

## South Norfolk Council

# Agenda

**To: All Members of the South Norfolk Council:**

You are hereby summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of South Norfolk Council for the purpose of transacting the business set out in this agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trevor Holden", written over a white background.

Trevor Holden  
Managing Director

Cllr James Easter (Chairman)

Cllr Sharon Blundell (Vice-Chair)

**Date & Time:**

Monday, 25 March 2024  
7.30 pm

**Place:**

Upper & Lower Yare - Horizon Centre, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF

**Contact:**

Claire White, tel 01508 533669  
Email: [committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/)

**Public Attendance:**

**This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRImsTCIng>

If a member of the public would like to attend, please email your request to [committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk), no later than 5.00pm Wednesday, 20 March 2024.

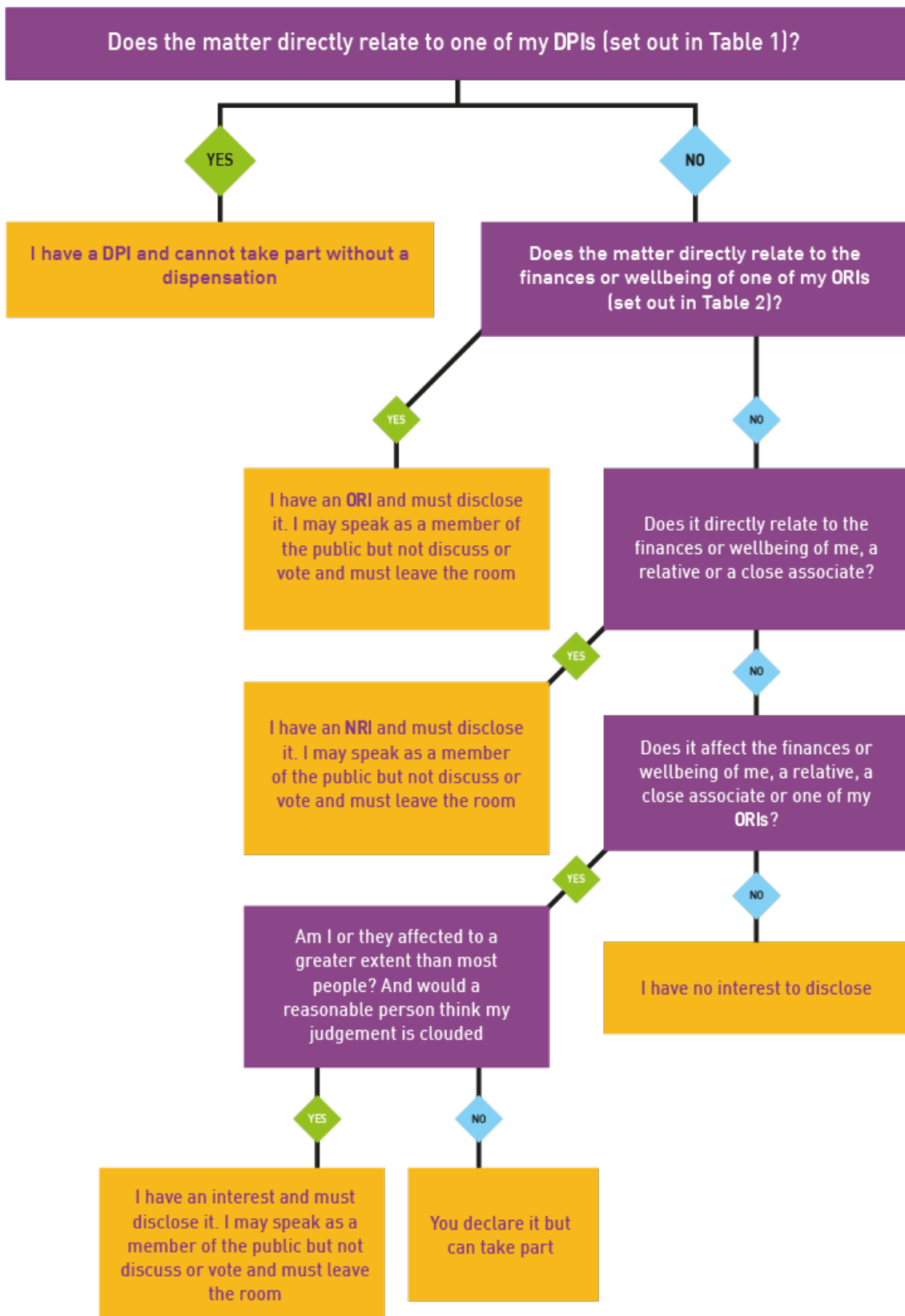
# AGENDA

## The Council's Prayer

1. **Apologies for absence**
  
2. **Declarations of interest** (Pages 3 - 5)  
To receive declarations of interest from Members (guidance attached).
  
3. **Adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan - Recommendations from the Cabinet** (Pages 6 - 100)  
Please see copy of the Cabinet report attached.  
  
The recommendations arising from the Cabinet meeting to be held 18 March will be forwarded separately.
  
4. **Wymondham Public Realm Improvements** (Pages 101 - 105)
  
5. **Housing Complaints Policy** (Pages 106 - 115)

## Interests Flowchart

The flowchart below gives a simple guide to declaring an interest under the code.



**Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the

[Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012.](#)

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
<b>Land and Property</b>	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
<b>Licenses</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer

<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<b>Securities</b>	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) If the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

**Table 2: Other Registrable Interests**

<p>You must register as an Other Registerable Interest :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) any unpaid directorships</li> <li>b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority</li> <li>c) any body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) exercising functions of a public nature</li> <li>(ii) directed to charitable purposes or</li> <li>(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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# Agenda Item 3



**Cabinet**  
**18 March 2024**

## **Adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan**

**Report Author:** Mike Burrell  
Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager  
01603 222761  
mike.burrell@norfolk.gov.uk

**Portfolios:** Cllr John Fuller; and Cllr Lisa Overton-Neal  
External Affairs & Policy; and Stronger, Greener Economy

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

To consider the outcome of the examination into the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) and to recommend adoption of the plan.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended to Cabinet that Council:

1. notes the inspectors' report (at Appendix A) and the required main modifications in appendices 1 to 5 (available from [this link](#));
2. adopts the modified GNLP (documents J2.1 to J2.11 inclusive available from [this link](#)); and
3. delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Planning to publish the Adoption Statement and accompanying documents, making the GNLP part of the Adopted Local Plan for South Norfolk.

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The report by independent Inspectors Mike Worden BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI and Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI into the soundness and legal compliance of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) has been received. In line with the requirements of the Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), a publication notice and the inspectors' report were published on the GNLP and the partners' websites on February 20th. Interested parties were also notified of the publication of the report.
- 1.2 The inspectors conclude that, subject to the inclusion of the main modifications they recommend being incorporated into the plan, the GNLP is sound and can be adopted as part of the local plans for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of the development and content of the GNLP and of the inspectors' examination conclusions. It proposes that Council adopts the modified GNLP.
- 1.4 Appendix A contains the inspectors' report which summarises the main modifications required to make the plan sound. These changes are detailed in appendices 1 to 5 (documents J1.2 to J1.6 inclusive available from [this link](#)).
- 1.5 The GNLP, including the main and additional (minor) modifications, is in documents J2.1 to J2.11 inclusive available from [this link](#).
- 1.6 If the councils resolve to adopt the GNLP, Adoption Statements will be placed on each of the three councils' websites in line with Regulations 17 and 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.7 The Sustainability Appraisal of the plan consists of a number of documents. It is available from section J4.2 [here](#). To meet the requirements of Regulation 16 of the SEA Regulations, an Environmental Adoption Statement will be published with the GNLP's Adoption Statements. It is available in section [J4.1](#) here.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Greater Norwich has an excellent record of partnership working. We were one of the first partnerships nationally to adopt a joint local plan, the Joint Core Strategy, in 2011 (only 16 areas have adopted joint plans in England).
- 2.2 Since 2013, we have taken a successful and unique approach by pooling Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income from developers to help to pay for the infrastructure improvements we need. We have also worked with all the Norfolk planning authorities and with infrastructure providers and environmental bodies to plan together for our strategic needs across the county and with Suffolk. As a result, growth has been well-planned, with new infrastructure delivered to support it, whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing our special environment.

- 2.3 Local plans set the development framework for an area, usually for the next 15 years. To do this, they:
- Contain planning policies which are the basis for deciding whether to approve planning applications.
  - Allocate sites for development, including homes and employment sites, which respond to evidenced local needs and opportunities.
  - Ensure that buildings and places are sustainable, beautiful and of a high quality.
  - Facilitate the delivery of local infrastructure, such as new schools, health and community facilities, transport, and green infrastructure such as parks, street trees, local wildlife areas and woodlands.
  - Protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.
  - Respond to climate change and support nature recovery.
- 2.4 National policy requires local planning authorities (LPAs) to have local plans which reflect recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) submitted by the end of June 2025 and adopted by December 2026. Government evidence on local plan progress shows that it takes 7 years, on average, to produce a local plan and that approximately 35% of LPAs have adopted a local plan in the last 5 years.

### **3. Current positions/findings**

#### The GNLP and other local plan documents

- 3.1 On adoption, the GNLP will supersede the current JCS and the Norwich and Broadland site allocations plans, along with the majority of South Norfolk's site allocations plan. It consists of the strategy for growth, the site allocations to implement that strategy and a monitoring framework. Resulting changes to the adopted Policies Map are available in section J3 [here](#).
- 3.2 Allocations will be made in a separate plan in the smaller villages in South Norfolk through the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Local Plan. The Diss, Scole and Burston area allocates sites through their Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.3 As well as making new site allocations, the great majority of the undeveloped sites in the site allocation plans adopted around a decade ago are re-allocated through the GNLP.
- 3.4 The GNLP will not replace existing adopted Area Action Plans (AAPs) for Long Stratton, Wymondham and the Growth Triangle (NEGT), though in some cases additional allocations are made through the GNLP in these areas. The GNLP will be used in conjunction with the adopted AAPs, development management (DM) plans for the three districts and Neighbourhood Plans.

#### The GNLP Strategy

- 3.5 The growth strategy in the GNLP builds on and further develops the strategic approach taken in Greater Norwich in recent years and has been developed



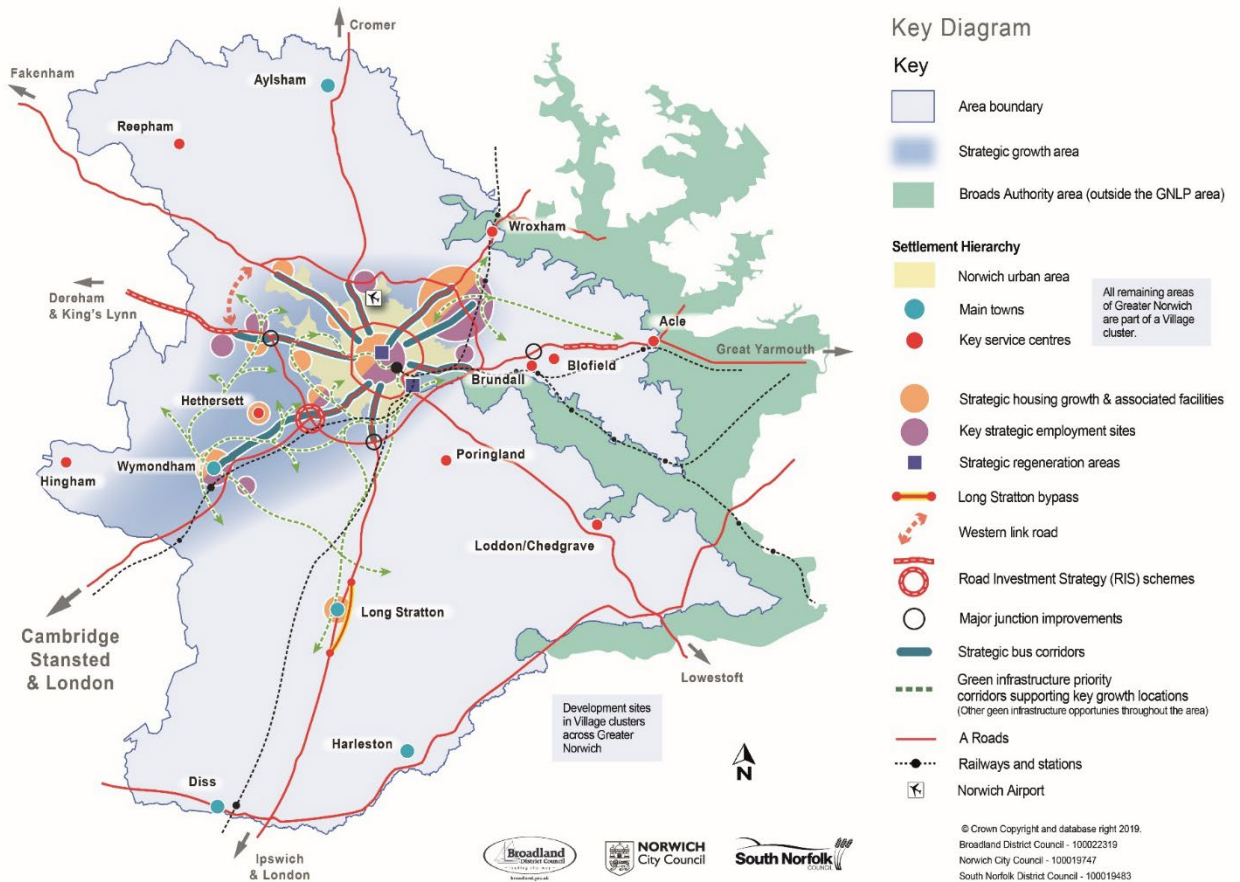
through detailed community and stakeholder consultation. Its development has taken account of a broad range of issues and views. It is well-evidenced, meets the plan's objectives and has now been endorsed by the government appointed inspectors through its examination.

- 3.6 The GNLP provides for up to 45,050 new homes, a jobs target of 33,000 jobs and 360 hectares of employment land from 2018 to 2038. It will ensure that Greater Norwich's housing and jobs needs will be fully met in a sustainable manner, supporting the growth of the post carbon economy, assisting in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing the many environmental assets of the area.
- 3.7 This will be achieved through the strategy focussing the great majority of growth in and around the Norwich urban area and the fringe parishes, the towns and the larger villages, together with some growth in smaller villages to support local services as follows:
- 62% of the new homes will be in the Norwich urban area and the fringe parishes. These homes will be provided firstly through infill and regeneration sites (including East Norwich) to maximise brownfield capacity and secondly on urban extensions. The largest urban extension is the Growth Triangle to the north-east of the city in Broadland, providing just over 10,000 homes to 2038, as well as jobs and infrastructure (including a secondary school). This now includes a new strategic allocation at White House Farm, Sprowston. Extensions to the north-west of the city at Taverham (a new strategic allocation), to its west at Easton, Costessey and Three Score and south-west at Cringleford provide other strategic housing growth locations.
  - 15% of the new homes will be in the main towns. There are new sites in Aylsham, Diss (partly through its Neighbourhood Plan), Harleston and Wymondham, with no additional sites in Long Stratton.
  - 8% of the homes will be in the key service centres (new sites are allocated in Acle, Blofield, Hingham and Loddon).
  - 9% of the homes will be in the village clusters covering the remaining rural areas of Broadland and South Norfolk. These sites will provide growth to meet local needs and support local services.
  - 6% of the homes will be provided by windfall development.
- 3.8 The strategy provides the great majority of employment land at strategic sites (at Norwich City Centre, the Norwich Airport area, Browick Interchange Wymondham, Longwater, Rackheath, Broadland Business Park, Broadland Gate, Norwich Research Park, Hethel and the Food Enterprise Park at Easton/Honingham). Allocations also provide smaller sites with local job opportunities.
- 3.9 The strategy includes a strategic growth area promoting Greater Norwich's economic strengths and sectors and linking via the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor to other regional and national growth corridors centred on Cambridge. The increased focus on the strategic growth area defined in the GNLP assists consideration of future strategic approaches, potentially including a new settlement or settlements.
- 3.10 This approach will both assist the ability to access external funding and emphasise the role that Norwich, in particular the city centre as a regional centre

for jobs, retailing, leisure, entertainment and cultural activities, and the Norwich Research Park (NRP) for employment, play as a driver of the regional economy, generating travel and contributing to the economy. This strong focus on the strategic growth area will assist strong economic growth in the area. It will also provide for the co-location of jobs and homes, providing strong links to services, education opportunities and other facilities, at the same time promoting active and sustainable travel.

- 3.11 The strategy also promotes the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment and local landscapes. This is done through the further development of the green infrastructure network and the retained strategic focus on continued protection of river valleys and strategic gaps.
- 3.12 The GNLP promotes a pro-active approach to housing delivery through only allocating housing sites where a reasonable prospect of delivery has been evidenced. The plan also provides choice and flexibility by ensuring there are enough committed sites to accommodate 11% more homes than “need”, should they be required to offset any non-delivery. Additional opportunities will be provided through windfall development.
- 3.13 As such, the proposed strategy offers the opportunity to strengthen Greater Norwich’s role as a key part of the national economy. Economic growth in Greater Norwich is set to be in key sectors that will assist in the national and international adaptation to a post carbon economy, including in plant sciences and high value engineering.
- 3.14 Taken together, these measures will ensure that housing needs to 2038 will be fully met in sustainable manner, supporting the growth of the post carbon economy in Greater Norwich and more widely, assisting in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing the many environmental assets of the area.
- 3.15 The GNLP Strategy is summarised in the plan’s Key Diagram below.

## Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Key Diagram



### GNLP Plan-making Stages

- 3.16 The publication of the inspectors' report is the end of the GNLP's examination. The independent planning inspectors, who are appointed by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State, have assessed the soundness of the submitted plan through its examination.
- 3.17 Plans are 'sound' if they are:
- Positively prepared – i.e. it provides a strategy which, as a minimum, meets the area's objectively assessed needs and is informed by agreements with other authorities;
  - Justified – it is an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
  - Effective – it is deliverable over the plan period, and is based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters as evidenced by a statement of common ground;
  - Consistent with national policy – it enables the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with national policies.
- 3.18 In line with regulatory requirements, the following stages have been undertaken in producing the GNLP:

<b>Stage</b>		<b>Dates</b>
Call for Sites		May to July 2016
<b>Regulation 18 Preparation Stage</b>		
Stage A	Growth Options and Site Proposals consultation	January to March 2018
Stage B	New, Revised and Small Sites consultation	October to December 2018
Stage C	Draft Plan Consultation	January – March 2020
<b>Regulation 19 Publication Stage</b>		
Pre-submission Draft Plan for representations on soundness and legal compliance		February – March 2021
<b>Submission and Examination Hearings</b>		
Submission to the Secretary of State		July 2021
Public Examination Hearings		February 2022 – July 2023

### Examination Hearings

- 3.19 The hearings were divided into 5 sections:
- Parts 1 and 2 in February and March 2022 covered the strategy and site allocations.
  - Part 3 in July 2022 was on the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area.
  - Part 4 in March 2023 was on Nutrient Neutrality and Housing (specifically the trajectory for the delivery of homes).
  - Part 5 in July 2023 was on Gypsy and Traveller needs and site allocations.

