

COLNEY

1. Settlement characteristics

Colney is situated mainly within the Yare Valley and although dispersed in nature, forms an attractive identifiable settlement. The parish includes the new Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and the Norwich Research Park (NRP). Colney Hall and its parkland form an important and significant feature and also include proposals for an extension to the NRP. The parish is very well connected to both the local and national road network; the B1108 Watton Road connecting directly to the A47 Norwich Southern Bypass and into the city. The Bowthorpe perimeter road links Colney with the Bowthorpe development and the proposed Bawburgh/Colney recreation area (policies BAW 1 and BAW 2).

Policies and proposals (see Inset Map 16)

2. Development Limit

The 1999 Norfolk Structure Plan (policy N.3) identifies Colney as one of the main strategic locations for new employment development in the Norwich Policy Area. Policy ENV 7 in this Plan accordingly specifies Colney as one of the main locations for development in the Norwich Area. A Development Limit has therefore been defined for the parish. The Development Limit encompasses: the main nucleus of housing focused around the church (whilst avoiding encroachment into the Yare Valley and other locally important areas of open countryside); the Research Park allocation and the proposed extensions (including Colney Hall); other committed employment land; and both the Norfolk and Norwich University and BUPA Hospitals.

Within the Development Limit new development will, under normal circumstances, be permitted. Outside the Development Limit, proposals for new development will be assessed against policy ENV 8 and other specific Local Plan policies where appropriate.

Outside the Development Limit a number of landscape policies protect the setting of the area from inappropriate development (see glossary), these include the river valley landscape (policy ENV 3, the Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone (policy ENV 6) and the historic parkland at Colney Hall (policy ENV 5).

3. Norwich Research Park (NRP)

Many universities now claim to have a Science Park, the earliest having been established over 25 years ago by Trinity College, Cambridge. The University of East Anglia (UEA) Science Park, proposed some years ago at the University Village, did not materialise because of a lack of demand, funding and marketing; however, the basic requirements for a potentially successful development exist. The NRP at Colney includes two hospitals and five research institutes of international standing, providing research and training in biological, chemical and environmental sciences with a particular emphasis on food research. Together with the UEA, the NRP jointly represents one of the largest concentrations in Western Europe of such biotechnological expertise. The NRP has been established since the 1960s and has invested significantly in new facilities since 1990, making it East Anglia's third largest employer with over 5000 staff. It is a unique partnership of a major research university and public and private sector organisations.

The NRP allocation to the west of Colney Lane included in the Norwich Area Local Plan has an attractive environment, is well related to the main road network and is adjacent to existing important research and academic institutions. It is therefore reallocated in this Plan as an extension to the NRP, along with an additional 15 hectares of land at Colney Hall. The NRP extension is also adjacent to the new Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. The allocation is screened from the north-west by Milestone Plantation and by the topography of the land when viewed from the north.

A development brief for the NRP is to be prepared and will be published as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This will be prepared in consultation with all interested parties in accordance with Government guidance.

Any proposals to develop the allocated land at Colney Hall should be designed to produce a high quality research development site in this attractive location, and must take into consideration the following:

- Proposals must reflect the landscape setting of Colney Hall including the designated historic parkland (policy ENV 5) and respect the setting of Colney Hall as a Listed Building;
- Proposals must include plans for the long-term maintenance of the surrounding trees and woodland; and
- Consideration must be given to access and transport issues including a Green Travel Plan for the development.

Whilst approximately 15 hectares of land is allocated adjacent to Colney Hall as an extension to NRP it is likely that taking account of the location and the aim to produce a high quality of building and landscaping only some 6 to 8 hectares may be developed.

Policy COL 1: Research and development uses at Norwich Research Park

Planning permission will be granted for research and development uses on land shown on the Proposals Map at the Norwich Research Park, Colney, provided that:

The design and layout of all such development, including any proposals for the extension, infilling or development of existing buildings respects the layout, scale and quality of the existing Research Park buildings, where appropriate, and contributes positively to their landscape setting.

Any planning permission granted for development at the Norwich Research Park will be limited to that falling within class B1(b) of Part B of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (and the equivalent class in any successor Order), or to that which is ancillary to existing buildings and uses on the same site, and conditions will be imposed to this effect.

The aim of this policy is to meet the special locational needs of users covered by the Use Classes B1(b) element of the policy. The allocation is *not* made for the normal range of B1 class uses (see Appendix 1). In pursuance of this the District Council will seek to avoid changes of use to other activities falling within Class B1.

