

Strumpshaw Parish Council - Objection to Outline Planning Application 2026/1884 Land at Norwich Road (Snook's Field), Strumpshaw

Dear Planning Officer,

Strumpshaw Parish Council objects to this outline planning application and respectfully requests that planning permission be refused.

The Parish Council acknowledges certain positive aspects of the proposal, including improved pedestrian connectivity, biodiversity enhancement proposals, sustainable drainage measures, renewable energy technologies and other sustainability initiatives. However, these benefits are outweighed by the significant adverse impacts arising from the development of an important greenfield site beyond the settlement boundary.

The proposal would result in harm to landscape character, ecological connectivity, mature trees, flood resilience and local infrastructure capacity, while conflicting with important objectives and policies of the adopted Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan (2025-2045). The Parish Council considers that insufficient evidence has been provided at outline stage to demonstrate that these impacts can be satisfactorily addressed.

1. Development Outside the Settlement Boundary

The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and therefore constitutes development within the countryside. Previous applications for residential development on this land have been refused, in part, because the site lies outside the settlement boundary.

The site continues to form an important transition between the built-up area of the village and the surrounding countryside and contributes significantly to the rural setting of Strumpshaw.

The Parish Council considers that development on this site would extend residential development beyond the established limits of the village and would undermine the established settlement pattern.

2. Harm to Landscape Character and Settlement Identity

The site occupies a prominent position on the western approach to Strumpshaw and provides an important visual break within the village streetscape. Its open and undeveloped character contributes significantly to the identity of the parish and helps maintain the distinction between built form and countryside.

Development of the site would introduce housing, roads, parking areas, lighting, fencing and domestic curtilages into an open landscape. The resulting urbanisation would erode rural character and contribute to the perception of ribbon development along Norwich Road. The Parish Council considers that the loss of this open greenfield site would have a harmful effect on local character, landscape quality and the setting of the village.

3. Conflict with the Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan

The proposal conflicts with a number of policies contained within the adopted Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan, including:

- STR5: Natural Assets and Biodiversity
- STR6: Ecological Corridors
- STR8: Important Local Views
- STR10: Surface Water Flooding and Sewage Management
- STR13: Community Infrastructure

Although the site is not designated as a Local Green Space, evidence gathered during preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan identified the site's important environmental, landscape and community value. Its removal from the Local Green Space schedule at the request of the landowner does not diminish those characteristics.

Development of this land would undermine the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan through the loss of green infrastructure, harm to local character and reduction of an important area of open space within the village.

4. Loss of Green Infrastructure and Ecological Corridors

The site forms part of an interconnected network of green infrastructure linking Pages Wood, woodland associated with The Old Rectory, established hedgerows and mature trees. This network provides habitat connectivity and ecological resilience for birds, mammals, insects and other wildlife.

The Parish Council is concerned that development would fragment this established ecological network and weaken ecological connectivity between existing habitats.

Whilst the proposal includes biodiversity enhancement measures, newly planted habitats and landscaping would require many years to establish and may not replicate the ecological value and connectivity currently provided by the existing greenfield site.

5. Mature Trees, Woodland Character and Natural Heritage

The Parish Council has significant concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on mature trees and woodland character.

Trees located along the western boundary are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. In addition, residents have identified a number of important specimens including:

- Mature oak trees
- A historic coppiced oak stool
- Two mature redwood trees

These trees contribute significantly to the natural heritage, landscape character and ecological value of the area. Development in close proximity to mature trees can create long-term pressures through root disturbance, soil compaction, shading conflicts and future demands for pruning or removal.

The Parish Council considers that insufficient weight has been given to the long-term protection and management of these important landscape assets.

6. Flood Risk, Surface Water Management and Climate Resilience

Flood risk is a principal concern.

The geological evidence submitted by the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership, including indications of a former clay extraction hollow and historic ponding, may further demonstrate the site's natural capacity to retain water. The Parish Council considers that these characteristics warrant detailed hydrological investigation before any development proposals are approved.

Residents report that the northern section of the site functions as a natural washland and temporary flood storage area during periods of heavy rainfall and elevated groundwater conditions. This role appears to contribute to flood attenuation within the local landscape.

Development would reduce permeable ground, alter natural drainage pathways and may increase surface water runoff.

The Parish Council is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that flood risk would not increase either on-site or elsewhere.