### Inspectors' Letter

- 3.20 A letter from the inspectors was received on August 9<sup>th</sup> 2023. It is available on the [GNLP website](#). It showed that the inspectors were generally content with the plan, but that a number of policies, largely relating to site allocations and housing delivery, would require main modifications to the 2021 submitted version of the plan which was the subject of the examination.

### Main and Additional Modifications

- 3.21 Almost all local plans require main modifications to be made to them.
- 3.22 The main modifications were subject to consultation between October 25<sup>th</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup> 2023. Consultation feedback was received from 67 respondents who made 257 individual representations. Many of the responses did not raise soundness issues and some comments only focussed to a limited extent on the main modifications, instead returning to issues already addressed through the examination, such as objecting to specific site allocations or requesting the inclusion of sites not allocated in the plan.
- 3.23 The Inspectors took note of the partnership's view on the consultation comments, along with the other comments made, in concluding on the modifications that are needed to make the plan sound. In this light, the Inspectors have made some amendments to the detailed wording of the main modifications and added consequential modifications where these are necessary for consistency or clarity.

Where the Inspectors' feel it is appropriate, their report references their response to specific soundness issues raised.

- 3.24 Additional modifications, mainly to supporting text rather than policies, have also been made. These are largely updates and clarifications which do not relate to the soundness of the plan. They do not form part of the inspectors' examination of the plan and were available for reference rather than being part of the main modifications consultation. They include:
- Factual updates to supporting text, especially in the spatial profile e.g. new census data.
  - References to changes in national policy e.g. the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) and nutrient neutrality requirements.
  - Progress on infrastructure schemes.
  - National targets for reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Removal of footnotes and replacement with references in text where required.
- 3.25 Further factual updates have been made to the additional modifications to reflect the final outcome of the plan's examination and the passage of time.
- 3.26 Taking account of the examination hearings and the consultation feedback, the modifications to the plan which they have concluded are necessary to make the GNLP sound have been included in the Inspectors' Report.

#### The Inspector's Report

- 3.27 The inspectors' report concludes that with the specific main modifications, the plan satisfies legal requirements and meets the criteria for soundness in the NPPF. However, the councils can only adopt the plan if they incorporate the modifications that the inspectors view as necessary to make the plan sound. Consequently, the councils must now consider whether or not to adopt the plan in the light of the inspectors' report and recommendations.
- 3.28 The inspectors' report in Appendix A begins with a Non-Technical Summary, an Introduction and a section providing the context for the plan. The Non-Technical summary of the main modifications requires:
- Amending Policies 2 and 3 for clarity, consistency with national planning policy, to reflect updated evidence, and in light of Natural England advice on nutrient neutrality mitigation;
  - Amending Policy 7.5 so that it relates solely to self/custom build housing;
  - Deleting Policy 7.6 for new settlements;
  - Deleting the Costessey Contingency Site Allocation;
  - Deleting those site allocations which are not justified;
  - Amending site allocation policies to remove ambiguity and clarify development requirements;
  - Allocating sites for Gypsy and Traveller needs;
  - Updating the housing supply figures and housing trajectory to reflect the evidence;
  - Replacing the monitoring framework;

- A number of other modifications to ensure that the Plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
- 3.29 The report then addresses legal compliance concluding that the plan meets all legal requirements. Specifically, the report states that:
- The Inspectors have had due regard to the Equalities Act through the examination, including their consideration of the allocation of Gypsy and Traveller sites to meet identified need, and policies relating to accessible and adaptable housing.
  - The Partnership has engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of the Plan and that the duty to co-operate has therefore been met.
  - The Sustainability Appraisal has adequately considered reasonable alternatives and is suitably comprehensive and legally compliant.
  - The legal requirement to undertake an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Habitats Regulations has been met. This work focuses on the impacts of the plan on internationally protected habitats. Policy requirements to protect those habitats in relation to visitor pressure and nutrient neutrality are included in policy 3 of the plan.
  - Public consultation requirements for the plan were addressed in line with our Statements of Community Involvement and Local Development Schemes and meet the requirements of the national Regulations.
  - The plan meets legal requirements in respect of preparing policies to address climate change.

### Soundness

- 3.30 The Inspectors identified nine main “soundness” issues which were investigated through the examination and conclude that if the modifications they recommend are made:
- The Plan’s overall spatial strategy is based on robust evidence and is justified and effective. They consider that the spatial distribution across the Plan area is logical, it has been selected following consideration of reasonable alternatives and is an appropriate strategy as required by the NPPF.
  - The housing requirement of 40,541 homes for the Plan period, based on the standard methodology using 2014 based projections, is justified and consistent with national policy. Also, the Plan’s jobs target of 33,000 jobs, and the allocation of around 360 hectares of employment land, are sound.
  - The strategy for the economy and areas of growth is justified, effective and consistent with the evidence. This includes the approach taken on village clusters and a modified approach to small-scale windfall housing in policy 7.5 to place its focus on self and custom build housing. The Inspectors also conclude that a review of the Local Plan will need to assess options for longer term growth which may include the potential for a sustainable new settlement or settlements.
  - The Plan policies relating to Sustainable Communities (policy 2 covering various aspects of design, including accessibility, density, designing out crime, water efficiency, and energy consumption) and Environment Protection and Enhancement (policy 3 covering the built, historic and natural environment, and

modified to cover nutrient neutrality) are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

- With a modification to clarify that strategic infrastructure schemes in policy 4 being progressed by other bodies including Norfolk County Council and National Highways, such as the Norwich Western Link, are not required to deliver any allocation, the Plan accords with the evidence and is justified and effective.
- The Plan's approach to the provision of affordable housing, Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation, self and custom build housing, and the housing needs of other groups, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
- The Partnership's approach to site assessment and selection for both general housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is appropriate and is justified. Thus, the vast majority of the proposed site allocations in the submitted plan are retained. Paragraphs 3.31 to 3.33 below identify the limited number of submitted sites which are not included in the plan for adoption and those sites for which site capacity and delivery assumptions have been changed. The housing trajectory, now in Appendix 4 of the GNLP, has been amended to reflect these changes.
- The plan provides a 5-year supply of 12,632 homes for the Greater Norwich area, which is a supply of 5.77 years. It also demonstrates a 5-year supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.
- The revised Monitoring Framework, which now includes targets, triggers, and actions and is in a separate third document of the plan, provides a sound and effective basis for monitoring the Plan.

3.31 The following sites have been removed from the plan as the result of the examination:

- i. South of Le Neve Road, Marsham GNLP2143 for 35 homes due to impacts on the neighbouring church.
- ii. Mill Road Reedham GNLP3003 for 30 homes due to poor access.
- iii. The contingency site at Costessey.
- iv. Other housing sites removed by landowners:
  - Ber Street (CC2), Norwich for 20 homes.
  - Lower Clarence Road (CC13), Norwich for 45 homes
  - Ipswich Road Community Hub (R2), Norwich for 15 homes
  - Land north of Springfield Way and west of Dereham Road, Hingham for 20 homes.

3.32 With regard to the larger sites with planning permission, and those allocated in Area Action Plans, the Inspectors have made some alterations to the supply and delivery assumptions. There has been a loss of 250 dwellings the Norwich RFU site as there was no evidence to support relocation plans during plan period, along with a loss of 180 dwellings at North Rackheath as some of the homes in the AAP are no longer considered likely to be delivered by 2038.

3.33 In addition, site capacity and delivery assumptions have been changed from the submitted plan on some sites. This includes East Norwich (3,000 homes are now

assumed to be delivered in the plan period) and White House Farm, Sprowston, where there has been a loss of 660 dwellings from the delivery trajectory to 2038.

- 3.34 The Inspectors overall conclusion is that with inclusion of their recommended main modifications the plan is sound and “*the LPAs will be able to confirm that a five-year housing land supply for the Plan area has been demonstrated in a recently adopted plan*”. This is an excellent outcome as due to recent changes to the NPPF, this 5-year supply will be fixed for 5 years on adoption of the plan.

#### **4. Proposed action**

##### Securing Plan Adoption

- 4.1 The publication of the inspector’s report enables the councils to proceed to adoption of the GNLP. It requires the main modifications to be included in the adopted plan to make it sound. As stated above, these changes are binding - a plan can only be adopted with their inclusion.
- 4.2 The decision to adopt the plan must be made by each of the three councils. Full Council meetings are scheduled in each authority in March 2024. Adoption of the GNLP involves the publication of an adoption statement the day after each authority adopts the plan. This is accompanied by the GNLP as amended by the inspectors’ modifications, the inspector’s report, the sustainability appraisal, an environmental adoption statement and the habitats regulation assessment. These are available from [here](#). An Environmental adoption statement will also be available.
- 4.3 Legal challenges can be made within 6 weeks of the adoption of a local plan. An application to the High Court can be made either on the grounds that the document is not within the appropriate power of the LPA, or that a procedural requirement has not been complied with.
- 4.4 Once the risk of legal challenge has passed, the production of the final online and hard copy documents to publication standard can be undertaken.

#### **5. Other options**

- 5.1 All local planning authorities are required to produce a Local Plan. As there are clear benefits to working together with our neighbours in Broadland and Norwich to produce a joint plan, and the case for adoption is concluded in this report to be overwhelming, there are no realistic options to adoption of the GNLP.

#### **6. Issues and risks**

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** – Work on the plan first began in 2016 and has involved a significant commitment of resources. Adopting the GNLP marks a significant achievement, and the new plan will play an important role in guiding the creation of new jobs and homes whilst protecting the environmental assets of the area.



- 6.2 **Legal Implications** – The preparation and content of a local plan needs to accord with a range of legal and regulatory provisions. Project assurance, including taking relevant legal advice, has been undertaken as part of the plan-making and examination process.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** – The plan encourages growth of vibrant and healthy communities with good access to jobs, services and facilities, helping to reduce disparities between the life chances of disadvantaged and other communities. New communities will be well-integrated with existing communities and will be safe and attractive places to live. An [Equality Impact Assessment](#) has assessed the impact of the local plan on the community and its potential to address socio-economic inequality.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** – A Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) support the GNLP. The SA has explicitly considered the policies and sites allocated through the plan. The HRA has focused on nutrient neutrality and visitor pressure on internationally protected habitats.
- 6.5 The GNLP’s Climate Change statement sets out how the plan seizes the opportunities available locally to promote low carbon development and address climate change. This includes the location of development and its design, with policies reducing the need to travel, promoting water efficiency, sustainable energy provision and recycling, and requiring development to be adapted to the address the impacts of climate change, including flood risk. The plan has a particular focus on ensuring that new development provides biodiversity net gain and new green infrastructure (GI) as part of a wider GI network.
- 6.6 **Crime and Disorder** – This report has implications for the council’s crime and disorder considerations in that new development is required to reflect best practice to deter crime through its design and layout. In addition, the supporting text in the plan advises planning applicants to contact Norfolk Constabulary for guidance on crime and safety issues.
- 6.7 **Risks** – Since the plan has successfully been through examination and has been found to be sound subject to including the Inspectors’ main modifications, risks relate to non-adoption of the plan. Non-adoption of the plan would lead to more speculative development in unplanned locations, potential government intervention in plan-making and would be likely to reduce both government and private investment in the area. Such risks will be addressed by adoption of the plan.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, the inspectors’ report is very positive, and the successful development of an updated joint strategy is a considerable success.
- 7.2 Adoption of the GNLP will allow us to implement evidence-based policies for our area through a plan which the partnership has invested considerable time and money in. While it has been a long process to get the GNLP to adoption, national

data shows that the seven years taken is the average under the current local plans system.

- 7.3 The GNLP builds on our extensive experience of joint working to identify where growth and new infrastructure is needed from 2018 to 2038. Plan adoption will keep us at the forefront of joint planning nationally which will help us to attract investment into the area, including Government funding, especially for infrastructure and regeneration programmes. Only one other partnership, Central Lincolnshire, has adopted a review of a joint plan.
- 7.4 The plan will deliver high-quality homes, along with a broad range of new jobs and supporting infrastructure, including green infrastructure, roads, schools, health care facilities and broadband connectivity. The plan includes a range of policies which will ensure that the development is in the best locations to support our existing communities and to create thriving new communities, as well as making sure that development is well-designed, and is sustainable.
- 7.5 The councils' strategy for the distribution of the majority of growth in the Strategic Growth Area focussed on the Norwich Urban Area and the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor, with some growth also focussed at other levels of the hierarchy to support thriving communities and the retention of services, has been fully endorsed. This further develops the long-term strategic approach set through the JCS. It also allows for a future focussing of growth on new settlements if this is the path which the authorities choose to take in their next plan or plans.
- 7.6 Adoption of this coherent strategic plan will mean that Greater Norwich will have an up-to-date local plan with a clear and sustainable policies and site allocations that will promote environmental protection, investment in our economy and the provision of the homes, jobs and infrastructure we need, including through the continued use of pooled CIL monies.
- 7.7 Importantly, recent revisions to the NPPF mean that for 5 years after adoption of the plan, there will be no need to annually demonstrate a five-year land supply for Greater Norwich. This will significantly reduce the pressure to grant permissions for non-allocated housing sites that currently exists as there is not, at this point, a 5-year land supply. This further increases the benefits of having an adopted plan.
- 7.8 There could potentially be some very serious negative impacts associated with not adopting the plan. Firstly, the uncertainty created by not having an adopted strategy and not having a 5-year land supply would increase the prospect of speculative or inappropriate proposals being submitted, resulting in "planning by appeal". Secondly, there is a very real threat of Government intervention for those LPAs which are not making sufficient progress on their plans to have an adopted plan in place by December 2026. Ten local planning authorities had the Secretary of State intervene in their local plan process in the last three months of 2023. Seven were required to update their Local Development Schemes to make clear when their plans are to be adopted, whilst three (Spelthorne BC, Erewash BC and West Berkshire Council) were instructed not to withdraw their draft plans from examination. It seems highly likely that there would be Government intervention if one or more of the Greater Norwich authorities were not to adopt the GNLP. Given

the amount of consultation it has gone through and the successful outcome of its examination, it is also possible that there could be a legal challenge and significant resulting costs to non-adoption of the GNLP.

- 7.9 Having received a highly positive Inspectors' Report endorsing the strategy and site allocations set out in our plan, and taking account of the significant benefits of adoption and the major difficulties that would be created through not following that path, the case for adoption is overwhelming.

## **8. Recommendations**

8.1 It is recommended to Cabinet that Council:

1. notes the inspectors' report (at Appendix A) and the required main modifications in appendices 1 to 5 (available from [this link](#));
2. adopts the modified GNLP (documents J2.1 to J2.11 inclusive available from [this link](#)); and
3. delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Planning to publish the Adoption Statement and accompanying documents, making the GNLP part of the Adopted Local Plan for South Norfolk.

## **Background papers**

Report to Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council, by Mike Worden BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI and Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI, 19 February 2024

## **Report to Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council**

**by Mike Worden BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI and Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State

Date: 19 February 2024

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## **Report on the Examination of the Greater Norwich Local Plan**

The Plan was submitted for examination on 30 July 2021

The examination hearings were held:

1-10 February 2022, 1-10 March 2022, 6 July 2022, 22-23 March 2023, 25 July 2023.

File Ref: PINS/G2625/429/9

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## Abbreviations used in this report

dpa	Dwellings per annum
dph	Dwellings per hectare
ENSRA	East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area
Framework	National Planning Policy Framework
GIRAMS	Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance Mitigation Strategy
GTAA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
GTAAP	Growth Triangle Area Action Plan
Ha	Hectares
HELAA	Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan
JCS	Joint Core Strategy
MM	Main modification
NSPF	Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework
Partnership	Greater Norwich Development Partnership
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPTS	Planning Policy for Traveller Sites
SNVCHAP	South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan
SA	Sustainability appraisal
SoCG	Statement of common ground
UEA	University of East Anglia

## Non-Technical Summary

This report concludes that the Greater Norwich Local Plan ('the Plan') provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the 3 Council areas, provided that a number of main modifications [MMs] are made to it. Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council working together as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, have specifically requested that we recommend any MMs necessary to enable the Plan to be adopted.

Following the hearings, the Council prepared schedules of the proposed modifications and, where necessary, carried out sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment of them. The MMs were subject to public consultation over a six-week period. In some cases, we have amended their detailed wording and/or added consequential modifications where necessary. We have recommended their inclusion in the Plan after considering the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment and all the representations made in response to consultation on them.

The main modifications can be summarised as follows:

- Amending Policies 2 and 3 for clarity, consistency with national planning policy, to reflect updated evidence, and in light of Natural England advice on nutrient neutrality mitigation;
- Amending Policy 7.5 so that it relates solely to self/custom build housing;
- Deleting Policy 7.6 for new settlements;
- Deleting the Costessey Contingency Site Allocation;
- Deleting those site allocations which are not justified;
- Amending site allocation policies to remove ambiguity and clarify development requirements;
- Allocating sites for Gypsy and Traveller needs;
- Updating the housing supply figures and housing trajectory to reflect the evidence;
- Replacing the monitoring framework;
- A number of other modifications to ensure that the Plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

## Introduction

1. This report contains our assessment of the Greater Norwich Local Plan in terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It considers first whether the Plan's preparation has complied with the duty to co-operate. It then considers whether the Plan is compliant with the legal requirements and whether it is sound. The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (paragraph 35) (the Framework) makes it clear that in order to be sound, a Local Plan should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
2. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local planning authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The Greater Norwich Local Plan, submitted in July 2021 is the basis for our examination. It is the same document as was published for consultation in February 2021.
3. A revised Framework was published on 19 December 2023. It makes it clear that, under transitional arrangements, plans reaching Regulation 19 stage before March 2024 should be examined under the previous version of the Framework (dated September 2023). The examination of this Plan has therefore taken place under that version. References to the Framework in this report are to the previous September 2023 version, unless otherwise stated.

## Main Modifications

4. In accordance with section 20(7C) of the 2004 Act the Councils requested that we should recommend any main modifications [MMs] necessary to rectify matters that make the Plan unsound and thus incapable of being adopted. Our report explains why the recommended MMs are necessary. The MMs are referenced in bold in the report in the form **MM1**, **MM2** etc, and are set out in full in the Appendix.
5. Following the examination hearings, the Partnership prepared a schedule of proposed MMs and, where necessary, carried out sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment of them. The MM schedule was subject to public consultation for six weeks.
6. We have taken account of the consultation responses in coming to our conclusions in this report, and in this light, we have made some amendments to the detailed wording of the main modifications and added consequential modifications where these are necessary for consistency or clarity. None of the amendments significantly alters the content of the modifications as published for consultation or undermines the participatory processes and sustainability appraisal/habitats regulations assessment that has been undertaken. Where necessary we have highlighted these amendments in the report.



## Policies Map

7. The Councils must maintain an adopted policies map which illustrates geographically the application of the policies in the adopted development plan. When submitting a local plan for examination, it is a requirement to provide a submission policies map showing the changes to the adopted policies map that would result from the proposals in the submitted local plan. In this case, the submission policies map comprises the set of plans identified as Submission Policies Map Broadland, Submission Policies Map Norwich, Submission Policies Map South Norfolk as set out in the Greater Norwich Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft Strategy and Draft Sites Plan.
8. The policies map is not defined in statute as a development plan document and so we do not have the power to recommend main modifications to it. However, a number of the published MMs to the Plan's policies require further corresponding changes to be made to the policies map. In addition, there are some instances where the geographic illustration of policies on the submission policies map is not justified and changes to the policies map are needed to ensure that the relevant policies are effective.
9. These further changes to the policies map were published for consultation alongside the MMs on the Greater Norwich Local Plan in October 2023.
10. When the Plan is adopted, in order to comply with the legislation and give effect to the Plan's policies, the Partnership will need to update the adopted policies map to include all the changes proposed in the Plan and the further changes published alongside the MMs.

