourhood plan, the principle of development within them is supported while development proposals outside a settlement boundary is only supported in exceptional circumstances.

The Local Plan states: *"Proposals for new residential development, residential conversion schemes, residential redevelopment and replacement of an existing dwelling with a new dwelling will be permitted within housing settlement boundaries where supported by other policies in the development plan. All areas outside of the defined housing settlement boundary are to be regarded as 'countryside' unless specifically identified for other uses in the development plan."*



## **Housing proposals outside the Housing Settlement Boundary**

The starting point for deciding planning applications is the Local Plan. Proposals for market housing outside the Housing Settlement Boundary would be contrary to the Local Plan. Planning applications would therefore expect to be refused and most developers would not even go to the expense of making a planning application.

## **How long would developers have to wait before they could get permission to develop other sites like the Low Way, Sharp's Lane & Manor Lane & have them added to the West Suffolk Plan?**

The process for getting sites allocated in a Local Plan is for landowners or developers to put them forward when West Suffolk Council carry out a "call for sites". Sites are assessed for suitability and if sites are not suitable they will not be included in a report of sites that are available for development.

The allocation of sites would then follow the agreed settlement hierarchy. So for Horringer, although 3 sites were identified as being suitable, only one was allocated as it met the settlement hierarchy and distribution of growth across the district.

When West Suffolk prepare their new Local Plan they will carry out the same process.

It is important to emphasise that the allocation comes before the planning permission, rather than get permission and then have the site added to the Local Plan.

## **If an area is not in the West Suffolk Plan does that mean that planning permission will definitely be refused?**

If a site for market housing is proposed outside the Housing Settlement Boundary then generally it would be refused. There are exceptions to this, such as the conversion of barns to dwellings or for an affordable housing scheme to meet local needs on what is known as an exceptions site. Inside the Housing Settlement Boundary sites such as infill plots are not identified as you do not know if or when they will come forward. Hence the presumption in favour of housing within the Housing Settlement Boundary.

## **What does 'massing' mean in this context?**

The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings.

## **What happens to the Neighbourhood Plan when Council reorganisation is implemented?**

The Neighbourhood Plan will remain in force regardless of which Council is in place. Just like the St Edmundsbury Local Plan remains in force despite West Suffolk Council being in existence for a number of years, the Neighbourhood Plan will remain until superseded by a review or until it becomes totally out-of-date.

### **What can the Neighbourhood Plan cover?**

The Plan includes planning policies that will only be used for matters that require planning permission. Where something that doesn't need planning permission, the Plan cannot be applied.