Hopkins Homes are providing this consultation response in reply to the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Consultation by the requested submission deadline of 16th March 2020.

Hopkins Homes Ltd is the largest independent house building company in East Anglia with a reputation for delivering well designed, high quality residential and mixed-use development harmonising with its local context. In the past decade the company has succeeded in delivering sustainable developments which improve neighbourhoods, improve local infrastructure and add to local distinctiveness throughout the Greater Norwich area.

In respect of the content of the Draft Plan, Hopkins Homes wish to make the following comments:-

**SECTION 5 – THE STRATEGY POLICY 1 THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH STRATEGY**

Consultation Questions for Policy 1 – The Sustainable Growth Strategy

*13. Do you agree with the proposed Settlement Hierarchy and the proposed distribution of housing within the hierarchy?*

Whilst Hopkins Homes agrees with the broad strategy outlined, we do consider that a number of the existing villages within the wider Greater Norwich Area, both within and beyond the defined *‘Norwich Policy Area’* benefit from sufficient sustainability credentials so as to be able to accommodate greater levels of housing growth than are currently proposed.

Notably, Hopkins Homes have proposed sites on the periphery of the villages of Mulbarton and Scole within South Norfolk, both of which settlements benefit from facilities and good connections with nearby higher-order market towns which enable them to accommodate higher levels of growth than are currently envisaged through the proposed Strategy.

In respect of Mulbarton, the existing population in excess of 3,500 is higher than that of over half of the designated Key Service Centres, as confirmed by the data contained in Table 1 on Page 11 of the Draft Plan, which therefore further confirms the appropriateness of higher levels of proportionate housing growth than currently proposed within the Draft Plan.

**POLICY 5 – HOMES**

Consultation Questions for Policy 5 – Homes

*32. Do you support, object or have any comments relating to the approach to Self/Custom-Build ?*

Whilst Hopkins Homes understands the Government’s desire to promote the development of housing via Self and Custom-Build, it is common knowledge that the vast majority of demand for such housing is upon smaller and individual development sites in predominantly rural locations, rather than as a small portion of a larger development site.

To this end, it is suggested that specific smaller sites in rural locations should be allocated for such uses, rather than seeking to require such provision as a portion of larger sites.

**POLICY 7.3 – THE KEY SERVICE CENTRES**

Consultation Questions for Policy 7.3 – The Key Service Centres

*43. Do you support or object or wish to comment on the approach for the key service centres overall? Please identify particular issues.*

*44. Do you support or object or wish to comment on the approach for specific key service centres: (Acle, Blofield, Brundall, Hethersett, Hingham, Loddon / Chedgrave, Poringland / Framingham Earl, Reepham, Wroxham)? Please identify particular issues*.

As previously outlined under Question 13, Hopkins Homes considers that the village of Mulbarton should be formally identified as a Key Service Centre, Mulbarton, given the existing population in excess of 3,500 is higher than that of over half of the designated Key Service Centres, as confirmed by the data contained in Table 1 on Page 11 of the Draft Plan, whilst the village also benefits from a proportionately good range of services and facilities.

**POLICY 7.4 - VILLAGE CLUSTERS**

Consultation Questions for Policy 7.4 – The Village Clusters

*45. Do you support or object or wish to comment on the overall approach for the village clusters? Please identify particular issues.*

*46. Do you support or object or wish to comment on the approach for specific village clusters? Please identify particular issues.*

Whilst Hopkins Homes support the identification of village clusters to accommodate additional residential development to support the sustainable growth of rural areas, there should be no defined numerical restraint upon the size of site area or the number of dwellings proposed for allocation in this way. Instead, any such allocations should be made so as to be proportionate to the size of settlement cluster within which they are located and the range of facilities available, in order that they successfully meet local housing needs.