## Context of the Plan

11. The Plan has been produced jointly by Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council working together as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership. This is a formal partnership arrangement overseen by a Board comprised of representatives from the three Councils plus Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority.
12. The Plan will replace the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk ('JCS') and the Site Allocations Plans/DPDs for each of the three districts. Allocations in the smaller villages in South Norfolk which will be covered by the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan ('SNVCHAP') when it is adopted. It is expected to be submitted for examination in 2024. The now made Diss, Scole and Burston Neighbourhood Plan also allocates sites for development.

13. The following plans are to be carried forward and used in conjunction with the Greater Norwich Local Plan; the Old Catton, Sprowston, Rackheath and Thorpe St Andrew Growth Triangle Area Action Plan (2016); the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (2016); the Wymondham Area Action Plan (2015); the Broadland Development Management Policies Document (2015); the Norwich Development Management Policies Document (2014); and the South Norfolk Development Management Policies Document (2015).
14. The Plan area has a population of around 409,000 just over half of whom live in the Norwich urban area. Norwich is the regional capital, an economic hub and an historic city. The Plan area extends to cover the many market towns, villages and hamlets in this part of the County along with many rich natural and historic assets. The Broads National Park lies immediately to the east of the Plan area.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty**

15. We have had due regard to the aims expressed in S149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This has included our consideration of several matters during the examination such as the allocation of Gypsy and Traveller sites to meet identified need, and policies relating to accessible and adaptable housing.

## **Assessment of Duty to Co-operate**

16. Section 20(5)(c) of the 2004 Act requires that we consider whether the Councils have complied with any duty imposed on it by section 33A in respect of the Plan's preparation.
17. The Plan has been prepared by the three authorities working together as part of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership within the provisions set out in the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework ('NSPF'). Evidence has been produced jointly across the three districts and wider areas, building on previous joint working as part of preparing the JCS. As a joint plan there has clearly been effective joint working between the three local planning authorities together with the other GNLP Board member authorities of Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority.
18. The Partnership has submitted evidence, including numerous statements of common ground with prescribed authorities. Strategic matters have been identified and the Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance sets out how these have been consulted on and worked on together with prescribed bodies and other authorities, agencies and organisations across Norfolk and Suffolk. These relate to housing, economy, infrastructure (education, transport, and utilities) health, natural environment, historic environment, and climate change/energy efficiency.

19. We are satisfied that where necessary the Partnership has engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of the Plan and that the duty to co-operate has therefore been met.

## **Assessment of Other Aspects of Legal Compliance**

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

20. A Sustainability Appraisal ('SA') report of the Regulation 19 version of the Plan was published in January 2021, and was the culmination of work undertaken since 2017. Three further SA Addendum reports were published in September 2021, December 2021 and June 2022. The first of these was published in response to a representation made at Regulation 19 stage and re-assessed the original seven spatial options in light of the increased housing requirement. The second addendum was undertaken at our request and modelled both smaller and minimal housing supply buffers as 'reasonable alternatives'. The third SA addendum updated some factual information and also addressed omissions that had been identified. The SA was also updated to assess the MMs. This final iteration of the SA identifies that the MMs to Policy 2 and Policy 7.5 would lead to minor negative effects for SA objectives compared to the submission version of the Plan. Regarding Policy 2 this relates to the deletion of wording we considered to be ineffective, which has led to a minor change to 1 SA objective. In terms of Policy 7.5 it relates to an assumption that the modifications to this policy will lead to a greater loss of greenfield land than the submission version of the policy. However, we consider that to be unlikely given that the policy now relates solely to self and custom build housing. The assumed supply contribution from this policy also remains unaltered at 800 dwellings over the Plan period. Moreover, the SA does not consider these potential adverse effects to be significant. Other strategy policies either score the same or slightly better against the SA objectives than in the submission version of the Plan.
21. Throughout the production of these documents a consistent framework has been used to assess the emerging plan. This framework was developed following a scoping and consultation exercise and is relevant and appropriate to the scope of the plan, local context and national policy. Assessment of the Plan against this framework was undertaken, and we are satisfied that the overall approach is acceptable.
22. The SA has assessed a range of housing and growth options. Six options for distributing growth were assessed in the SA at Regulation 18a stage, and a preferred option incorporating elements of each of these was devised at Regulation 18c stage. The total quantum of development envisaged when the six original options were assessed was very similar to at Regulation 19 stage, with a total housing provision of 48,465 dwellings. Whilst the net growth envisaged was lower (7,200 dwellings compared to 10,704 at Regulation 19 stage), and the Plan period was slightly different (2015-2036 compared to 2018-

36), those differences do not invalidate the original assessment in our view. In this regard, the SA is a high level document that seeks to assess the broad implications of different spatial distributions of development. In any case, the addendum published in September 2021 provided a summary of the performance of each of the original 6 options, as well as the preferred option, which illustrates how these options perform. It was unnecessary for this work to identify potential alternative sites given the high level nature of the SA.

23. It is argued that other spatial options scored better, or should have scored better, than the preferred option selected by the Partnership. However, the purpose of the SA is to inform the preparation of the Plan, and each SA objective could be given different weight in different circumstances. Whilst the scoring assigned to some of the options has been questioned, the judgements that have been made are within the bounds of reasonableness in our view.
24. A second SA addendum was undertaken at our request and modelled both 10% and 1% buffers to the Local Plan housing supply. The purpose of this exercise was to inform both the discussions at the hearings, and our deliberations in relation to the strategy. Following the hearings and the publication of our initial findings, this buffer has reduced to 11%, and the SA addendum has assisted in assessing the implications of this. Once again, given the high level nature of the SA, it was unnecessary for the addendum to have identified which sites would be removed from the Plan were a lower buffer to have been adopted at Regulation 19 stage.
25. It is also asserted that the site assessment process underpinning the Regulation 18c version of the Plan did not take the findings of the 2020 SA into account. However, even if that were the case, this was an early version of the Plan that preceded the submitted Regulation 19 version. Final decisions about the composition of the Plan had not been made at that stage, and the Regulation 18c plan is not the version which is the subject of this examination. In this regard, the Regulation 19 version of the Plan was clearly informed by the 2021 SA. Whilst many of the "preferred sites" identified in the Regulation 18c version were subsequently carried forward into the Regulation 19 Plan, that is unsurprising given that they are amongst the most sustainable alternatives, as has been confirmed in various iterations of the SA and in other work. Moreover, the SA is not intended to be the sole mechanism by which proposed allocations are selected, and the Partnership were entitled to use the approach set out in the site assessment booklets for that purpose.
26. The assessment of potential housing sites with regard to climate change impacts assumed that increases in emissions would be directly linked to the new population arising from the development. In this regard, a development leading to an increase in carbon emissions across the Plan area of between 0.1% and 1% was assumed to have a negative effect, whereas more than a 1% increase was assumed to have a major negative effect. Whilst this approach

was criticised in some representations, it reflects that larger developments will generally be associated with higher emissions. The locational accessibility of individual sites, which has implications for emissions arising from private cars, is also assessed under SA Objective 12 – Transport and Access to Services.

27. It is argued that the SA should have benchmarked reasonable alternatives against the national target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. However, that is not a requirement of the Framework or the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and achieving this target will depend on a range of factors, most of which are beyond the scope of the planning system. The testing of climate change impacts within the SA has been undertaken on a consistent and reasonable basis and is adequate in our view.
28. The assessments of potential site allocations within the SA were largely based on secondary data sources, and each site was assessed using a consistent methodology. Technical reports and other evidence submitted by representors were not taken into account in the SA, as these were not available for every site, and so would have led to inconsistencies had they been considered. This approach is appropriate in our view. Whilst the site assessment booklets took a different approach to the assessment of certain matters (such as landscape) that is unsurprising given the high level, desktop nature of the SA assessment. In this regard, the site assessment booklets also considered other sources of information, including Officer assessments based on site visits. There was no legal failure in utilising this approach.
29. Appendix E of the January 2021 SA sets out a 'post-mitigation assessment' which considers how mitigating factors could help to avoid or reduce any site impacts identified at the pre-mitigation stage. This assessment incorporates the impact of Plan policies, including the site-specific policies which are set out for allocations in part 2 of the Plan. Whilst it is argued that this approach is inconsistent, as it affords the benefit of the site-specific policies to proposed allocations, that is in the context of the need to assess the Plan that has been submitted. There is no legal flaw in this regard.
30. Overall, we consider that the SA has adequately considered reasonable alternatives and is suitably comprehensive and legally compliant.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

31. A Habitats Regulations Assessment ('HRA') of the Regulation 19 version of the Plan was published in July 2021, and followed HRAs of earlier versions of the Plan. Having undertaken an appropriate assessment, it concluded that subject to the adoption of the Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance Mitigation Strategy ('GIRAMS'), and the monitoring of progress towards water recycling improvements, there would be no adverse effects to the integrity of

any European site. The GIRAMS strategy has subsequently been implemented by Local Planning Authorities throughout Norfolk, including the Partner Authorities, and is supported by Natural England. The Greater Norwich Water Cycle Study was also subsequently finalised in March 2021.

32. An updated HRA was published in March 2023, which assessed a proposed modification to Policy 2 regarding Nutrient Neutrality. This found that subject to the adoption of this modification, there would be no adverse affect upon the integrity of any European site. A HRA addendum was also published in May 2023, which assessed the proposed Gypsy and Traveller allocations. A further HRA addendum was undertaken in relation to the MMs, which also found that there would be no adverse affect upon the integrity of any European site.
33. Focussing on the legal requirement at this stage, the HRA reports conclude, overall, that the Plan provides a sufficient policy framework to ensure that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European protected sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. We are therefore satisfied that the legal requirement to undertake an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Habitats Regulations has been met.

## **Other**

34. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme ('LDS') for Norwich City [A17], South Norfolk [A16] and Broadland [A15]. Each LDS was updated in January 2023 to reflect the most recent timetable for the examination and adoption of the Plan.
35. The Partnership has confirmed that the Plan will supersede the policies in four existing development plan documents. In accordance with Regulation 8(5) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 these are set out in Appendix 3 of the Plan, along with a list of development plan documents which will remain, and which will be used alongside the Plan for decision making purposes.
36. Consultation on the Plan and the MMs was carried out in compliance with the respective Statements of Community Involvement [A18.1 A18.2, A19, A20.1 and A20.2]. These included temporary arrangements in response to Covid 19 guidance. The preparation of the Plan also met the minimum consultation requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
37. A number of site allocations were either introduced or significantly expanded (in terms of site area / capacity) between Regulation 18c stage and the submitted version of the Plan. However, there was an opportunity to comment on these at Regulation 19 stage. In this regard, it is not uncommon for sites to be added,

removed, or adjusted between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 versions of a local plan. This approach does not raise any legal or soundness concerns.

38. The Development Plan, taken as a whole, includes policies to address the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area.
39. Several Plan policies will help to ensure that the development and use of land contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. In addition, the spatial focus of the Plan on developing sites within the Norwich urban area and in the main towns and centres, is intended to reduce the need to travel. In particular the allocation of the large site at East Norwich provides an opportunity for a major new housing and business quarter for the city well linked to public transport and the city centre. The Plan includes a specific statement on Climate Change setting out how the Plan relates to measures identified in Royal Town Planning Institute and Town and Country Planning Association practice guidance. Whilst this is not statutory, it does help to show how addressing climate change runs through key elements of the Plan.
40. The Plan does not address wider climate change issues that are outside the scope of the planning system. Representations made at the examination argue that the Plan does not go far enough in terms of dealing with issues such as carbon emissions and developing a net zero strategy approach. However, we consider that the Development Plan, taken as a whole, accords with the statutory objective set out in Section 19 (1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and with the provisions of the Framework in respect of preparing policies to address climate change.
41. The Plan complies with all other relevant legal requirements, including in the 2004 Act (as amended) and the 2012 Regulations.

## **Assessment of Soundness**

### **Main Issues**

42. Taking account of all the representations, the written evidence and the discussions that took place at the examination hearings, we have identified nine main issues upon which the soundness of this Plan depends. This report deals with these main issues. It does not respond to every point or issue raised by representors. Nor does it refer to every policy, policy criterion, or allocation in the Plan.

## **Issue 1 – Is the Plan's overall spatial strategy based on robust evidence and is it justified and effective?**

### **The Plan Period**

43. The Plan covers the period 2018 to 2038. It was submitted for examination in July 2021. It is likely that adoption will take place in March 2024. This delay was largely due to the extension of the examination period as a result of further work and consultation undertaken by the Partnership on potential Gypsy and Traveller site allocations. Therefore, on adoption, the Plan period will be marginally less than the minimum 15 years which the Framework expects strategic policies to cover. However, extending the Plan for an additional year would involve a re-assessment of the housing requirement and site delivery evidence which would prolong adoption even further. In the circumstances and recognising that the Plan will need to be reviewed within 5 years, and that the provisions in the Framework are non-statutory, we consider that the Plan period to 2038 is sound and no modification is therefore necessary.

### **The Vision for Greater Norwich 2038**

44. The plan sets out a Vision for Greater Norwich in 2038. It promotes growth making the best of Greater Norwich's distinct built, natural and historic assets. It sets out the vision in relation to the economy, communities, homes, environment and delivery, and accords with the evidence. It is a soundly based vision and one from which the Plan objectives and policies flow.
45. The Plan sets out six objectives which together with the vision provide the context for the policies.

### **Strategic Policies**

46. The Plan is divided into two separate documents relating to the Strategy and the Sites. All of the policies in the Strategy document are strategic. These are necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area and this approach accords with the Framework. There are a number of strategic site allocations in the sites part of the Plan. **MM21** brings these sites together within the Plan so that it has a logical structure which is effective.

### **The Growth Strategy**

47. The housing requirement of 40,541 for the Plan period has been identified based on the standard method using 2014-based household projections. This figure forms the housing requirement set out in Policy 1. The supporting text to the Plan sets out that this is a housing target. However, to be effective, the



wording within the supporting text needs to make it clear that this is a requirement. **MM1** and **MM3** address this.

48. The Growth Strategy accords with the vision of focusing development within Norwich and the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor. The distribution of growth broadly follows the settlement hierarchy of the Norwich urban area and the fringe, main towns, key service centres and village clusters. It seeks to promote the regional function of the City and to maximise opportunities for brownfield and accessible greenfield development. It follows a logical hierarchy with the City of Norwich at the top, then the main towns of the Plan area, then the key service centres which serve their rural hinterlands and then the village clusters. It accords with the vision in this Plan and builds on strategic approaches already set out and being implemented through the JCS. It has been arrived at through consultation and consideration on six broad spatial options including concentration and dispersal.
49. Not all the main towns are proposed to have similar levels of growth, and even within the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor there are variations in approach. Nevertheless, the strategy is based on firm evidence including topic papers and site assessment appraisals for each main town. Some settlements have more constraints than others. In some settlements, there is a significant pool of extant planning permissions which has been a factor in decisions around the need and scope for new allocations. Hence not every town has the same amount of growth to be met through allocations in this Plan.
50. We consider that the general approach to the spatial distribution across the Plan area is logical, and supported by the evidence and is justified. It has been selected following consideration of reasonable alternatives. It is an appropriate strategy as required by the Framework.
51. In order to meet the need for around 40,541 homes the Plan allocates new sites, re-allocates some sites allocated in existing plans, and relies on delivery from sites with planning permission, windfalls, and smaller sites which may come forward in accordance with policies in this Plan.
52. Tables 6 and 7 of Policy 1 need modifying for effectiveness to refer to the Plan requirement and to make consequential changes to a number of figures and descriptions which are to be modified as set out elsewhere in this report. **MM2** and **MM5** address these matters.
53. The Housing Growth Locations map sets out the main areas of housing growth. This map needs to be updated for effectiveness to reflect the changed numbers for each area as a consequence of other policy changes and delivery assumptions set out in the Plan. **MM6** makes this change.

54. We have found that the housing supply is lower than the 49,492 set out in the submitted version of the Plan. This is explained in the appropriate sections of the report, but it is primarily due to revisions to site delivery assumptions. The vast majority of the site allocations in the Plan are sound, but the evidence before us indicates that for many sites a later start date should be assumed, or a lower annual delivery rate, or both.
55. We therefore consider that the provision in the Plan would be around 45,041 homes for the period 2018 to 2038. This represents a supply buffer of around 11% above the housing requirement figure. Whilst this is below that set out in the submitted Plan, we consider it to be an appropriate supply buffer for the reasons set out under Issue 8 of this report.
56. The modifications necessary to make Policy 1 sound are set out in **MM7**.

## **Conclusion**

57. Subject to the MMs identified above, the Plan's overall spatial strategy is based on robust evidence and is justified and effective.

## **Issue 2 – Have the identified housing and employment needs and requirements been positively prepared and are they justified and consistent with national policy?**

### **Housing Need and Requirement**

58. The Plan identifies a housing need figure of 40,541 based upon the standard methodology using 2014 based projections. This follows the approach set out in the Planning Policy Guidance ('PPG'). Based upon the evidence before us, we do not consider that there are exceptional circumstances to depart from using the standard method for this Plan.
59. The standard method is the minimum starting point for assessing local housing need. However, based on the evidence before us and having regard to the factors set out in the PPG, we do not consider that there needs to be an uplift to this figure. We consider that whilst the Partnership has growth ambitions such as set out in the City Deal, these do not justify an uplift. For example, the housing growth element of the City Deal refers to the housing sites within the North East Norwich Growth Triangle, sites which are already committed or set out in this Plan or other adopted Area Action Plans.
60. The Plan identifies a significant supply buffer over and above the housing requirement. It states that this higher supply is to assist with the growth ambitions of the Norwich area and to recognise higher rates in the 2018 based

projections. The Partnership has effectively made provision for an oversupply against the requirement given these factors.

61. For these reasons we consider that the housing requirement of 40,541 homes for the Plan period is justified and consistent with national policy.

### **Employment Need and Requirement**

62. The Plan proposes to allocate around 360 hectares of employment land to aid the delivery of 33,000 additional jobs and to support key economic sectors over the Plan period. The figure of 33,000 jobs was originally based on the 2017 Greater Norwich: Employment Land Assessment, which used figures derived from the East of England Forecasting Model. Subsequent modelling undertaken in the Employment Land Assessment Addendum (2020) largely supports this figure, including when factoring in an uplift for higher growth in certain sectors. Whilst this uplift was relatively modest (at around 500 jobs) it uses an approach that we consider to be robust.
63. Reference is also made in the representations to an East of England Forecasting Model run that was published in August 2020, which projected a broadly similar level of jobs growth (around 29,700 jobs). However, this is based on data from 2018 and 2019 and so did not consider the impact of Covid 19. Whilst there is a different profile of jobs growth between these forecasts, that is to be expected given that they were derived from separate models using data from different years. In this regard, the 2020 East of England Forecasting Model run does not call into question the jobs target in the Plan in our view.
64. Our attention has been drawn to the fact that the local economy has grown significantly since 2011, adding around 29,000 jobs since then. However, that reflects in part a bounce back from the 2007-2008 financial crisis and subsequent recession. In this regard, the Partnership stated in the hearings that a return to the 2006 jobs level was only achieved between 2016-18 in the Plan area. Moreover, whilst jobs growth between 2015 and 2018 was higher at around 5,000 per annum, that represents a relatively brief snapshot that is not comparable to the longer-term analysis that has informed the jobs requirement.
65. The proposed 360 hectares of employment land represents a significant over-allocation of land to meet the requirement for 33,000 jobs. However, this headline figure includes a number of sites which are already partially built out. Moreover, this amount of land is justified in our view to provide choice, allow for churn and windfall losses to other uses, and to facilitate the growth of certain sectors. It would also help to support a higher rate of growth should this transpire. Each of the proposed allocations, the majority of which are carried forward from previous plans, have also been assessed for their ongoing suitability for allocation in the 2017 Employment Land Assessment.