4. Norwich Research Park (NRP) contingency reserve

The allocated extensions to the NRP off Colney Lane/Hethersett Lane and at Colney Hall, for class B1(b) uses, provide a variety of sites for potential NRP users. The concept of a 'cluster' of users is familiar in terms of research park development and the Council is keen to enable the NRP cluster to flourish. This plan covers the period to mid-2006, but consideration is being given to the longer-term expansion of the NRP through joint work with the landowners and the local authorities in the form of a 'vision' document to 2025. Initial indications are that up to 80 hectares may be required in the period. The 'vision' document will be subject to consultation during the review of this Plan and may influence the content and allocations made in that Plan. As a key driver within the Norwich Area economy the development of the NRP forms an important part of the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

The nature of potential users of the NRP means they compete in a global market place and location is often an international choice. It is difficult to balance the need for large/adequate amounts of readily available land to sustain the economy and the need to maintain environmental safeguards, with the allocation of appropriate sites. In the context of the above allocations the Council may have to respond to demands for land beyond the amounts allocated. Material considerations such as the local economy, links to local institutions, the status of any "vision" documents, along with the availability of sites, would be relevant if pressures occur for the release of additional or unallocated land in the Plan period to mid-2006.

For these reasons the Council has identified a contingency reserve site as part of this Plan. This is intended to provide a degree of certainty to potential NRP users. The policy notes that this land would only be released if the Council was satisfied that the proposed uses could not locate on other allocated land because of the size of site required, or particular end user requirements, or other sites being committed. In addition design and layout are considered important factors. Any permission given will be limited to research and development under the Use Classes Order, class B1(b).

The Council is satisfied that through the County Council's South West Sector Strategy and subsequent initiatives a solution to the traffic needs of an enlarged NRP is emerging and that, should development of this site be initiated in the Plan period, the traffic implications for the development and the area could be accommodated satisfactorily. Any development would be required to undertake appropriate traffic impact assessments and contribute to any improvements that were made necessary. A Green Transport Plan would also be expected.

The land has been removed from the river valley landscape protection (policy ENV 3) and the Norwich Southern Bypass Protection Zone (policy ENV 6). It has been included within the Development Limit for Colney, but is subject to the caveats of clause i) of policy COL 2.

Policy COL 2: Norwich Research Park, contingency reserve

14 hectares between Hethersett Lane and Watton Road (B1108) as shown on the Proposals Map is proposed as a “contingency reserve” for the Norwich Research Park (research and development uses). Planning permission will be granted on this site within the plan period provided that:

- i) The uses proposed cannot be located on other allocated land by reason of Site size required, or Detailed end user requirements, or Other sites are committed.
- ii) The design and layout of all such development, including any proposals for the extension, infilling or development of existing buildings respects the layout, scale and quality of the existing Research Park buildings, and contributes positively to their landscape setting.
- iii) Any planning permission granted for development at the Norwich Research Park will be limited to that falling within class B1(b) of Part B of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (and the equivalent class in any successor Order), or to that which is ancillary to existing buildings and uses on the same site, and conditions will be imposed to this effect.

5. Norwich Research Park (NRP) transportation issues

Policy COL 3 below sets out the transportation requirements necessary to achieve the development of the NRP allocation.

Policy COL 3: Norwich Research Park, transportation issues

The development of the Norwich Research Park allocation will require the following transport improvements by the developers of the site:

- i) Footway/cycleway links within Norwich Research Park, with the new hospital, and to major areas of housing such as Bowthorpe and Cringleford;
- ii) Public transport services particularly to the City Centre, to major areas of housing such as Bowthorpe and Cringleford and to Costessey and Cringleford Park and Ride sites;
- iii) Green Travel Plans to reduce traffic generation to the minimum possible;
- iv) Highway improvements to the B1108 Watton Road from Hethersett Lane to the A47 Southern Bypass;
- v) Further improvements to the Watton Road/Hethersett Lane junction and Hethersett Lane itself, over and above that associated with the current Colney Developments planning permission;
- vi) Traffic management measures into the City Centre.

6. Expansion of the new Norfolk and Norwich Hospital

Policy COL 4: Expansion of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital

A site of 5ha of land between the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and Hethersett Lane is allocated for hospital and hospital related activities in addition to research and development uses permitted by policy COL 1 at the Norwich Research Park.

This allocation has been made to allow for the immediately foreseeable clinical and patient care needs of the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital now established at Colney. The allocation will also make land available to accommodate allied research and development activities that the hospital's presence may attract to the NRP and be available for other uses appropriate to the research park. The needs of the Hospital in the longer term will be kept under review and taken into account in the emerging master plan for the NRP.

In bringing forward this allocation special consideration must be given to the formulation of suitable access and public transport arrangements, and how these relate to the transportation network of the Colney-Cringleford sector as a whole.