

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan Review (2016 – 2036) - Summary

1. Local Plan explanation

1.1 England runs a plan-led system for land use planning. A Local Plan is the key document which planning authorities use to make land use planning decisions. It is a statutory requirement for the starting point for decisions to be the Local Plan unless material circumstances say otherwise. Planning regulations require local plans to be reviewed every five years.

1.2 Local plans provide a sustainable framework for development in terms of both housing numbers and location. As a minimum the Local Housing Need (LHN) must be met. The starting point for this is provided by Government through a standard method, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This will usually be met through allocations of sites for housing and by policies allowing small-scale development within settlement development boundaries, defined by the plan. The plan will also have development management policies that guide development in terms of acceptable locations, design, and protection of the natural and historic environment. It will also have policies to guide and support the local economy.

2. Current Local Plan

2.1 The Borough Council (BC) already has an adopted Local Plan in place. This includes two documents - the Core Strategy (CS) (2011) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP) (2016). It is in two parts as this was the process at that time. It covers the period from 2001 to 2026. The CS gives the overall strategic approach and the SADMP gives further detail to ensure this can take place.

3. The Need for an up-to-date Local Plan

3.1 During the last examination process the BC agreed to update its Local Plan at once and look over the longer term from 2016 to 2036. This would ensure that planning policies are up to date, based upon the latest evidence, and provide all with a degree of certainty in relation to planning decisions.

3.2 The Government has a policy ambition for 300,000 new homes to be built each year by the mid 2020's. This is driving changes to the planning system and means that the BC must play their part in ensuring the housing need is at least met locally through an up-to-date Local Plan. Alongside requiring an up-to-date Local Plan to be in place by the end of 2023, local planning authorities must also pass two further tests to keep making planning decisions locally. The first is to be able to show a 5-year housing land supply (i.e., is there enough housing land within the local planning system for at least 5 years' worth of building). The second, introduced more recently, is having to 'pass' the Housing Delivery Test (has there been enough housing completed within the area). Failure in any of these elements can result in the policies within the Local Plan carrying less/limited/no weight in the planning decision-making process. This could lead to development taking place in less desirable locations or in a much higher amount than needed.

4. High Level Overview of the Local Plan review

4.1 The Local Plan review is exactly that, it is a review, so does not start from scratch. Many of the existing policies are proposed to be carried forward, albeit updated where appropriate. This includes most of the housing allocations made in the 2016 Plan.

4.2 The housing need was in the region of 700 new homes being needed each year in the Borough in 2016. The 2016 Plan supported this. Today the housing need has reduced to 539 new homes per year (10,780 2016-2036). This is a significant reduction, especially over a 20-year plan period. The need was higher at the point when the draft version of the Local Plan review was consulted upon in 2019, this meant several new draft allocations were proposed. The housing need has dropped, and these are no longer needed. This is not surprising as the need has fallen, and the 2016 Plan adopted four years ago catered for a much higher need. This has resulted in an unusual situation with no absolute requirement to make any further housing allocations to meet the Local Housing Need.