66. The Plan has identified a significant range of employment sites, of various sizes and locations, to support the Plan's jobs target. Where a specific company's site and locational requirements necessitate the identification of an alternative site, that is a matter for the development management process.
67. For the above reasons, we consider the Plan jobs target of 33,000 jobs, and the allocation of around 360 hectares of employment land, to be sound.

## **Conclusion**

68. Subject to the modifications set out above, the Plan identifies housing and employment needs and requirements that are justified, have been positively prepared and accord with national policy.

## **Issue 3 – Is the strategy for the economy and areas of growth justified, effective and consistent with the evidence?**

69. The strategy for the economy and areas of growth flows from the spatial strategy set out in Policy 1 of the Plan. Its detail in relation to specific areas is set out in Policies 7.1-7.4 which then relate to the individual site allocations set out later in the Plan. Policy 6 also deals with the overall approach to the economy and town centres. This general approach is justified and effective.

## **Policy 6 - The Economy**

70. This policy aims to support economic growth in the Plan area and sets out the overall approach to employment development, tourism, leisure and cultural industries, and town centres. Modifications to the policy wording are necessary to provide appropriate support for the development of rural enterprises in line with national planning policy. Modifications to the 'Town Centres' section of the policy are also necessary for consistency with national policy, to control the proliferation of town centre uses in out-of-centre and edge-of-centre locations, and to delete an unjustified requirement that prevented the loss of commercial premises. Finally, changes to the 'Local Retail and Leisure' section of the policy are necessary for clarity and effectiveness. **MM12** makes these changes.

## **Policy 7.1 - The Norwich Urban Area including the Fringe Parishes**

71. This policy sets out the spatial framework for the Norwich Urban Area and the fringe parishes. It flows from the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy 1.
72. The focus on Norwich and the fringe parishes for jobs, homes and service development accords with the evidence and the spatial strategy. It enhances Norwich's role as the regional centre and aims to promote major regeneration, strategic and smaller scale extensions and neighbourhood renewal. The policy

seeks to focus development in the city centre, at the strategic regeneration site at East Norwich, along with strategic urban extensions. The approach is therefore one of promoting development in the centre of the city but complementing it by the ENSRA and new and rolled forward allocations on the fringes of the urban area, most of which are greenfield. This distribution helps to avoid any over concentration of housing in the city centre and provides choice in the housing market. This approach is justified based on the evidence.

73. A number of modifications to the policy are required as a result of changes made elsewhere in the Plan. For example, the numbers referred to in the housing table need to be modified as a result of changes to site allocations, expected capacities, and likely delivery timescales, which are referenced elsewhere in this report. A further modification is needed to the 'Economy' section to clarify where and under what circumstances the loss of existing office floor space will be resisted in Norwich city centre. In this regard, an Article 4 Direction came into effect in February 2023 that withdraws permitted rights from certain office buildings to change use to residential. Listed buildings do not benefit from this permitted right and so are not subject to the Article 4 Direction. Accordingly, the policy wording also seeks to restrict changes of use of listed office buildings that are of importance to the city centre economy.
74. Further changes to the 'Retail and Main Town Centre Uses' section of the Policy are necessary to clarify that it applies to the primary and secondary retail areas and large district centres within Norwich city centre, which will be the focus of any additional retail growth. These changes are necessary to accord with the sequential approach set out in the Framework.
75. In respect of the 'Leisure, Culture and Entertainment and the Visitor Economy' section of the policy, modifications are necessary to delete the restriction of such uses to the defined City Centre Leisure Area only, as this is inconsistent with the Framework. Further modifications to this section are necessary for reasons of effectiveness and to clarify the circumstances where leisure use proposals will be acceptable.
76. A section of the policy is concerned with the ENSRA site, which is subject to a separate site-specific policy in the Plan. Therefore, to be effective, Policy 7.1 needs to be modified such that it relates to key principles only and not to repeat the detail set out in the site-specific policy. Reference to the Costessey Contingency Site also needs to be removed as a consequential change to the separate modification to delete Policy GNLP0581/2043.
77. In light of representations to the main modification consultation, a reference to green infrastructure strategy updates within the final sentence of each of the Policies 7.1-7.4 is necessary for effectiveness and to remove any ambiguity.

None of the additional changes suggested in the MM consultation are necessary for soundness.

78. **MM13** addresses the above points and is necessary for the reasons set out.

### **Policy 7.2 - The Main Towns**

79. Policy 7.2 sets out the overarching approach to the Main Towns of Aylsham, Diss, Harleston, Long Stratton, and Wymondham. Consequential modifications to the housing table in the policy are necessary as a result of changes to site allocations and expected capacities. In addition, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to clarify that rural exception sites for affordable housing will be permitted on land adjacent or well related to the settlement boundary of the Main Towns (previously this was unclear). **MM14** makes these changes.

### **Policy 7.3 - The Key Service Centres**

80. Policy 7.3 sets out the overarching approach to the Key Service Centres of Acle, Blofield, Brundall, Hethersett, Hingham, Loddon/Chedgrave, Poringland/Framingham Earl, Reepham and Wroxham. Consequential modifications to the housing table in the policy are necessary as a result of changes to site allocations and expected capacities. In addition, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to clarify that rural exception sites for affordable housing will be permitted on land adjacent or well related to the settlement boundary of the Key Service Centres (previously this was unclear). **MM15** makes these changes.

### **Policy 7.4 - Village Clusters**

81. Policy 7.4 sets out the overall approach to the Village Clusters, which include a significant number of smaller settlements in the Plan area. Consequential modifications to the policy are necessary as a result of changes to site allocations and expected capacities. In addition, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to provide clarity regarding the proposed supply, and to remove the word "infill" which is unnecessary in relation to sites that are within existing settlement boundaries. **MM16** makes these changes.

### **Policy 7.5 - Small Scale Windfall Housing Development**

82. As submitted, Policy 7.5 would allow for small scale residential development adjacent to any development boundary or "*within or adjacent to a recognisable group of dwellings*". This would apply across the Plan area, although cumulative development permitted under the policy would be capped at 3 dwellings in smaller parishes and at 5 dwellings in larger parishes. There are a number of problems with this approach. In particular, it would permit new housing development in remote locations including adjacent to "*recognisable groups of*

*dwelling*s” that do not constitute a settlement. This would be contrary to national planning policy which seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas and to avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside. Moreover, whilst the policy states that “*positive consideration will be given to self and custom build*”, it would equally allow for open market housing in these locations. In this regard, it is unclear that it would provide any additional incentive to deliver self and custom build housing.

83. We also have practical concerns regarding how this policy would operate. The approach of allowing for small open market housing developments in areas where housing has previously been strictly controlled is likely to attract significant interest. In this regard, it is unclear how the proposed cap could operate effectively in a situation where several applications were lodged concurrently in the same parish.
84. At the hearings, the possibility of Policy 7.5 operating as a self and custom build exception sites policy was discussed, and the Partnership subsequently indicated that it wished to pursue that approach. Such an approach would be justified given the need for self and custom build housing, which is discussed separately under Issue 6. Accordingly, **MM17** modifies Policy 7.5 to that effect, and alters the policy wording to apply solely to settlements rather than “*recognisable groups of dwellings*”. It also sets out criteria to ensure that such developments respect the form and character of the settlement and do not lead to an inappropriate cumulative level of development. Given the size threshold and policy criteria that would apply to such proposals, we do not consider that this approach would significantly affect the availability of rural exception sites for affordable housing.

### **Policy 7.6 - Preparing for New Settlements**

85. Policy 7.6 sets out an approach to identifying one or more new settlements to be brought forward in the next local plan.
86. The Plan identifies enough sites to meet housing need to 2038 as is set out elsewhere in this report. This Plan will be subject to review in accordance with the provisions of the Framework. There is no submitted evidence that major new additional sites are required before 2038 or that new settlements should be a favoured option in any case. The supporting text to the Policy indicates that these new settlements could be delivered from 2026 which is contrary to the spatial strategy set out in the Plan.
87. The Policy is not consistent with the Sustainable Growth Strategy set out in Policy 1. It is not justified, does not accord with the submitted evidence, and provides significant uncertainty for communities. It is open to the authorities to consider options for future growth when they review the Plan but there is no

need for this Plan to refer to such options in a policy. Indeed Policy 7.6 could be prejudicial to those considerations. **MM18** therefore deletes this policy.

88. **MM4** is necessary for effectiveness in order to make changes to the supporting text of Paragraph 187 to explain that a review of the Local Plan will need to assess options for longer term growth which may include the potential for a sustainable new settlement or settlements.

## **Conclusion**

89. Subject to the modifications set out above, the strategy for the economy and areas of growth is justified, effective and consistent with the evidence.

## **Issue 4 – Whether the Plan policies relating to Sustainable Communities and Environment Protection and Enhancement are justified, effective and consistent with national policy?**

### **Policy 2 Sustainable Communities**

90. Policy 2 seeks to ensure that development is of high quality design, contributes to resilient and inclusive communities, and helps to address climate change. It covers various aspects of design, including accessibility, density, designing out crime, water efficiency, and energy consumption. There is clearly a need for a policy of this sort in the Plan. However, a series of modifications are necessary to remedy ineffective wording so that it is clear how a decision maker should react to development proposals. Modifications are also necessary to remove text that does not serve a clear purpose, to avoid unnecessary duplication including with other plan policies, and to avoid conflating distinct planning issues.
91. It is necessary to modify the first paragraph to insert “where relevant” as most of the policy criteria will not be relevant to all development proposals. Part 1 of the policy is altered so that appropriate emphasis is placed on non-car modes. Changes to part 4 of the policy are necessary to clarify that minimum densities are not merely “indicative” but that they will also be subject to consideration of accessibility and local character. In addition, part 9 of the policy is modified to remove reference to the automatic adoption of any more stringent optional standards that may emerge in the future. In this regard, the content of any such standards is currently unclear, including whether any stipulations would be attached to their adoption in a local plan. Were any such standards to emerge, that would be a matter for a future review of this Plan.
92. The deletion of part 10 of the policy is necessary as these matters are now addressed in the Building Regulations, which have subsequently set higher



national minimum energy efficiency standards than are referred to in the policy. A further change to the Building Regulations is planned for 2025 which will mean that homes built to that standard will be net zero ready. A new part 10 of the policy is necessary to address energy consumption in terms of design, layout, and orientation and to provide for the use of sustainable energy, local energy networks, and battery storage where appropriate. The transfer of part iv into the explanatory text is also necessary as this section is for information only and is not intended to guide the determination of planning applications.

93. We note the request to modify Policy 2 so that it would require major developments to detail how they would fund the necessary police infrastructure. However, Policy 4 already requires that development proposals support local infrastructure capacity improvements through on-site provision, providing land and developer contributions. Accordingly, such a modification is not required for soundness. The policy wording also adequately covers measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and no further modifications are required in this regard. The historic environment and the setting of the Broads are both addressed in Policy 3, and it is unnecessary to duplicate that here. None of the other changes suggested in the MM consultation are necessary for soundness, with the exception of a detailed alteration to refer to protecting water quality.
94. **MM8** makes the changes referred to above.

### **Policy 3 Environmental Protection and Enhancement**

95. Policy 3 sets out an approach that seeks to enhance the built, historic, and natural environments. In this regard, it contains criteria relating to design, designated and non-designated heritage assets, and designated and non-designated natural assets. A policy covering these matters is clearly necessary in the Plan. However, a number of modifications to the policy wording are necessary to ensure consistency with national policy and the statutory tests that relate to listed buildings, conservation areas, and those set out in the Habitats Regulations.
96. In terms of the 'Built and Historic Environment' section of the policy, several modifications are necessary in order to separate out distinct requirements and planning issues. Modifications are also necessary to include reference to conservation area appraisals and historic landscape character assessments, and to highlight the contribution that landscapes, views, and the Broads make to the historic environment. These changes are required for clarity and effectiveness.
97. With regard to the 'Natural Environment' section of the policy, a number of detailed modifications are necessary for clarity and to avoid conflating separate planning designations, including the distinct tests that apply to each. An additional bullet point is necessary to refer to the enhancement of the strategic

green infrastructure network, which was not adequately addressed in the submitted version of the policy. Modifications are also necessary to avoid lending the weight of the development plan to the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and local green infrastructure strategies, as these are not Development Plan Documents and may be subject to revision without external scrutiny or oversight. Moreover, additional paragraphs within this section are necessary to require a project level HRA to be undertaken where there would be a likely significant effect on a European site, and to reflect the Partnership's nutrient neutrality strategy. Following the MM consultation, further detailed changes have been made for clarity and consistency with national policy.

98. A Written Ministerial Statement on Nutrient Neutrality in River Basin Catchments was issued during the examination, and Natural England wrote to a number of planning authorities to advise that as a competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, they should carefully consider the nutrient impacts of any new plans, policies and development proposals. This affects sites within the catchments of the Wensum Special Area of Conservation, the Broads Special Area of Conservation and the Broadland Ramsar, which cover most of the Plan area. The Partnership subsequently produced a Nutrient Neutrality Mitigation Strategy and a viability study addendum, and it agreed a statement of common ground with Natural England. As a result, modifications to Policy 3 were proposed that would require applicants to provide evidence, through a HRA, that relevant proposals would not adversely affect the integrity of sites in an unfavourable condition. This modification is necessary to ensure that the Plan accords with national planning policy and the Habitats Regulations.
99. **MM9** makes the above changes to Policy 3.

## **Conclusion**

100. Subject to the abovementioned MMs, we consider that the Plan policies relating to Sustainable Communities and Environment Protection and Enhancement are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

## **Issue 5 – Is the approach to Strategic Infrastructure justified and effective and does it accord with the evidence?**

101. Policy 4 sets out the approach that is taken in respect of identifying and delivering strategic infrastructure improvements which are necessary to support the growth identified in the Plan. These improvements relate to transport and other strategic infrastructure including energy, health, education and utilities.

102. The Policy provides the overarching approach, with more detail set out in an appendix to the Plan. That appendix is not policy and can be updated without the need for a review of the Plan.
103. The Policy wording refers to the Transport for Norwich Strategy. This is a transportation plan led by Norfolk County Council, which covers a significant proportion of the Plan area. It sets out a number of key transport schemes and projects, some of which are necessary to support the levels and pattern of growth in the Plan.
104. To be justified and effective, the wording of Policy 4 needs to be modified to make it clear that the schemes listed within the Policy are not proposals within the Plan, but in most cases, schemes already being promoted and progressed by other bodies including Norfolk County Council and National Highways. In this sense, to be effective, these schemes should be more clearly expressed as contextual projects being undertaken by key partners rather than projects that may appear to be requirements of the Plan itself. The Norwich Western Link falls into this category, and the modified wording highlights that this is a scheme on which work is already underway. This road project is not required to deliver any allocation in the Plan but, it is appropriate for it to be referenced as a strategic infrastructure project being progressed by the Highway Authority.
105. There is also a need for the Policy to make reference to new police building infrastructure requirements within the list of strategic infrastructure categories, based on the evidence submitted.
106. In light of representations made to the MM consultation, we consider that for effectiveness and to make the policy wording unambiguous, a reference to green infrastructure strategy updates needs to be added to the paragraph of the Policy relating to the green infrastructure network.
107. **MM10** addresses these matters.

## Conclusion

108. Subject to **MM10**, the approach to Strategic Infrastructure accords with the evidence and is justified and effective.

**Issue 6– Whether the Plan’s approach to the provision of affordable housing, Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation, self and custom build housing, and the housing needs of other groups, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.**

**Affordable Housing**

109. The evidence base underpinning the affordable housing requirements in Policy 5 is supported by the Greater Norwich Local Housing Needs Assessment 2021. The need for affordable housing across the Plan area is around 670 homes per annum which includes an allowance for stock lost through right to buy. We consider the evidence base that supports the policy requirement to be soundly based.
110. The lower policy requirement for Norwich city centre is based on the prevalence of previously developed land and the challenges in securing over 30% affordable housing on such sites. Both requirements have taken account of viability evidence.
111. We consider that the assumption that the SNVCHAP will provide 33% affordable housing to be appropriate. This is the policy requirement and there is no evidence before us which indicates that this level of provision cannot be achieved across that plan area.
112. The policy provides for circumstances where individual schemes on brownfield sites can justify a lower affordable housing delivery on the basis of a viability assessment. However, this approach is not justified since it is possible that the development of greenfield sites may also have viability issues due to possible abnormal costs and the Framework does not refer to brownfield sites only. If it can be demonstrated through a viability assessment that a site cannot provide the affordable housing required by policy, then the land status is not relevant. Therefore, an amendment to remove reference to brownfield sites is necessary.
113. The policy requires purpose-built student accommodation to provide affordable housing ordinarily on site. However, given the practicalities of securing and managing affordable housing within student housing schemes it should be modified to require a financial contribution to off-site affordable housing, for effectiveness.
114. The requirement for 10% of all affordable housing, rather than 10% of the total number of homes, to be provided as affordable home ownership is inconsistent with the Framework and therefore needs to be removed.

## **Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation**

### *Need and requirement*

115. Following further work undertaken during the Examination, a requirement for 52 Gypsy and Traveller pitches was proposed over the Plan period to 2038. This is based on meeting the overall 'ethnic need' for pitches identified in the Greater Norwich Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2022) ('GTAA'), which is consistent with the most recent definition of "gypsies and travellers" in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites ('PPTS'). The GTAA is based on a thorough assessment which included a 90% survey rate of authorised pitches in the Plan area. Whilst around 10% of those surveys were undertaken via third parties, including family members, that is a relatively small proportion and there is no indication that this has undermined the results of the study. Moreover, the survey data was validated in discussion with the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Service, and by speaking to site managers. The assessment was also informed by stakeholder consultation including with the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain.
116. Whilst it is argued that some Gypsy and Traveller families living in the Plan area have been omitted, no detailed evidence has been submitted in support of that contention. In this regard, a study undertaken in relation to the Kings Lynn GTAA has not been submitted to the Examination, and it is therefore unclear whether it has any implications for the Greater Norwich GTAA. An assumption has also been made about those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation who may wish to live on a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, and so the assessment is not restricted to those currently living in a caravan. Separately, whilst it is noted that caravans made up 0.45% of the total housing stock in the 2011 Census, that figure included park homes, agricultural workers accommodation, and other caravans not associated with Gypsies and Travellers. It is therefore of limited value in assessing the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.
117. In terms of migration assumptions, the GTAA assumes that inflows and outflows will balance out over the Plan period. However, as none of the surveyed households expressed a desire to leave the Greater Norwich area, this effectively assumes that no one will choose to in-migrate either. During the hearings, the Partnership stated that the 2021 Census indicated that in-migration rates were relatively low. The Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Service representative also stated that in their experience movement in and out of Greater Norwich was limited. However, it is unlikely that there will be no in-migration into the area, as is currently assumed. The use of a criteria-based policy is therefore necessary to address such cases and to provide the requisite flexibility.