Natural flood management features are becoming increasingly important as communities adapt to more intense rainfall events and changing climatic conditions. The loss or reduction of these functions should therefore be approached with caution.

The Parish Council is further concerned that the proposed sustainable drainage strategy has not adequately demonstrated that it can be implemented without adverse impacts on neighbouring woodland, mature trees and established root systems.

7. Infrastructure Capacity and Sustainability

7.1. Foul Drainage and Wastewater Infrastructure

Residents have repeatedly raised concerns regarding limitations within the existing drainage network.

The Parish Council considers that additional housing should only be supported where clear evidence demonstrates that adequate foul drainage and wastewater capacity exists or that necessary upgrades will be provided before occupation of any dwellings.

7.2. Highway Safety and Sustainability

Concerns remain regarding:

- Vehicular access arrangements
- Additional traffic generation
- Cumulative traffic impacts on Norwich Road
- Continued reliance on private vehicles despite proposed pedestrian improvements

The Parish Council considers that these matters require careful assessment before any permission is granted.

7.3. Electricity Network Capacity

Recent local experience suggests that electricity infrastructure constraints have affected electric vehicle charging provision within the parish.

The Parish Council therefore requests confirmation from the relevant utility provider that sufficient transformer and network capacity exists to accommodate additional housing and

future electric vehicle charging demand, or alternatively that reinforcement works will be delivered before occupation.

7.4. Community Infrastructure

The Parish Council is concerned that the proposal would place additional pressure on local infrastructure and services. These cumulative impacts should be fully assessed before a planning decision is made.

8. Geological and Environmental Heritage

In addition to the ecological and hydrological concerns identified above, evidence gathered during preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and by local residents indicates that the site and its surrounding landscape may possess geological interest which has not yet been fully assessed.

The site forms part of a wider landscape containing ecological, hydrological, geological and heritage features. The Parish Council considers that further investigation may be appropriate before development proceeds.

Recent evidence submitted by local residents includes:

- A 1962 aerial photograph showing a pond formed following a significant pipe burst, demonstrating the site's historic capacity to hold water and function as a natural washland.
- A 1990 aerial image showing a number of depressions within the landscape which continue to be the subject of local geological investigation and interpretation.
- A 2026 aerial image illustrating the interconnectivity of green infrastructure linking Pages Wood, the corner field, hedgerows and Snowdrops Wood at The Old Rectory.

The Parish Council considers that this evidence reinforces the need for further ecological, hydrological and geological assessment before outline permission is considered.

8.1 Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership Representation

The Parish Council notes the comments submitted by Adrian Read on behalf of the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership (NGP) on 21 April 2026, which identify the site as having potential geological significance that warrants further investigation prior to development.

The NGP advises that the site contains a hollow with evidence of a former pond and possible historic clay extraction. It has been suggested locally that clay may have been excavated from the site for brickmaking, utilising glacial deposits associated with the Lowestoft Till laid down during the Anglian glaciation approximately 440,000 years ago. The NGP notes that such deposits are of geological interest because they contain evidence relating to the glacial history of Norfolk and the wider region.

The NGP further reports that the hollow appears to align with a wider series of depressions that have been the subject of ongoing investigation by members of the Partnership and researchers, including work undertaken with the University of East Anglia. The geological origins of these features are not yet fully understood and additional subsurface information could contribute to a better understanding of the area's complex glacial history.

In light of these observations, the NGP has requested that, should development proceed, borehole logs, samples and excavation exposures be made available for inspection and recording by suitably qualified geologists. The Partnership considers that information obtained during intrusive site investigations could provide valuable evidence regarding local geological conditions and the development of the landscape.

The Parish Council considers that these representations reinforce concerns that the geological and geodiversity interests of the site have not been fully assessed at outline stage.

In the Council's view, there is insufficient information currently available to determine the potential significance of the subsurface features identified by the NGP or to establish whether further geological investigation should be undertaken before development is approved.

The Parish Council considers that geodiversity forms an important component of the natural environment and that potential geological assets should be properly understood before development proceeds. Where evidence indicates the possibility of geological features of local significance, the precautionary approach should be applied pending further investigation.

Accordingly, the Parish Council considers that additional geological assessment and recording may be necessary to ensure that potential geodiversity interests are properly understood and taken into account as part of the planning process.

9. Failure to Meet Local Housing Needs

The application does not currently demonstrate how affordable housing needs will be addressed or what level of affordable housing provision would be delivered.