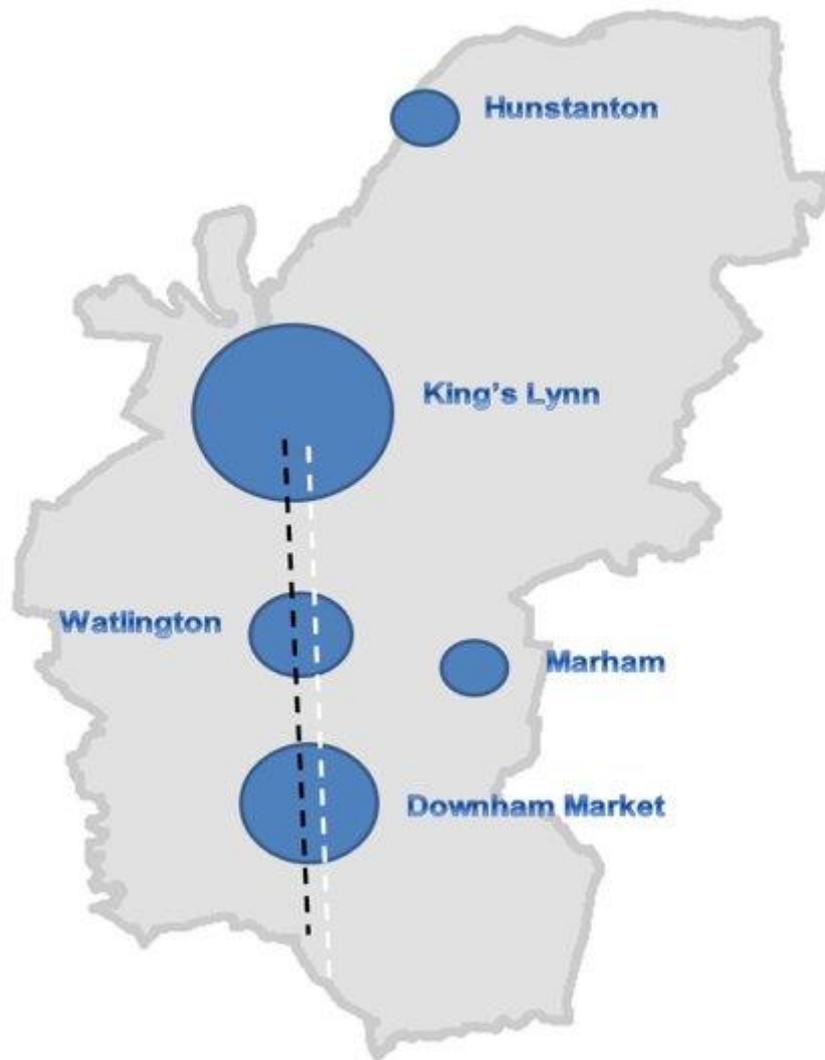
4.3 The Plan's **Vision** for King's Lynn and West Norfolk to 2036 is that:

- People want to be part of the success story that is West Norfolk, drawn here to live, work, invest, and visit.
- West Norfolk enjoys an unparalleled balance between quality of life and quality of opportunity with people drawn to the area to take advantage of this.

The overall Vision is supported by a Vision for Places together with 16 Objectives spanning the areas of Economy, Society and Environment. Visions and Objectives are also set for King's Lynn, Downham Market, Hunstanton, the Wisbech fringe area, and the rural and coastal areas.

4.4 Other key elements of the Local Plan review are:

- A Strategic Direction of Growth following the Settlement Hierarchy: King's Lynn Sub-Regional Centre (including South Wootton and West Winch), Downham Market, Hunstanton, Wisbech Fringe and Key Rural Service Centres.
- A Strategic Growth Corridor along the A10 road/main railway line - 70% of growth is to take place in this corridor.



- 2,500 new homes in the West Winch Growth Area (4,000 in the fullness of time).
- Deletion of the adopted plan's Knights Hill allocation for 600 homes (note that the bulk of this allocation was granted outline planning permission on appeal in July 2020. The rest has outline permission for 55 houses).
- A new Riverside Regeneration Area in King's Lynn stretching from South Quay to Southgates, including four existing individual allocations supporting up to 170 houses in total.
- Two new Growth Key Rural Service Centres at Marham and Watlington near the A10/main railway line Strategic Growth Corridor.

- A new policy on climate change – requiring developers to illustrate how what they are proposing is sustainable development and supports the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
- A new policy for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- A framework to allow ‘windfall’ development (i.e., that not specifically allocated in the Plan), such as re-development within development boundaries and sensitive infilling and rounding off outside of them.
- Settlement boundaries defined for all smaller villages and hamlets to help with the implementation of the infilling and rounding off policy.
- Policies to provide affordable housing, housing for elderly people and those who need specialist care, accessible and adaptable homes and to support people to build their own homes (custom and self-build housing).
- Separate policies for the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, previously combined into one policy.

Local Plan Review Diagram