118. Overall, we consider the GTAA to be based on robust assumptions, and it forms an appropriate basis for planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople provision in the Plan area. In this regard, modifications to Policy 5 are necessary to include a requirement for both Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots based on the needs identified in the GTAA. This is necessary in order for the Plan to be positively prepared, justified, and consistent with national policy, as set out in PPTS.

#### *Transit provision*

119. The GTAA recommends that the Partner authorities set up a negotiated stopping places policy to address transit provision. In this regard, there is an established Norfolk and Suffolk unauthorised encampment protocol in place, which was summarised at the hearings as *“toleration if possible, eviction if necessary”*. Such an approach has been used in recent years to manage unauthorised encampments in the area, the majority of which relate to Gypsies and Travellers who are visiting or passing through. The Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Service representative stated that this established approach has worked well, and that around 50% of unauthorised encampments are tolerated on this basis. In light of the evidence before us, including that given at the hearing sessions, we are satisfied that this is a sensible approach to transit provision and that the Plan is therefore sound in the absence of allocating sites for this purpose.

#### *Site allocations*

120. The submitted version of the Plan did not include any site allocations for Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople accommodation. In this regard, no potential sites were promoted to the Plan at any stage of Regulation 18 between 2018 and 2020. However, during the Examination, the Partnership undertook further work which led to the identification of several potential allocations. This is discussed further under Issue 7. Given the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller provision, and the availability of sites to meet this need, site allocations are necessary for the plan to be positively prepared, justified, and consistent with national policy.

121. In terms of the spatial distribution of sites, these are spread across the Plan area and are generally in rural locations. The proposed allocations are a mix of extensions to existing sites and entirely new sites, which would be capable of meeting the identified need which will largely arise from household growth.

### *Criteria in Policy 5*

122. Policy 5 of the Plan sets out criteria against which to assess planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People sites. This approach is necessary to ensure that the Plan is positively prepared, flexible, and to provide a basis for determining planning applications on sites that are not allocated in the Plan. However, modifications to Policy 5 are necessary to identify the site allocations and the assumed capacity and delivery timescales for each. Further modifications are necessary to clarify that the loss of existing pitches will be resisted unless certain circumstances apply, which is necessary to protect the existing supply of sites. In addition, modifications to policy criteria relating to accessibility and landscaping are necessary as most Gypsy and Traveller sites are located outside of the urban area. Other modifications are necessary for clarity, and to reflect the need for adequate storage at Travelling Showpeople plots.

### **Self and Custom Build Housing**

123. Policy 5 requires that proposals of 40 dwellings or more should provide at least 5% of plots as serviced self and custom-build plots, unless a lack of need can be demonstrated, or a 12-month marketing exercise has been undertaken. Whilst this requirement excludes proposals for flats, a modification is required to exclude other schemes where provision of self and custom build would be clearly impractical, e.g. schemes of wholly terraced housing.

124. Each Partner authority keeps a self-build and custom housebuilding register of those who wish to acquire serviced plots in order to build their own home. These registers are managed differently; in Norwich and Broadland a fee is charged to register and registrations must be renewed annually, whereas in South Norfolk there is no fee or mandatory renewal process. In the 7 years following the registers being set up in 2016, a total of 39, 92, and 719 unique registrations were received in Broadland, Norwich, and South Norfolk respectively. This is a significant range of figures. However, not everyone who wishes to build a self or custom build property will necessarily choose to register, particularly in areas where a fee is charged. Conversely, the lack of a fee may encourage registrations in other areas. Actual demand for each of the 3 Partner authorities is therefore likely to be somewhere between the figures for Norwich and South Norfolk, although this would still represent a considerable level of demand. We also note that some of the Partner Authorities count all developments of 1-5 dwellings as being self and custom build housing, which is likely to artificially inflate the assumed supply that has come forward. In these circumstances, the requirement in Policy 5 is justified in order to deliver self and custom build housing in the Plan area.

125. In terms of the supply of plots this requirement would deliver, Table 6 of the submitted Plan identifies that 'new allocations' would contribute 10,704

dwellings to the overall housing supply. However, that figure includes large sites such as Anglia Square (Ref GNLP0506), the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area (Ref GNLP0360/3053/R10), and other sites in Norwich city centre that will deliver mostly flatted development and so would be exempt. A number of the proposed housing allocations also have an assumed capacity of less than 40 dwellings or have now been granted planning permission. Moreover, most 'existing commitments' in the Plan housing supply already have planning permission. Accordingly, the contribution to the supply of self and custom build plots from this source is likely to be no more than around 200-300 dwellings. The policy 5 requirement is therefore unlikely to deliver an oversupply of self and custom build plots, even in combination with modified policy 7.5 (discussed separately under Issue 3).

126. A number of practical concerns regarding the delivery of self and custom build plots under Policy 5 have been raised. However, the requirement to market such plots for 12 months before they revert to open market housing could be accommodated in most build programmes with appropriate planning. Whilst a lack of demand for such plots in schemes elsewhere has been cited, it is unclear whether those examples are representative of demand in Greater Norwich. The Partnership has also drawn our attention to recent planning applications that have included provision for self and custom build plots. Moreover, the Council's Viability Appraisal Supplementary Appendix 2 suggests that this policy requirement will not reduce scheme viability. Whilst it is argued that it will complicate the planning process and some elements of the construction programme, there is no detailed evidence before the Examination that this would have a significant negative effect on viability.

### **Purpose-built Student Accommodation**

127. Policy 5 is supportive of purpose-built student accommodation within the University of East Anglia ('UEA') campus. This approach is justified and is supported by site allocations within the campus area. However, a modification is necessary to clarify that proposals should only have regard to, rather than accord with, the UEA Development Framework Strategy as this is not a Development Plan Document. A further modification is required to clarify that purpose-built student accommodation within the UEA campus will not be required to provide an affordable housing contribution, as these sites would not be suitable for general needs housing given their campus location.
128. Away from the UEA campus, the policy sets criteria against which applications for purpose-built student accommodation would be assessed. Modifications to this part of the policy are necessary for precision, and to clarify that an offsite affordable housing contribution will be sought. The requirement to "*make provision for a policy compliant proportion of affordable housing that would be expected if the site were developed for general needs housing*" is deleted as it is ineffective. In this regard, it is not clear how the amount of affordable housing



that would otherwise be delivered could be calculated in the absence of an alternative scheme. Instead, the modified policy wording states that detailed guidance will be provided in a Supplementary Planning Document, which would allow for a more practical approach to be devised.

129. In terms of the principle of seeking affordable housing contributions from purpose-built student accommodation, our view is that this is appropriate outside of the UEA campus. In this regard, these uses are residential in nature and typically occupy sites that could otherwise be developed for general purpose dwellings.

### **Accessible and Specialist Housing**

130. The approach to accessible and specialist housing in Policy 5 is generally sound, but the sentence requiring affordable housing to be provided in all specialist older persons housing schemes (rather than just in major development), does not accord with national policy and needs to be deleted. The affordable housing requirements are set out elsewhere in the policy. There is no need for a modification to the Policy to set out a requirement for the number of specialised units which the Plan as a whole should deliver. Some sites are allocated for this use specifically and Policy 5 is positively worded and encourages specialised, accessible and adaptable homes.

### **Conclusion**

131. All of the modifications to Policy 5 described above are set out in **MM11**. Subject to these modifications, we consider that the Plan's approach to the provision of affordable housing, Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation, self and custom build housing, and the housing needs of other groups, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

## **Issue 7 – Are the site allocations consistent with the Spatial Strategy and the evidence, are they justified and effective and can they be delivered?**

### **Site Assessment Process**

132. Potential site allocations were assessed using a standardised approach. This included subjecting all submitted sites to a 'red, amber, green' Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment ('HELAA') assessment and sifting out sites that were subject to over-riding constraints. This produced a shortlist of reasonable alternatives that were subject to SA. The shortlisted sites were then discussed in detail with Highways, Development Management, Lead Local Flood Authority and Children's Services colleagues to come up with a list of

preferred sites for allocation. Whilst it is argued that this latter stage was opaque and relied on informal discussions and subjective opinion, it is inevitable that professional judgement will play a role in the allocation process. Moreover, the comments / input from each participant is recorded in the Site Assessment booklets and the reason for selecting certain sites is clearly set out. Overall, we consider this to be a robust approach that has led to the identification of sites which are generally appropriate for allocation (with a small number of exceptions). Each proposed site allocation is subject to further detailed discussion below.

133. Whilst the assessment of some sites has been challenged, the judgements that have been made are within the bounds of reasonableness in our view. The Site Assessment booklets adopt a different approach to the SA. However, that is not unsurprising given that the SA is a high level document and is just one of the pieces of information that feeds into the selection of potential allocations.

134. Overall, we are satisfied that the Partnership's approach to site assessment and selection is appropriate and is justified.

#### *Sequential and Exception Tests*

135. Several of the proposed allocations incorporate land that is at risk of either surface water or fluvial flooding. In some cases, this affects only a very small part of the site (less than 5%) and so could easily be avoided at application stage. Moreover, given the location of these areas of flood risk within the site, it is often impractical to exclude them from the allocation altogether. In such cases, we consider that the Sequential Test has been met. Separately, several brownfield allocations in and around Norwich city centre are either wholly or partly within Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with fluvial risk from the River Wensum. However, these sites are essential to deliver the Plan's strategy which seeks to maximise brownfield development and regeneration opportunities, particularly in and around the city centre. In this regard, there are insufficient brownfield sites in accessible locations such as these to meet the Plan need for housing, which has necessitated the allocation of greenfield sites. In that context, and having regard to guidance at paragraph 163 of the Framework to take into account wider sustainable development objectives, we consider that these sites meet the Sequential Test. Moreover, with the exception of GNLP2163, each of these sites has either been previously allocated for development in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) or has been granted planning permission.

136. A number of these sites are also partially within Flood Zone 3, and are therefore required to meet the Exception Test. Those sites are GNLP0360, R10, CC4B, CC7 and CC8. In the case of sites CC4B, CC7, and CC8, 21%, 2%, and 1% respectively of these sites are in Flood Zone 3, which relates to flood risk

associated with the River Wensum. These are prominent, riverside, brownfield sites in highly accessible locations with the potential to deliver significant numbers of new dwellings. The development of these sites also has the potential to enhance the river frontage and would deliver significant regeneration benefits to Norwich city centre. These wider sustainability benefits would outweigh the flood risk in our view, which in any case affects relatively small proportions of each site. With regard to sites GNLP0360 and R10, these are component parts of the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area, which is the largest site in the Plan and a key regeneration opportunity. The wider sustainability benefits of delivering these sites would be significant, including a substantial number of new dwellings, new bridges across the Rivers Wensum and Yare, and infrastructure that would connect the city centre to the open countryside and The Broads National Park to the east. These wider sustainability benefits would outweigh the flood risk in our view. Furthermore, each of these sites could be made safe for its lifetime, and this would be ensured through Plan Policy 2 and the site-specific policies. Consequently, the Exception Test is passed.

137. In addition, a number of the proposed Gypsy and Traveller site allocations are partially affected by surface water flood risk. In such cases, the site-specific policy requires that development of these areas be avoided. Moreover, given the very limited availability of suitable Gypsy and Traveller sites for allocation, each of these sites would meet the Sequential Test.

### **General Site Allocation Matters**

138. A number of representations assert that detailed changes should be made to settlement boundaries within the Plan area. However, these are designated in other plans that have been adopted by each of the Partner authorities. Any detailed review of the settlement boundaries will therefore take place as part of any review of those separate plans, which are not superseded by the GNLP.

139. Modifications **MM112**, **MM141**, and **MM143** delete housing allocations in Hingham, Marsham and Reedham, for reasons which are set out below. In this regard, the Plan does not set a strategy or housing need figure that is specific to these settlements. Given that the Plan identifies a sufficient overall supply of housing it is unnecessary to allocate additional sites in these settlements, which in any case are towards the bottom of the settlement hierarchy.

#### *Modifications that apply to multiple site-specific policies*

140. A number of MMs have been applied to multiple site-specific policies. For sites within the locally designated Norwich 'Area of Main Archaeological Interest', a criterion has been added which requires the submission of an archaeological assessment at application stage. This is necessary to protect archaeological

interests in and around the area of the former walled city. For site-specific policies that refer to conservation areas, the policy wording has been modified to state “conserve, and, where opportunities arise, enhance”, rather than “conserve and enhance” to ensure consistency with national planning policy and the statutory test at s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A significant number of site-specific policies have also been altered to comply with modified Policy 2 in relation to reduced levels of car parking in highly accessible locations. In addition, all cross-references to Policy CS16 of the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy have been moved to the supporting text to prevent unnecessary duplication of policies in other plans.

141. A number of site-specific policies state that “*a minimum of*”, “*at least*”, or “*up to*” a certain number of dwellings shall be permitted. However, in most cases this was not justified, and these policies have therefore been modified to state “*approximately*”, which allows for an appropriate degree of flexibility. Following these changes, statements such as “*more homes may be accommodated, subject to an acceptable design and layout, as well as infrastructure constraints*” are unnecessary and have been deleted. Separately, following the publication of the Water Cycle Study, it was no longer justified to require phasing to be in line with upgrades to certain water recycling centres, and these references have therefore been deleted.
142. The wording of several site-specific policies has been modified to remove reference to the acceptability of a proposal being subject to measures “*required by the Highway Authority*”, or requirements that the Historic Environment Record be consulted. This is necessary as a proposal could be acceptable in highways terms despite not incorporating certain measures requested by the Highway Authority. In this regard, acceding to the opinion of the Highway Authority should not be a policy requirement. Similarly, a proposal could be acceptable in terms of its impact on the historic environment without the Historic Environment Record having been consulted. It should therefore not be a policy requirement to do so. Moreover, the planning authority is responsible for determining planning applications, and not any other body.
143. We consider that adding references to actions such as ‘*early engagement*’ with a statutory authority are not necessary for soundness. It is also asserted that there is an inconsistency between policies for sites in Norwich that are adjacent to the River Wensum, as some refer to the Broads and others do not. However, that is not a soundness issue, and the Partnership is able to add such references to the supporting text should it wish to do so. Similarly, cross-references to the dark skies of the Broads are not necessary for soundness.
144. A number of the site-specific policies refer to nearby designated heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas. However, it is unnecessary for soundness that these be comprehensive of every heritage asset that may be affected by a development. In this regard, designated

heritage assets are protected by other development plan policies that will apply at planning application stage.

*Identification of Gypsy and Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople, site allocations*

145. The Partnership has undertaken a pro-active approach to the identification of potential Gypsy and Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople, site allocations. In this regard, it has reviewed existing Council-owned sites, consulted with Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople residing in the Plan area, and engaged a local land agent to look for sites on its behalf. It has also encouraged the submission of potential site allocations from land owners. This proactive approach led to the identification of a pool of potential sites, which were then subject to a detailed site selection process based on that used in the HELAA. Each site has also been subject to SA and HRA assessment. In our view, this is a robust approach to identifying and assessing potential sites.
146. The capacity of each allocation has been assessed based on either input from the landowner/developer, or by applying a standard density assumption, depending on the available information. With one exception (site GNLP5004R, discussed below) the assumed capacity is realistic. The availability and delivery of each site has also been robustly assessed.
147. In terms of accessibility, most of the site allocations are in rural and semi-rural locations. The majority of these are extensions to or intensifications of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites, and their location reflects the fact that most Gypsy and Traveller sites are located outside of existing urban areas. In addition, the availability of potential Gypsy and Traveller site allocations is limited, particularly when compared to potential housing allocations. In these circumstances, a less rigid approach to accessibility is justified in comparison to that which has been applied to bricks and mortar housing. Nonetheless, we are satisfied that the accessibility of the proposed site allocations is not unacceptable.
148. In addition to the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches, the GTAA identifies a need for 43 Travelling Showpeople plots. Whilst the Plan does not identify any allocations to meet this need, that is in the context of an absence of sites either being put forward or identified for this purpose. This was despite an extensive search process which, conversely, led to the identification of several Gypsy and Traveller site allocations. Moreover, a Statement of Common Ground has been agreed between the Partner Authorities and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain (Eastern Region) that endorses the use of a criteria-based policy to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople. In these circumstances, we consider this approach to be soundly based.

## Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

### Norwich

#### *East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area (GNLP0360/3053/R10)*

149. The East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area ('ENSRA') is a key strategic site in the Plan. It consists of three brownfield regeneration sites by the rivers Wensum and Yare, along with an area of land in front of ATB Laurence Scott. It is a major opportunity to create a new urban quarter for Norwich with the potential to be well linked into the city centre and to the countryside to the east along the river corridors. The recent developments close to Norwich City's stadium offer a glimpse of how this corridor could be extended further and link sustainably to the station and the core of the city. The principle of development here links well to the Plan's spatial vision and strategic objectives. It is a fundamental part of the future development of the city and central to the growth ambitions of the Greater Norwich area.
150. Parts of the site are allocated in the adopted Norwich Site Allocation and Site-Specific Policies Plan (2014). However, the proposed allocation in this Plan is significantly larger and includes additional land such as the Carrow Works site.
151. It is clear to us that the delivery of the whole ENSRA presents significant challenges. A number of constraints would have to be overcome, including obstacles to securing access to parts of the site. The redevelopment of the Carrow Works site requires demolition of some large buildings whilst protecting the heritage assets of the site including the listed Carrow Abbey. The Utilities site is constrained by the presence of railways and the river and would require significant investment in infrastructure to bring it to fruition. It requires an all-modes bridge across the River Wensum from the Deal Ground which itself requires a new bridge across the River Yare from the May Gurney site.
152. The delivery of the whole ENSRA relies upon a significant degree of public funding. Evidence presented by the Partnership indicates a requirement of £153M of public sector funding in order to generate a 15% profit on Gross Development Value, which is a rate considered necessary to attract private sector investment. Progress has been made on identifying and securing external finance but the certainty of an allocation in the Plan will assist the Partnership and promoters in working to bring in such funding. If not allocated in the Plan, the prospects of securing public funding through for example Homes England sources, and the consequential private sector investment, would be less likely. Parts of the site are not reliant on such funding and their early development will assist in creating a residential environment which could help to bring forward the more remote parts of the ENSRA.