The Parish Council considers this to be a significant omission given the recognised difficulty many local people and younger families experience in accessing housing within rural communities.

The proposal therefore fails to address one of the most important housing challenges facing the parish and provides limited benefit in meeting identified local housing needs.

10. Principal Planning Impacts

Issue	Identified Impact	Relevant Policy / Consideration
Development Outside Settlement Boundary	Expansion of residential development into countryside beyond the established limits of the village.	Development Plan Policies
Landscape Character and Village Identity	Loss of an important open greenfield site which contributes to the rural setting and character of Strumpshaw.	STR8

Ribbon Development	Erosion of the visual break along Norwich Road and extension of built form along the village approach.	Settlement Pattern
Conflict with Neighbourhood Plan	Development undermines objectives relating to biodiversity, local views, flood management and community infrastructure.	STR5, STR6, STR8, STR10, STR13
Loss of Green Infrastructure	Reduction of an established area of interconnected green space linking woodland, hedgerows and mature trees.	STR5, STR6
Ecological Connectivity	Fragmentation of ecological corridors and weakening of habitat connectivity across the parish.	STR6
Biodiversity	Existing ecological value may not be fully replaced through landscaping and mitigation measures.	STR5
Mature Trees and Woodland Character	Potential impacts on protected and significant mature trees through construction, drainage works and future management pressures.	STR5
Surface Water Flooding	Loss of permeable land and possible reduction of the site's natural drainage and flood storage function.	STR10
Flood Resilience	Reduced natural flood attenuation capacity and uncertainty regarding long-term climate resilience.	STR10
Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)	Potential changes to ground and drainage conditions affecting mature trees and adjacent woodland habitats.	STR5, STR10
Foul Drainage and Wastewater	Uncertainty regarding the ability of existing drainage infrastructure to accommodate additional demand.	STR10

Highway Safety	Concerns regarding access, traffic generation and cumulative impacts on Norwich Road.	Highway Authority Assessment
Sustainability of Location	Continued reliance on private vehicles despite proposed pedestrian improvements.	Sustainable Transport Principles
Electricity Network Capacity	Uncertainty regarding transformer and network capacity to support additional housing and EV charging demand.	STR13
Community Infrastructure	Additional pressure on local utility and service infrastructure.	STR13
Geological and Environmental Heritage	Potential impacts on features of possible local geological significance which have not yet been fully assessed.	Environmental Considerations
Affordable Housing	The application does not demonstrate how affordable housing needs will be addressed or what level of affordable housing provision would be delivered.	Housing Need Considerations
Geodiversity and Geological Heritage	Potential adverse impact on geological deposits, landform features and geodiversity interests identified by the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership, together with loss of opportunities for scientific investigation and recording.	Environmental and Geological Considerations

11. Overall Planning Balance

Claimed Benefits	Identified Harm
Improved pedestrian connectivity.	Development beyond the settlement boundary
New pedestrian crossing provision.	Loss of open greenfield land and rural character.

Biodiversity enhancement proposals.	Fragmentation of ecological corridors and green infrastructure.
Sustainable drainage measures.	Flood risk, drainage and flood attenuation concerns.
Renewable energy measures including photovoltaic panels.	Potential impacts on mature trees and woodland character.
Electric vehicle charging provision.	Uncertainty regarding electricity network capacity.
Additional housing supply.	Conflict with Neighbourhood Plan objectives, uncertainty regarding affordable housing provision, and potential loss of geological and geodiversity information before adequate investigation has been undertaken.

Conclusion

The Parish Council acknowledges the positive elements of the proposal, including pedestrian improvements, biodiversity enhancement measures and renewable energy technologies. However, the proposal would introduce development beyond the settlement boundary, result in the loss of a valued greenfield site, harm landscape character and ecological connectivity, place pressure on mature trees and infrastructure, and raise unresolved concerns regarding flood risk and drainage.

The Parish Council also notes the concerns raised by the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership regarding the site's potential geological significance, the presence of possible historic clay workings and the opportunity to improve understanding of the area's complex glacial history through further investigation prior to development.

Collectively, these impacts conflict with the objectives and policies of the adopted Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan and have not been shown to be capable of satisfactory mitigation at outline stage. The Parish Council considers that the identified harms significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits put forward by the applicant.

For these reasons, Strumpshaw Parish Council strongly objects to the application and respectfully requests that planning permission be refused.