153. However, the evidence before us does not support the likely prospect of the Utilities Site coming forward before the end of the Plan period. Access to it is constrained by the railway line and river, and significant infrastructure works will be required to progress its delivery. However, the Utilities site should be allocated as it is clearly a part of the ENSRA site, enables benefits to be brought to the wider redevelopment, and requires regeneration. There are no planning reasons why redevelopment cannot be commenced within the Plan period if funding and delivery constraints can be overcome.
154. Progress on the planning application for the Carrow Works has been slower than envisaged, whilst there has been progress with the reserved matters planning application for the May Gurney/Deal sites suggesting earlier delivery is more likely there.
155. For these reasons we consider that the allocation of the ENSRA is justified and positively prepared. However, we consider that the proposed timetable is overly ambitious. The evidence before us does not support the position that the whole ENSRA would be complete by 2038. Nor does it support the position that the allocation, other than on the May Gurney/Deal site, would start to deliver housing completions in 2025/26. For the reasons set out above, we do not consider that the Carrow Works site will start to deliver in the first five years. We therefore consider it necessary for a modification to the trajectory to show that the housing delivery is moved backwards within the Plan period. This has implications for the 5 year supply position which we address in Issue 8.
156. A small part of the ENSRA site is outside of the Plan area, and so a reduction of the total expected delivery within the Plan area is required. Further reductions are needed for the reasons set out above. The appropriate number of homes to be delivered on the site within the Plan period is therefore around 3000 units.
157. The detailed policy for the ENSRA, (GNP0360/3053/R10) sets out a number of site-specific requirements. In the submitted plan there is a significant degree of duplication between the Policy set out here and Policy 7.1. This is not effective. **MM13** and **MM22** address this.
158. Modifications to the policy wording are necessary to identify the key pieces of infrastructure that will need to be delivered across the component parts of the allocation. This includes the provision of bridges over the River Wensum and the River Yare, pedestrian and cycle connections, a marina, a site for a primary school, land for healthcare provision, and other highways and infrastructural works. Modifications are also required in order to clarify the role and scope of a Supplementary Planning Document which will provide detailed planning guidance for the development of the site. In this regard, the Partnership now intend to prepare an SPD instead of the 'masterplan' which was previously referred to in the policy. Further modifications are necessary to ensure that a

high quality of design is achieved, to address heritage assets within and close to the site, and to clarify the requirement for archaeological assessment. **MM22** makes these changes, which are necessary for effectiveness and to ensure that the policy is justified.

159. Separately, it is unnecessary for the policy to itemise every designated heritage asset that may be affected by the development of this site as these assets are protected by other plan policies that will apply at application stage. The level of detail in relation to design is also sufficient. In our view, none of the further changes suggested in the MM consultation are necessary for soundness.

*Land adjacent to the River Wensum and the Premier Inn, Duke Street (GNLP0068)*

160. This is a brownfield site located within Norwich city centre that benefits from extant planning permission for student accommodation. It is appropriate to allocate it for residential-led development, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM23**.

*Land adjoining the Enterprise Centre at Earlham Hall (GNLP0133BR)*

161. Earlham Hall is a Grade II\* listed building and the site contains other listed buildings, an Historic Park and Gardens, and is in a Conservation Area. The wording of criterion 2 of the Policy needs to be modified for effectiveness to require that a heritage impact assessment will be required, and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM24** achieves this.

*Land north of Cow Drive, University of East Anglia (GNLP0133C)*

162. To be effective and justified the policy needs to be modified to replace the word 'minimum' with 'approximately' when referring to the number of student bedrooms required as part of the allocation. In addition, the final paragraph is not necessary as it refers to development needing to accord with an approved planning consent. **MM25** makes these changes.

*Land between Suffolk Walk and Bluebell Road (GNLP0133DR)*

163. To be effective and consistent with national policy, criterion 2 needs modifying to require a heritage impact assessment to be undertaken, and to address the soundness issues identified above. Paragraph 2.39 of the supporting text refers to a requirement for opening up new areas of public access as part of proposed development. The evidence as to how this could be secured or whether it is a reasonable requirement to impose on an applicant is not convincing. This requirement is not justified and needs to be deleted. **MM26** makes these changes.



*Land at Constitution Motors, 140-142 Constitution Hill (GNLP0282)*

164. This is a cleared brownfield site in Norwich, with extant planning permission for 12 dwellings. It is appropriate to allocate for residential development subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM27**.

*Land at the UEA Grounds Depot Site, Bluebell Road, University of East Anglia (GNLP0133E)*

165. The allocation is for future development at the university. It is expected to come forward in the later part of the Plan period. The policy makes provision for additional student bedroom accommodation with ancillary space. The allocation is sound without modification.

*Former Eastern Electricity Headquarters (Dukes Wharf), Duke Street, (GNLP0401)*

166. This is a mixed-use site. The housing element of the scheme could be residential or student accommodation. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications that are necessary for clarity, for effectiveness in relation to heritage interpretation measures, and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM28** resolves these issues.

*Land at Whitefriars, Norwich (GNLP0409AR)*

167. Most of this site was previously allocated for mixed-use development in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). It benefits from planning permission for a mixed use scheme of dwellings and commercial units and is currently under construction. The site is appropriate for re-allocation in the Plan, however, modifications are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM29** addresses these.

*Land south of Barrack Street, Norwich (GNLP0409BR)*

168. The site is currently used as a surface car park that serves the adjacent office buildings and is located on the edge of Norwich city centre. It was previously allocated for mixed-use development in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). An outline permission for 200 dwellings and office space was approved in 2016, although this has since lapsed.

169. The site promoter contends that the policy wording should specify that a multi-storey car park be re-provided as part of any re-development of the site. In this regard, it is asserted that the existing level of parking is necessary to retain occupiers of the adjacent offices, due to the ready availability of car parking at

competitor office parks on the urban edge. The policy wording does not comment on the re-provision of parking, and this is a detailed matter that could be dealt with at application stage. In this regard, this is a sensitive design location, next to the river and near to designated heritage assets, and specifying the form of any re-provided car parking is not appropriate at this stage.

170. In our view the site is appropriate to allocate for mixed use development. However, given the uncertainty about when the site will come forward, it should not be included in the 5 year supply. Modifications to the policy wording are also necessary to reflect the uncertainty regarding the number of dwellings that will be provided, to correct some factual errors, and for effectiveness. These are remedied in **MM30**.

*Land adjoining Sentinel House, (St Catherine's Yard) Surrey Street (GNLP0451)*

171. This is a vacant brownfield site in Norwich city centre that was granted planning permission for student accommodation in 2018. It is appropriate to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity, to require replacement planting for any loss of trees, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM31**.

*Land at and adjoining Anglia Square (GNLP0506)*

172. This is a prominent brownfield site that is proposed as a residential-led mixed-use allocation, with the potential to deliver significant regeneration benefits to this part of Norwich city centre. It is in a sensitive location being set within a conservation area and in close proximity to a number of listed buildings. In this context, and given the likely mix of uses, the assumed figure of 800 dwellings is a reasonable approximation. However, additional wording is required to clarify that the precise number of homes should be determined at application stage in light of a detailed scheme. Other modifications to the policy wording are also necessary for clarity, effectiveness, and to ensure that the presence of designated heritage assets is adequately addressed. These matters are addressed in **MM32**.

173. The delivery of this site is reliant on a significant sum of grant funding, which has strict delivery timescales attached to it. Given these timescales and the commitment of the developer to achieve them we consider that the site will deliver as envisaged within the 5 year period.

*Land at and adjoining St Georges Works, Muspole Street (GNLP2114)*

174. This is a brownfield site on the northern edge of Norwich city centre. It is being promoted for development in the short term and is appropriate to allocate for

residential led mixed use development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to allow for greater flexibility in terms of the uses that are specified, and to clarify that the site is capable of providing either around 110 homes or 5,000 square metres of commercial floor space, and not both. These, and other modifications which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above, are addressed in **MM34**.

*Friars Quay Car Park, Colegate (GNLP2163)*

175. A modification is required to make it clear that the site is expected to provide approximately 25 homes rather than require that to be a minimum. Such a requirement would be overly restrictive on this relatively small site. Further changes are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM35** addresses these.

*Land west of Eastgate House, Thorpe Road (GNLP2164)*

176. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM36** addresses these.

*Site at St Mary's Works and St Mary's House (GNLP3054)*

177. This is a brownfield site on the northern edge of Norwich city centre. It previously benefitted from planning permission for mixed use development including 151 dwellings, but this has since lapsed. Nonetheless, the site is being promoted for development in the short-to-medium term and is appropriate to allocate for residential led mixed use development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to allow for greater flexibility in the uses that are specified, and to clarify that any development should be residential led. Further modifications are required to remove unjustified requirements to enhance the adjoining churchyard and to provide housing "*in response to identified local community needs*", which is not specified for any other allocation. Modifications are also necessary for clarity, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These matters are covered in **MM37**.

*14 Ber Street, Norwich (CC3)*

178. This site is allocated in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) and the principle of development for residential led mixed use housing is therefore established. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to general modifications for effectiveness and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM39** addresses these points.

*Land at Rose Lane/Mountergate (CC4a)*

179. This is part of a previously allocated site for mixed uses, which is mostly owned by Norwich City Council. It is expected to come forward later in the Plan period. The Council now consider that it could deliver more than 50 homes so it is necessary to modify the current wording which restricts it to that amount. **MM40** makes these changes and other modifications which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above.

*Land at Mountergate/Prince of Wales Road (CC4b)*

180. This is part of a previously allocated site for mixed uses that is a significant regeneration opportunity adjacent to the river. The principle of the allocation has been established and is justified. As with CC4a, the site is expected to deliver towards the later part of the Plan period. The Policy erroneously refers to a requirement to retain public open space whereas it should refer to provision of new public open space. **MM41** makes these changes and other modifications that are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above.

*Hoborough Lane, King Street (CC7)*

181. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM42** makes these changes.

*King Street Stores, Norwich (CC8)*

182. The allocation is sound in principle. However, criterion 3 of the policy and the supporting text at paragraph 2.140 need to be amended to refer to the need to retain the trees on the King Street frontage as part of any development proposal. The trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order and the policy needs to be clear about the importance of retaining the trees which currently make an important contribution to the street scene. Further modifications are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM43** makes these changes.

*Land at Garden Street and Rouen Road, Norwich (CC10)*

183. The allocation of this site is sound in principle, subject to modifications to remove wording which unnecessarily repeats national policy on design, and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM44** addresses these.

*Land at Argyle Street, Norwich (CC11)*

184. The allocation of this small site is sound in principle subject to modifications that are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM45** addresses these.

*Norwich Mail Centre, 13-17 Thorpe Road (CC15)*

185. Although currently in commercial use, the evidence indicates that there is a reasonable prospect that this site will come forward as a housing site in the Plan period. It is currently allocated in Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) and the principle of redevelopment is therefore established. Its allocation in this Plan is sound subject to modifications to specify the designated heritage assets that any redevelopment proposals would have to respect, and to clarify policy wording. **MM47** addresses these.

*Land adjoining Norwich City Football Club north and east of Geoffrey Watling Way (CC16)*

186. This site was previously allocated for mixed-use development in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). Much of the site benefits from planning permission for housing development, and it remains appropriate to re-allocate in this Plan. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above, which are remedied in **MM48**.

*Land at 140-154 Oak Street and 70-72 Sussex Street, Norwich (CC19)*

187. This site was allocated in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) as two separate sites and the principle of redevelopment is therefore established. The evidence indicates it is likely to come forward in the Plan period. The boundary is proposed to be amended slightly from that in the previous plan. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to correcting the address of the site in the Policy heading (to 150-154 Oak Street and 70-72 Sussex Street) and modifying the policy wording to address the soundness issues identified above, together with consequential changes to the supporting text. **MM49** makes these changes.

*Land to rear of City Hall, Norwich (CC24)*

188. This site lies directly behind the City Hall in the commercial heart of Norwich city centre. It was previously allocated in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) and the principle of development is therefore established. The evidence indicates that with a more committed and positive

approach to disposal/redevelopment from the City Council it will come forward in the period of this Plan. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM50** makes these changes.

*Westwick Street Car Park Norwich (CC30)*

189. This small site was previously allocated in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) and the principle of development is therefore established. It is likely to come forward in the period of this Plan and its allocation is, in principle, sound. The policy wording needs to be amended to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM51** addresses this.

*John Youngs Limited 24 City Road (R7)*

190. The allocation of the site is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM54** addresses these issues.

*Site of former gas holder at Gas Hill, Norwich (R13)*

191. The allocation of the site is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity, to specify nearby heritage assets, and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM55** addresses these issues.

*Land at Ketts Hill and east of Bishop Bridge Road, Norwich (R14/R15)*

192. The allocation of the site is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM56** addresses these issues.

*Site of former Van Dal Shoes, Dibden Road, Norwich (R17)*

193. The allocation of the site is sound in principle. The policy needs to be modified to replace 'minimum' with 'approximately' given the evidence and to make a consequential change to the supporting text. **MM57** addresses these issues.

*Site of former Start Rite Factory, 28 Mousehold Lane (R18)*

194. This is a brownfield site that benefits from planning permission for a 79 bed residential care home and 42 supported living apartments. At the time of the hearings, construction was underway. The allocation is sound in principle

subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM58**.

*Land north of Windmill Road, Norwich (R19)*

195. This is a vacant site in Norwich, surrounded by existing housing, that was granted planning permission for 17 dwellings in 2019. It is appropriate to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM59**.

*Land east of Starling Road, Norwich (R20)*

196. This is a cleared brownfield site in close proximity to the northern edge of Norwich city centre. Planning permissions have been granted on different parts of the site for a total of 28 dwellings. Given these separate permissions, a reference in the policy wording to comprehensive development is not justified. It is appropriate to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity and effectiveness. These are addressed in **MM60**.

*Land at Hurricane Way, Airport Industrial Estate, Norwich (R29A and B)*

197. These are two previously allocated sites within the Airport Industrial Estate. The principle of development is therefore established. Although they have not yet come forward for development, there is evidence to indicate that they will do so in this plan period. The allocation for both parcels is sound subject to modifications that are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. This is addressed in **MM61**.

*Heigham Water Treatment Works, Waterworks Road, Norwich (R31)*

198. The site was allocated in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) and the principle of development is therefore established. Although reduced in extent to reflect the operational requirements of Anglian Water, the allocation of the site is sound in principle subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM63** addresses these issues.

*Mile Cross Depot, Norwich (R36)*

199. This site was allocated in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). The principle has therefore been established. The site has been cleared and is the ownership of Norwich City Council. Planning proposals

are being advanced by the Council and the evidence indicates that homes could be completed in on the site early in the plan period, with some within the first five years. The allocation is sound in principle but the policy needs to be clarified for effectiveness to refer to the number of homes not being a minimum and to specify that the final number of homes to be delivered may be dependent upon the scale of community uses delivered as part of the scheme. **MM64** addresses these issues.

*The Norwich Community Hospital site, Bowthorpe Road (R37)*

200. This is an NHS hospital site within Norwich, part of which was allocated for housing development in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). It benefits from outline planning permission to provide a new hospital, residential care home, extra care units, key worker units, and other residential units through the conversion of Woodlands House. Part of the site falls outside of this permission, and this land has the potential to deliver a further 50 dwellings. However, subsequent meetings with the Trust indicate that various development options are being considered, and in these circumstances, the site is unlikely to contribute towards the 5 year supply. Whilst this is an appropriate site to allocate for mixed use development, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to reflect the number of dwellings indicated in the outline permission, which is addressed in **MM65**.

*Three Score, Bowthorpe (R38)*

201. This Council-owned site was previously allocated for housing development in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). It benefits from outline planning permission for 1000 dwellings, a proportion of which have now been developed. Key pieces of infrastructure have also been implemented including a spine road through the site. It is currently being developed by a Council-owned local housing company with a significant proportion of affordable housing, and given the evidence that has been presented, the delivery assumptions appear to be realistic. The site is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to correct the residual capacity of the site. This is remedied in **MM66**.

*Land west of Bluebell Road, and north of Daisy Hill Court/Coral Court, Westfield View (R42)*

202. This is a previously developed site, the majority of which was allocated for over-55s housing in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). Part of the site now benefits from planning permission for 50 dwellings, and a masterplan for the whole site has been agreed. It is appropriate to re-allocate for residential development without modification.



*Site of former Earl of Leicester Public House, 238 Dereham Road, Norwich (R33)*

203. This small vacant brownfield site is allocated for 10 homes. It was previously allocated and granted planning permission. It is expected to come forward in this plan period. It is appropriate to re-allocate for residential development without modification.

*Land at Lower Clarence Road (CC13), Ipswich Road Community Hub (R2) and 153 Ber Street (CC2)*

204. These three sites are no longer available for development. Consequently, the allocations are not justified and should be deleted. **MM38, MM46 and MM53** achieve this.

### **The Urban Fringe**

*Colney Hall, Watton Road, Colney (GNLP0253)*

205. The allocation is for a scheme of specialist housing and for research/healthcare uses. Progress has been made with the drawing up of a planning application and the evidence indicates that the site will be delivered in the Plan period. The allocation is sound, but the Policy wording needs to be modified to clarify when a masterplan would be required, that landscape and archaeological assessments will be required given the historic and heritage value of the Hall and gardens, and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM72** makes these changes.

*Land north of the A11, Cringleford (GNLP0307/GNLP0327)*

206. This strategic allocation is part of a wider area of land identified for development in the Cringleford Neighbourhood Plan (2014). Planning permission has been granted for 650 dwellings on the north eastern part of the site. However, the south western part of the site did not benefit from planning permission at the time of the hearings. The proposed allocation and policy assume that this south western area will deliver an additional 410 dwellings, which would result in a total site capacity of 1,060 dwellings. Whilst Policy GNLP0307/GNLP0327 refers to 1,710 homes, that is an error and includes completions on neighbouring sites.

207. The assumed 410 dwellings on the south western part of the site represent a significant uplift on the numbers given in the Cringleford Neighbourhood Plan. However, that is due to higher densities being achieved on the north eastern part of the site, and on neighbouring sites. Moreover, the Neighbourhood Plan was made around 10 years ago before the detailed site layouts were known. Given the size of the remaining area of the site, an uplift of 410 dwellings

assumes an appropriate density for this location. In this regard, the Highway Authority has not raised any objection to this uplift on highways or network capacity grounds. In any case, the policy wording requires that a Transport Assessment accompany any future application to confirm that the proposed improvements to the A47 Thickthorn Interchange can accommodate this uplift. This will ensure that the highways implications of any detailed proposal are fully assessed.

208. At the hearings, views were expressed that the assumed number of dwellings for this site should be expressed either as a cap or as a minimum. However, we consider the Partnership's approach to be justified and sufficiently flexible to allow the precise number of dwellings to be determined at application stage, in light of a detailed scheme and supporting technical information. The site is appropriate to allocate for residential development, including for the number of dwellings envisaged. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to correct factual errors, remove reference to a bus route through the site, and to clarify that a landscape buffer should be provided outside of the settlement limit. These are addressed in **MM78**.

*Land east of Cator Road and north of Hall Lane, Drayton (DRA1)*

209. This site was previously allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) and benefits from planning permission for housing development. It is currently under construction and is suitable to re-allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to resolve the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM80**.

*Land south and east of Easton (EAS 1)*

210. This site was allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) and benefits from planning permission for residential development. The site is under the control of a housebuilder, reserved matters approvals are in place on parts of the site, and areas are currently under construction. Based on the submitted evidence, the delivery assumptions appear to be realistic. The allocation of this site is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording to reduce its capacity to 962, as part of the site now has permission for other uses, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM81**.

*Land at Hospital Grounds, southwest of Drayton Road, Hellesdon (HEL1)*

211. The allocation of this site for housing and employment uses is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM82** makes these changes.

*Land at the Royal Norwich Golf Club, either side of Drayton High Road, Hellesdon (HEL2)*

212. This site was allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) and benefits from outline planning permission for residential development. The site is under the control of a housebuilder, reserved matters approvals are in place on parts of the site, and areas are currently under construction. Based on the submitted evidence, the delivery assumptions appear to be realistic. The site is appropriate to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to resolve the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM83**.

*Land to the west of Green Lane West, Rackheath (GNLP0172)*

213. The site now has planning consent and the allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM85** makes these changes.

*Land at Heathwood Gospel Hall, Green Lane West, Rackheath (GNLP0351)*

214. This is a small brownfield site within the village. Its allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM86** addresses these.

*Land off Blue Boar Lane/Salhouse Road, White House Farm, Sprowston (GNLP0132)*

215. This is a large allocation close to an area of recently developed housing on the fringe of the city within the Growth Triangle. New housing lies to the west and south of the site.

216. The allocation of the site is sound in principle. The Policy requires provision to be made for supporting infrastructure, including the potential for a new secondary school or a new primary school. It is not known at this stage whether the secondary school will be needed and so to be effective and justified, the policy needs to be amended to refer to either option and the resulting land use requirements. Based on the evidence submitted to us during the examination, it is still appropriate to refer to the option of the school in the policy, even though some of the delivery timetable and expectations may have altered since the submission of the Plan. The policy enables a flexible approach and the triggers provide for various options. The wording is justified and effective.

217. The expected delivery on the site needs to be reduced given updated evidence from the site developer/promoter. This leads to a reduction of 660 homes being delivered on this site in the Plan period.

218. **MM87** addresses these issues.

*Land between Fir Covert Road and Reephams Road, Taverham (GNLP0337R)*

219. This is a large urban extension that would sit between the A1270 and the northern edge of Taverham. The site is well contained by major roads and the existing built-up area and it represents a logical extension to the settlement. There are no over-riding constraints that would prevent the development of the site, and it would be capable of providing a range of services and facilities onsite, including a local centre, open space, and land for a new primary school and medical centre. It would also benefit from facilities and public transport connections in the existing settlement. This is an appropriate site for housing development, albeit modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity, to address the soundness issues identified above, and to provide appropriate guidance in relation to the proposed local centre. **MM88** addresses these points.

*Land off Beech Avenue, Taverham (GNLP0159R)*

220. The principle of the allocation is sound. The site is suitable for housing and there are no constraints to prevent it coming forward. However, it emerged during the examination that a planning application for a slightly large area of land had been submitted and that the Partnership were considering it favourably. Broadland District Council Planning Committee has subsequently resolved to grant permission for the development. In light of this, it is justified that the site area should be enlarged to reflect the planning application boundary and the number of houses expected on it is increased from 12 to 25. The policy should therefore be modified accordingly. **MM89** addresses these points.

*Land on White Horse Lane and to the rear of Charolais Close & Devon Way (TROW 1)*

221. The site benefits from full planning permission for residential development and is currently under construction. It is appropriate to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording to remove a requirement to provide a masterplan, which is unnecessary given that the entire site now has planning permission and much of it has already been built out. This is remedied in **MM90**.

## Main Towns

*Land south of Burgh Road and west of the A140, Aylsham (GNLP0311, 0595 and 2060)*

222. This is an allocation on the edge of Aylsham between the existing built up area of the town and the A140. It is currently farmland. It is open in character but has well defined boundaries. It and the nearby site off Norwich Road are the two Plan allocations for the town.

223. The policy for the site looks to secure a number of infrastructure related requirements including land for a new primary school. The Town Council is concerned about the impact that the development would have on the town's infrastructure capacity, highway network and environment but there is no demonstrable evidence that the allocation is not justified.

224. The allocation is sound subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM91** addresses these points.

*Land at Norwich Road, Aylsham (GNLP0596R)*

225. This is another site between the town and the A140. It is of a similar size to the Burgh Road site. The Town Council is concerned about the impact that the development would have on the town's infrastructure capacity, highway network and environment but there is no demonstrable evidence that the allocation is not justified. It is soundly based in principle.

226. For effectiveness, it is necessary to modify the policy wording to require the phasing plan to be submitted with or in advance of the first permission, and to modify the specified pedestrian and cycle access locations based on more recent transport evidence. These, and other modifications necessary to address the soundness issues identified above, are covered in **MM92**.

*Land at Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Sandy Lane, Diss (GNLP0102)*

227. This site is currently occupied by industrial uses that would need to be relocated. We consider that the site is not likely to be available as early as the Partnership and the site promoters are expecting but that it will be delivered in the Plan period. It is in an accessible location within the town, situated adjacent to the railway station. It is a sound allocation in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM93** rectifies this.

*Land south of Spirketts Lane, Harleston (GNLP2108)*

228. This site lies between the built-up area of Harleston and the A143. It is well connected to the town. The allocation of the site is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM94** addresses this.

*Land at Spirketts Lane, Harleston (HAR 4)*

229. This site was allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) and the principle of development has been established. It lies to the north of allocation GNLP2108. Proposals to bring it forward for development are now being progressed by the landowner. It is sound, subject to a modification for effectiveness to remove the reference to more homes being accommodated subject to an acceptable design and layout. This reference is not necessary. **MM95** addresses this.

*Land off Station Hill, Harleston (HAR 5)*

230. This site was allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) and the principle of development is therefore established. The evidence indicates that it is likely to come forward in this plan period. The allocation of the site is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM96** addresses this matter.

*Land at Briar Farm, Harleston (GNLP2136)*

231. This is an allocation on the edge of Harleston between the built up area and the A143. It is a logical and well defined extension to the settlement that is likely to deliver in the Plan period. The allocation is sound without modification.

*Land at Johnson's Farm, Wymondham (GNLP0354R)*

232. The site is an extension to the existing built up area on the south western side of Wymondham. Its allocation is sound in principle. The policy wording needs to be modified for effectiveness to make it clear that a masterplan and transport assessment must be submitted in advance of or with the first planning application, and to ensure that a pedestrian/cycle access point at Preston Avenue will be required. **MM101** makes these changes.

*Land at Tuttlles Lane, Wymondham (GNLP3013)*

233. This is a reasonably small site on the northern side of the town. It is self-contained and can be easily accessed from Tuttlles Lane. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications which are necessary to make it clear that an ecological assessment must be submitted, given the potential need for mitigation along the River Tiffey and its tributaries. **MM102** addresses this.

**Key Service Centres**

*Land west of Acle (GNLP0378R/GNLP2139R)*

234. This is a relatively large greenfield extension to the west of the existing settlement and adjacent to a smaller allocation (ACL1) that is currently under construction. The site would be accessible to existing services, facilities, and public transport connections in Acle and would be capable of providing new areas of open space. The development of this site would allow for a new link road to be constructed between Norwich Road and South Walsham Road through the site that would bypass the centre of Acle, which currently experiences significant congestion. This is a unique benefit of the scheme. There is also no detailed evidence before us to indicate that such a requirement would make the scheme unviable or to substantiate a purported cost of £3 million. Whilst the site is subject to potential reservoir flooding in the event of a breach, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment states that this risk is “*relatively low*”, due to the standard of inspection and maintenance required under the Reservoir Act 1975. It also states that this risk is less than either river or surface water flood risk. Moreover, mitigation measures could be secured at application stage.

235. Separately, Policy GNLP0378R/GNLP2139R requires that development address the proximity of the site to the Broads, and a further specific reference to its dark skies is therefore unnecessary. In addition, the presence of a water main within the site boundary is a matter that is capable of being dealt with at application stage. This is an appropriate site for housing development, albeit modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity, to ensure the link road is provided across the land ownership boundary, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM103**.

*Land to the north of Norwich Road, Acle (ACL1)*

236. This site benefits from planning permission for residential development, is currently under construction, and a significant number of dwellings have already been completed. The site is suitable to allocate for residential development without modification.

*Land south of Acle Station, between Reedham Road and New Reedham Road, Acle (ACL2)*

237. This site benefits from planning permission for residential development and is currently under construction. The site is suitable to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording that are necessary for effectiveness to clarify which highway improvements are required. This is remedied in **MM104**.

*Land adjacent to Norwich Camping & Leisure, off Yarmouth Road, Blofield (GNLP2161)*

238. This is a small brownfield site within the existing urban area that is in walking distance of existing services, facilities, and public transport connections in Blofield. It is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity and effectiveness, and to remove the requirement to provide “*possible alterations of former trunk road*” as this is vague and disproportionate given the number of dwellings proposed. These are remedied in **MM106**.

*Land to the south of A47 and north of Yarmouth Road, Blofield (BLO1)*

239. This site benefits from planning permission for residential development, is currently under construction, and a significant number of dwellings have already been completed. The site is appropriate to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording to correct factual errors and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM107**.

*Land north of Hethersett (HET 1)*

240. This site was allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) and benefits from outline planning permission for residential development. It is under the control of a housebuilder, reserved matters approvals are in place on much of the site, and significant areas have been developed out. The allocation also assumes an uplift of 200 dwellings over and above the capacity set out in the outline permission. This is due to the site having been developed to a higher density than originally envisaged, and the proposed uplift is supported by the developer. Based on the submitted evidence, the uplift and the site delivery assumptions appear to be realistic. The site is appropriate to allocate for residential development, although several modifications to the policy wording are necessary. These include the deletion of a requirement to comprehensively masterplan the site, which is unnecessary given much of it has reserved matters consents in place and large areas are now developed. Moreover, modifications are required to clarify that the policy



applies to all undeveloped parts of the site and not just the 200 dwelling uplift, and to remedy other soundness issues. These are addressed in **MM110**.

*Land north of Grove Road, Hethersett (HET 2)*

241. This site was allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) for extra care housing. It sits immediately adjacent to allocated site HET1 and the principle of development has been established. It will complement the development of that site.

242. The delivery of this site is dependent upon progress of the HET1 site to secure access through to it. Nevertheless, the evidence indicates that it is likely to come forward in the Plan period. A modification is required for effectiveness to remove an erroneous reference to the JSC in the Policy and to clarify some site-specific requirements. **MM111** addresses these issues.

*Land north of Springfield Way and west of Dereham Road, Hingham (GNLP0503)*

243. The site owner has requested that this allocation be deleted from the Local Plan, as they do not intend to release it for development. Accordingly, there is not a reasonable prospect that it will be available during the Plan period, and it is therefore not a sound allocation. This is remedied by **MM112** which deletes the allocation and its supporting policy.

*Land south of Norwich Road, Hingham (GNLP0520)*

244. The site consists of open agricultural land on the south eastern edge of Hingham. It is in easy walking distance of a nearby primary school, convenience store and bus stops, and a pedestrian route via Granary Way would connect the site to the footpath along Norwich Road. In this regard, Granary Way is a lightly trafficked cul-de-sac and the use of this shared surface route would not raise safety concerns. The walking route to Hingham centre would be more convoluted and would include narrow sections of footway and several crossings of Norwich Road. Whilst this may deter some trips to the centre, there would be a direct bus service, and the site would still have other services and facilities in easy walking distance. A vehicular access to the site is capable of being taken from Norwich Road without removing protected trees, which is accepted by the Highway Authority. The precise location of the pedestrian refuge would be determined at application stage.

245. The northwest corner of the site is subject to surface water flood risk, comprising a flow path that runs from the Industrial estate to the north, through the site, and on to land to the south west. However, only a relatively small proportion of the site itself is subject to this flood risk. Moreover, the land promoter asserts that its mitigation scheme would be capable of reducing the

existing level of flood risk experienced by land and properties to the south west. In this regard, we consider that the area of land subject to flood risk should remain within the allocation so that this mitigation can be required by the site-specific policy. The policy wording needs to be modified to require that the part of the site subject to surface water flood risk should not be built on, in accordance with the Sequential Test. These matters, and others relating to clarity and effectiveness, are addressed in **MM113**. Separately, a drainage scheme ensuring that there is no increase in run-off from the site is capable of being secured at application stage.

246. The Grade I listed St Andrews Church is located in the centre of Hingham and its tower is visible in longer views from a number of directions. In this regard, views of the tower are currently available from along parts of Norwich Road as it approaches and then as it enters Hingham. However, longer views of the church from along Norwich Road (outside of Hingham) are unlikely to be significantly affected by the allocation given the height of the tower, the topography of the area, and the likely height of any development. Views of the church as the road enters Hingham are fleeting and available predominantly to motorists, as there are no pedestrian footpaths in this location. Whilst the allocation would be visible in longer views of the church tower from along parts of Seamere Road, these views are relatively distant in nature, and boundary planting could be used to soften any impact. In our view, any effect on the setting of the St Andrews Church is capable of being dealt with at application stage. The site is also some distance from the listed buildings to the south and there would be no impact on their setting. We further note that Historic England has not objected to the allocation on these grounds.
247. The proposed allocation is opposite to an industrial estate that accommodates some B2 uses. However, it is located on the far side of Norwich Road, and there is scope to provide a further buffer within the site if that is considered necessary. In this regard, the assumed capacity of 80 dwellings would allow for significant areas of the site to be occupied by open space, planting, and flood risk mitigation. Moreover, a number of existing properties back directly onto the industrial estate, and there is no evidence before the Examination that this has resulted in an unacceptable level of noise or disturbance.
248. There would be a small loss of countryside associated with the allocation. However, the site comprises a relatively flat agricultural field that is bounded on 2 sides by the existing built up area. It is well related to the existing settlement and most views of it from the surrounding area are seen against the backdrop of existing townscape. Accordingly, the site does not comprise a 'valued landscape' and any harm to the wider landscape would be minor. Separately, whilst the site is around a kilometre from the Sea Mere SSSI, that is a matter which is capable of being dealt with at application stage.

*Land to the east of Beccles Road, Loddon (GNLP0312)*

249. This site comprises open land on the eastern edge of Loddon. It is well related to the existing settlement and is contained by a band of trees along its eastern edge. It is also accessible to existing services, facilities, and public transport connections in Loddon, and is not subject to any over-riding constraints that would prevent it from being developed. The allocation is sound in principle, subject to modifications to the policy wording that are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM115**.

*Land off Langley Road, Chedgrave (GNLP0463R)*

250. This site comprises open agricultural land on the northern edge of Chedgrave. It is reasonably well related to the existing settlement and is accessible to services, facilities, and public transport connections in Chedgrave. Whilst the site is raised above the existing properties to the south, the assumed capacity is low and would allow for landscaping and open space to be provided to manage this transition in levels. Any landscape harm would be localised and could be mitigated by landscaping and boundary planting. The site is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to clarify the access requirements and for effectiveness, which are addressed in **MM116**.

*Land off Broomhill Lane, Reepham (REP1)*

251. This site was allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) and a planning application has recently been submitted for the site. Discussions in relation to that application have led to an alternative solution with regard to the proposed sports hall which is now to be located off site. The evidence presented to us at the examination from the Partnership and the promoter was that this off-site solution was the option now being pursued. In the light of this, it is not justified to require a sports hall to be provided on site. Accordingly, modifications are necessary to remove this requirement, and to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM119** makes these changes.

252. It is appropriate that the policy expectation remains at approximately 100 dwellings even though this figure may not necessarily be consistent with the planning application before the Council. In this regard, the figure in the policy is not a cap. There is also no compelling evidence to adjust the site boundary.

*Land at former station yard, Station Road, Reepham (REP2)*

253. This site is located within the settlement boundary and benefits from planning permission for a care home, assisted flats, and bungalows. It is suitable to allocate for residential development without modification.

## Village Clusters

### *Land east of Woodbastwick Road, Blofield Heath (Policy GNLP1048R)*

254. The site comprises open land on the edge of the settlement that is surrounded by existing built development on 3 sides. It is in walking distance of services, facilities, and public transport connections in the village. The site is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, a modification to the policy wording is necessary to provide clarity regarding tree and hedgerow re-provision, as some removal is likely to be required to accommodate a new access and footway. Further modifications are necessary to require appropriate ecological surveys for any protected species that may be present, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM120**.

### *Land to the north of Blofield Corner, Blofield Heath (BLO5)*

255. This site is well related to the existing settlement and benefits from planning permission for housing development. It is suitable to allocate for residential development without modification.

### *Land east of Aylsham Road, Buxton with Lamas (GNLP0297)*

256. This is a relatively small open site on the northern edge of the village. It is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to clarify imprecise requirements relating to the 30 mph speed limit area, noise and vibration arising from the railway line, and the loss of any trees and hedgerows at the proposed access point. A further modification requiring the provision of boundary landscaping is necessary to provide an appropriate edge to the settlement. These are remedied in **MM121**.

### *Land east of Lion Road, Buxton (BUX1)*

257. This site was allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) but has not yet come forward. There is a reasonable prospect that it will come forward for approximately 20 homes in the Plan period. Its allocation is justified without modification.

### *Land east of Gayford Road, Cawston (GNLP0293 and CAW2)*

258. Site CAW2 was previously allocated for development in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016), whereas site GNLP0293 is proposed as an extension to it. Together, these adjoining sites effectively form a single allocation, and they

are in the same ownership. There are no over-riding constraints that would prevent the development of the site, and it is in walking distance of services, facilities, and public transport connections in the village, including a primary school and a small convenience store. It is an appropriate site to allocate for housing development. However, it is confusing for these adjoining sites to have separate policies. Accordingly, **MM122** and **MM123** delete Policies GNLP0293 and CAW2 and combine the sites to form a single allocation. This is subject to a new policy with modified wording that incorporates changes that are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. This is set out in **MM124**.

*Land at Rectory Road, Coltishall (COL1 and GNLP2019)*

259. Site COL1 was previously allocated for development in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016), whereas site GNLP2019 is proposed as an extension to it. Together, these adjoining sites effectively form a single allocation. The Highway Authority does not object to the site on highway safety or access grounds, and this matter has been considered in detail during the assessment of recent planning permissions on COL1. There are no other over-riding constraints that would prevent the development of the site, and it is in walking distance of services, facilities, and public transport connections in the village, including a primary school and a convenience store. It is an appropriate site to allocate for housing development in our view. However, it is confusing for this site to be subject to 2 separate policies. Accordingly, **MM125** and **MM126** delete Policies GNLP2019 and COL1 and combine these sites to form a single allocation. This is subject to a new policy with modified wording that clarifies which highway improvements are required and addresses the soundness issues identified above. This is set out in **MM127**.

*Land at Jordans Scrapyard, Coltishall (COL2)*

260. The site was allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) and there is an expectation that it will come forward for housing in this plan period. Its allocation is justified, subject to modifications that are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. **MM128** makes these changes.

*Land west of Foundry Close, Foulsham (GNLP0605)*

261. This site is an open piece of land on the western edge of Foulsham that adjoins the existing settlement to both the south and east. It is in walking distance of services and facilities in the village, including a primary school and a small convenience store. Whilst it would be accessed via relatively narrow estate roads, it would generate only a modest level of traffic given the number of dwellings that are envisaged. In our view, the access route would be of adequate width for a scheme of this size. Moreover, the footways are clearly demarcated despite being the same height as the carriageway, and are set

within a low speed, low traffic, environment. This does not raise significant highway safety issues, and it is noted that the Highway Authority has not raised any concerns in this regard. Similarly, the low level of traffic generated by the scheme would not place any significant additional pressure on High Street.

262. Any loss of hedgerow to create an access would be small-scale and could be compensated for by new planting within the site. The presence of a ransom strip across the site access is noted but given this is owned by a housing association rather than a householder, it is unlikely to prevent development from taking place. Furthermore, given the limited number of pupils that would be generated by an allocation of this size, it would be highly unlikely to necessitate an expansion of the school. Whilst planning permission has recently been granted for housing development elsewhere in the village, that does not make the allocation unsound given the requirement for housing across the Plan area. In our view, the site is appropriate to allocate for housing development subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. This is addressed in **MM129**.

*South of Bowlers Close, Freethorpe (GNLP2034)*

263. This is a relatively small site that is well-contained by existing built development and a band of trees along its southern boundary. It is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary in relation to the boundary trees for clarity and effectiveness. Other modifications are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM131**.

*Land north of Palmer's Lane, Freethorpe (FRE1)*

264. This site benefits from planning permission for housing and has now largely been completed. It is suitable to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM132**.

*Land at Bridge Farm Field, St Faiths Close, Great Witchingham (GNLP0608R)*

265. This is a relatively small greenfield site that adjoins the existing settlement to both the south and west. Whilst it is near to a County Wildlife Site, the County Council's Natural Environment Team have advised that this would not preclude development and that it is unnecessary to require a buffer to be provided within the site. There are no other over-riding constraints that would prevent the development of the site, and it is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, detailed modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above, as

set out at **MM133**. Separately, whilst the site has been promoted to the GNLP by the landowner, its delivery timescales are unclear. Accordingly, the site is not included within the assumed 5 year supply.

*Dog Lane, Horsford (GNLP0264)*

266. This is a brownfield site within the existing built-up area. The north western part of the allocation (accounting for around 25% of the site area) is in Flood Zone 2 and it is necessary to modify the boundary to remove this land, in accordance with national policy. The requirement to maintain a 20-metre buffer between the watercourse and proposed garden areas will also reduce the net developable area. These matters necessitate a reduction in the assumed capacity to 30 dwellings. These, and other modifications that are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above, are addressed in **MM134**.

*Land to the west of West Lane, Horsham St Faith (GNLP0125R)*

267. The site forms part of an agricultural field on the edge of the historic village of Horsham St Faith. Whilst it is close to several designated heritage assets, including the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and St Andrew, a scheduled monument, and the Horsham St Faith Conservation Area, the site is capable of being developed without harming the settings of these assets. In this regard, it is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to ensure that nearby heritage assets are protected in line with national policy. The proposed requirement for 2 site accesses to be provided was also acknowledged to be unnecessary by the Highway Authority in the hearing sessions and so is deleted. A further modification relating to the provision of frontage footways is also necessary given that existing hedgerows may prevent a frontage footway, subject to further design work. Other detailed modifications are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. These matters are addressed in **MM135**. Separately, it is asserted that other developments have recently come forward in the village, however, that does not in itself make the allocation unsound given the requirement for housing across the Plan area.

*Land east of Manor Road, Newton St Faith (HNF1)*

268. The site benefits from planning permission for housing and is currently under construction. The site is suitable to allocate for residential development, subject to modifications to the policy wording that are necessary to clarify the highway improvements required, and to remove an unjustified reference to onsite play provision which does not feature in the planning permission. These are addressed in **MM136**.

*West of Blofield Road, Lingwood (GNLP0380)*

269. This site comprises open agricultural land on the edge of Lingwood. It is well related to the existing built-up area and adjoins it to both the south and east. An appropriate access can be achieved and it is noted that the Highway Authority is supportive of the allocation. It is not subject to any over-riding constraints and the allocation is sound in principle. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity, to ensure compensatory planting for any loss of trees, and to specify the highway measures that are required. These are addressed in **MM139**.

*East of Station Road, Lingwood (GNLP4016)*

270. The site consists of open land on the eastern edge of Lingwood that is near to both a primary school and a train station. It is not subject to any over-riding constraints and the allocation is sound in principle. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity and to ensure compensatory planting for any loss of trees. These are addressed in **MM140**.

*Land south of Le Neve Road, Marsham (GNLP2143)*

271. This site is located on the southern edge of Marsham in close proximity to the Grade I listed All Saints Church. The surrounding landscape is relatively flat and the church tower is a prominent feature in longer views from the public footpaths to the west and south west, and from Allison Street to the south. At present, most of the properties to the west of the church are bungalows that are set down in the landscape, and the village edge follows a clearly defined line that sweeps away from the church to the north west. In contrast, the proposed allocation would be on higher ground and would jut out prominently into the open setting of the church. In this regard, development of this site would introduce a discordant, elevated peninsula of modern development that would interrupt important views of the church and its tower from the west, and visually compete with it when viewed from the south or southwest. There would be a harmful effect on several existing views of the church, including those out from the churchyard itself, that would negatively affect how the building is experienced. There are no obvious design solutions that could adequately mitigate this harm, and even a smaller allocation would still result in significant negative effects. Whilst the level of harm would be 'less than substantial', the public benefits including the provision of new market and/or affordable housing and the provision of expansion land for the adjoining graveyard, would not outweigh the harm. In our view, this allocation is clearly unsound. This is remedied by **MM141** which deletes the allocation and its supporting policy.



*Land to east of Station Road, Reedham (GNLP1001)*

272. This site adjoins existing housing on 3 sides and has only limited visibility from Station Road. It is near to a train station and is accessible to other services and facilities in the village. Whilst walking routes to the primary school would be along roads with no dedicated footway, these are mostly quiet residential streets with limited traffic. The site is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is appropriate to allocate for housing development. However, a modification is required to delete part 2 of the policy, which is repetitive of part 5. It is also necessary to delete unduly prescriptive design requirements, which do not appear to acknowledge the adjoining new build estate to the west. These matters are remedied in **MM142**. Separately, the policy wording already requires that development address the proximity of the site to the Broads, and so a further specific reference to its dark skies is unnecessary.

*Mill Road, Reedham (GNLP3003)*

273. Policy GNLP3003 states that vehicular access to this site should be via a route onto Mill Road. However, during the hearings it emerged that areas of the front gardens on either side of this route would be required to provide adequate visibility splays. In this regard, no agreement has been reached with either landowner and one has refused to engage in discussions. Other potential access solutions would unacceptably narrow Mill Road and are opposed by the Highway Authority. Any potential route via Holly Farm Road would also be highly constrained given its narrow width, poor visibility at the junction with Mill Road, and conflict with the pedestrian access to the school. There are no obvious design solutions that could overcome these constraints. Moreover, any pedestrian route adjacent to the railway bridge parapet would have very poor visibility to oncoming traffic over the bridge. Accordingly, a safe and suitable access to this site is not achievable and it is therefore not a sound allocation for development. This is remedied by **MM143** which deletes the allocation and its supporting policy.

*Land adjoining Norwich Road, Salhouse (GNLP0188)*

274. This is a small site on the edge of Salhouse that is well-related to the existing village and its facilities. The site is not subject to any flood risk constraints and the Lead Local Flood Authority did not object to its allocation. Whilst the development of the site would result in the loss of open views from the properties opposite, a change of view from a private window is not in itself regarded as a planning consideration. There are no over-riding constraints that would prevent the development of the site, and it is appropriate to allocate for housing development. The site lies some distance from the conservation area boundary and it does not need to be referenced in the policy. However,

modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity and to remove unduly prescriptive design stipulations, which are addressed in **MM144**.

*Land north of Chamery Hall Lane and rear of Burlingham Road/St Marys Close, South Walsham (SWA1 and GNLP0382)*

275. Site SWA1 was previously allocated for development in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) and site GNLP0382 is proposed as an extension to it. Together, these adjoining sites effectively form a single allocation, and they are in the same ownership. The Highway Authority objects to any access from Chamery Hall Lane, and the availability of appropriate visibility splays is uncertain in this regard. There is also an existing layby and field access immediately to the west which is likely to impair visibility from any such access. In these circumstances, the policy requirement that access be taken from Burlingham Road is justified.

276. It is confusing for these adjoining sites to have separate policies. Accordingly, **MM145** and **MM146** delete Policies GNLP0382 and SWA1 and combine these sites to form a single allocation. This is subject to a new policy with modified wording which clarifies that compensatory provision for the loss of recreational space is required, and to address the soundness issues identified above. This is set out in **MM147**.

## **Employment Allocations**

*Land known as 'Site 4', Norwich Airport (GNLP1061R)*

277. This is a large site within the operational boundary of Norwich International Airport. It is identified as a strategic allocation to provide aviation related uses, and given its size and location, it is appropriate to allocate for that purpose. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary for effectiveness to correct the site area, to clarify the uses that will be permitted, and to allow a proportion of non-aviation uses consistent with a recent planning permission and the Norwich Airport Masterplan. A modification requiring a design concept masterplan to be submitted is also necessary to ensure that the site is appropriately planned, landscaped, and appropriate infrastructure provided. Further modifications are required to ensure that the site is accessible by modes of transport other than the private car, and to address other soundness issues. These are addressed in **MM33**.

*Land at The Neatmarket, Hall Road (R1)*

278. This brownfield site was previously allocated for development in the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014). It is located within

an established employment area and is appropriate to re-allocate for this purpose. However, part of the site has now been developed for a car showroom, and a modification to the site area is necessary to reflect this. Further modifications to the policy wording are also necessary to clarify that contributions will be required for offsite pedestrian improvements, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM52**.

*Land at Holt Road, Norwich (R30)*

279. The site is located between the edge of an existing commercial area and the A140. It benefits from planning permission for employment development and is appropriate to allocate for those purposes. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to clarify the relationship of any development to airport safeguarding measures and to address other soundness issues. These are addressed in **MM62**. Whilst the representation received at MM stage is noted, the site boundary has not been modified during the course of this examination.

*Land adjacent to Norwich Research Park, Colney (Policy COL1/ GNLP0331BR & GNLP0331CR)*

280. Site COL1 was previously allocated for development in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015), whereas sites GNLP0331BR and GNLP0331CR are proposed as extensions to it. Together, these adjoining sites effectively form a single allocation. Much of the site has planning permission, and part of the COL1 site has been developed out. The site is clearly appropriate to allocate for employment purposes. However, it is confusing for these adjoining sites to have separate policies. Accordingly, **MM67**, **MM68**, and **MM69** delete Policies COL1, GNLP0331BR and GNLP0331CR respectively and these sites are combined to form a single allocation. This is subject to a new policy with modified wording to clarify the requirements in relation to highways and master planning, which are necessary given that much of the site already has outline planning permission to which an illustrative masterplan was attached. The new policy is set out at **MM70**.

*Land rear/east of Institute of Food Research, Colney (COL2/GNLP0140C)*

281. This is a relatively large site on the edge of an existing commercial area, that was allocated for employment development in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015). It is suitable to allocate for those purposes, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to resolve the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM71**.

*Longwater Employment Area, Costessey (Policy COS3/GNLPSL2008)*

282. These sites comprise areas of undeveloped or under-utilised land in the Longwater Employment Area that were previously allocated for development in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015). They are located within an established commercial area and are appropriate to allocate for this purpose. However, the site boundaries and site areas need to be modified to remove areas that have been developed out and to reflect other changes since the sites were last allocated. Further modifications to the policy wording are also necessary to clarify which uses will be permitted, and to resolve the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM74**.

*Land west of Ipswich Road, Keswick (KES 2/GNLPO497)*

283. This site was previously allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) and planning permission has since been granted for employment development. The site is clearly appropriate to allocate for this purpose. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM79**.

*South of Hethel Industrial Estate, Bracon Ash (GNLP 2109)*

284. This site is positioned between existing built development and is adjacent to a much larger employment allocation (Ref HETHEL 2) to the west. The site is not subject to any over-riding constraints and is suitable to allocate for employment purposes. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to remove reference to the need to provide a masterplan as this is not justified for a site of this size, and to address the soundness issues identified above. This is remedied in **MM99**.

*Land north of Spirketts Lane, Harleston (HAR 6)*

285. The site was previously allocated for employment purposes in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015). Much of the site has been granted planning permission and has now been built out and only a small area remains undeveloped. The site is appropriate to allocate for employment purposes, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to clarify that only around 0.22 ha of land remains available, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are addressed in **MM97**.

*Land south of Spirketts Lane, Harleston (HAR 7)*

286. The site comprises open land between the A143 and an established industrial estate. It was previously allocated for employment development in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015), and it remains appropriate to allocate for this purpose. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary for clarity, to correct factual errors, and to clarify that replacement planting will be required for the loss of any trees that are removed to facilitate access. These are addressed in **MM98**.

*Land South and South West of Lotus Cars, Hethel (HETHEL 2)*

287. This site is a strategic allocation that adjoins existing advanced engineering premises to both the north and south, including the head office of Lotus Cars. The site provides an opportunity to accommodate advanced engineering and technology-based businesses. It was previously allocated for development in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) and is being actively promoted for development. It remains appropriate to allocate for employment purposes, subject to modifications to the policy wording that are necessary to clarify when the site masterplan is required, and to address the soundness issues identified above. These are remedied in **MM100**.

*Land at the former station yard, west of B1140, Acle (ACL3)*

288. The site comprises an under-utilised piece of land adjacent to a railway line. It was allocated for employment development in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) and is appropriate to allocate for this purpose, subject to modifications to the policy wording. These are necessary to delete ineffective requirements that are purely descriptive, and to clarify the circumstances where non-B2 uses will be considered. These are addressed in **MM105**.

*Land adjacent to Hingham Industrial Estate at Ironside Way, Hingham (HIN2)*

289. The site consists of open land on the edge of Hingham Industrial Estate that is visually well contained by an existing band of trees. It was previously allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015). The site is available and is not subject to any over-riding constraint. It is appropriate to allocate for employment purposes, subject to modifications to the policy wording that are necessary to clarify the highways requirements, and to specify that development should avoid areas at risk of surface water flooding (which affects only a very small proportion of the site). These are addressed in **MM114**.

*Land adjacent to Loddon Industrial Estate, Little Money Road, Loddon (LOD 3)*

290. This site was previously allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015) and planning permission has since been granted for employment development. The site is appropriate to allocate for this purpose, subject to modifications to the policy wording which are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above. These are set out in **MM117**.

*Ex MOD site, Pine Loke, Poringland (POR3)*

291. The site comprises mostly open land to the rear of properties fronting Poringland Road. Two large metal lattice towers are positioned next to the site, and it is adjacent to an equestrian use. It was previously allocated for employment development in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015), and it remains appropriate to allocate for that purpose. Given the proximity of sensitive uses, a policy criterion restricting the site to Class E(g) uses only is justified. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to address the soundness issues identified above, and these are set out in **MM118**.

*Land at Old Railway Yard, Station Road, Foulsham (FOU2)*

292. This is a brownfield site close to the edge of Foulsham that was previously allocated for employment development in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016). The site is not subject to any overriding constraint, and is appropriate to allocate for employment purposes, subject to modifications to the policy wording that are necessary for clarity, to address the soundness issues identified above, and to remove an unnecessary criterion that is purely descriptive. These are addressed in **MM130**.

*Land east of the A140 and north of Norwich International Airport, Horsham St Faith (HNF2/GNLP0466R)*

293. This site is a large strategic allocation in close proximity to the A1270. It was previously allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016), and now benefits from planning permission for employment development. The site is appropriate to allocate for employment purposes, although modifications to the policy wording are necessary to adjust the site area so that it reflects the planning permission boundary and the position of the A1270. A modification specifying that no more than 50% of total floorspace should be within Class E(g)(i), rather than in any one use class, is also necessary as this requirement is intended to limit traffic generation associated with office development only. Further modifications are also necessary to clarify the highway requirements and to ensure that the site masterplan is provided with or in advance of the first application. These are addressed in **MM137**.

*Land at Abbey Farm Commercial, Horsham St Faith (SL2007/GNLP4061/HNF3)*

294. The site comprises open land to the north and west of the existing commercial park. Part of the site was allocated for employment development in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016), although part of the site represents an extension to the original allocation. The site benefits from a recent planning permission and is suitable to allocate for employment purposes. However, modifications to the policy wording are necessary to reflect the amended site area, clarify the highways requirements, and for effectiveness. These are addressed in **MM138**.

*Brooke Industrial Estate, Brooke (BKE3)*

295. This site is an existing industrial estate that was allocated for development in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015). It is now mostly developed out and occupied by existing businesses, although there are still areas of undeveloped and under-utilised land. The site remains appropriate to allocate for employment purposes, however, modifications to the supporting text are necessary to clarify that only around 1.2 ha of land remains available, and for clarity in relation to flood risk. These are addressed in **MM148**.

*Land at Dunkirk Industrial Estate (west), south of Banningham Road, Aylsham (AYL3)*

296. This is an open piece of land within an established industrial estate, that was previously allocated for employment development in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016). It is appropriate for re-allocation for this purpose without modification.

*Land at Dunkirk Industrial Estate (east), south of Banningham Road, Aylsham (AYL4)*

297. This site was previously allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016) and now benefits from planning permission for employment development, part of which has since been built out. It is appropriate to allocate for these purposes without modification.

### **Other Site Allocations and Site-specific Policies**

*Bawburgh and Colney Lakes (BAW2)*

298. This site was allocated in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015). The principle of the use has therefore previously been established. From the evidence presented to the examination, little progress has

been made in bringing this site forward as a country park and it is currently leased as a fishing lake. Nevertheless, the Partnership is keen to progress the site and there is a reasonable prospect that it could come forward within the Plan period, providing a valuable countryside and recreational resource for existing and future residents, as well as visitors. The allocation is sound in principle subject to modifications to the policy wording for effectiveness. **MM73** makes these changes.

*Redevelopment of existing uses within the Costessey Longwater Development Boundary (COS 4)*

299. The Longwater Employment Area encompasses a large commercial area that contains retail and employment uses, car showrooms, and other uses. A policy for this area is clearly necessary to control the uses that are permitted. However, modifications to the policy wording are required to clarify the criteria that would apply to the proposed loss of employment or complimentary sui generis uses, including the proposed marketing requirements. A further modification is also necessary to state that B2 and B8 uses will be permitted, which was omitted in error in the submitted version of the Plan. These matters are addressed in **MM75**.

*Royal Norfolk Showground, Costessey (COS5/GNLP2074)*

300. The Royal Norfolk Showground is a major visitor attraction and events location within Greater Norwich. Policy COS5/GNLP2074 recognises this and sets out criteria for development within the Showground area. Whilst the policy is clearly necessary, modifications to its wording are necessary to remove inconsistencies, and to clarify the highway requirements and the level of locally produced goods in any anchor food retail unit. These are remedied in **MM77**.

*Land northeast of Reepham Road Hellesdon (HEL4/GNLP1019)*

301. This is an area of land allocated for recreational open space in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016). The Plan proposes to continue with this allocation. However, the landowner objects and states that the site is not available for the use proposed. There is no convincing evidence that the site can be brought forward for the proposed use in the Plan period. Therefore, despite being previously allocated, the allocation in this Plan is not justified and should be deleted. **MM84** deletes the allocation.



*Redevelopment of existing hospital and science park uses within the Colney Development Boundary (COL 3)*

302. This policy encompasses the wider employment area, hospital, and science park at Colney. It is a policy that featured in the previous South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015), and it remains necessary to guide development in this area.

*Restriction of employment uses at Hethel (HETHEL 1)*

303. This policy area incorporates a cluster of advanced engineering and technology-based businesses, including the head office of Lotus Cars and the Hethel Engineering Centre. The policy is necessary in order to protect and encourage the growth of this important cluster of businesses.

*Land west of Poppyfields, Hethersett (HET 3)*

304. This is an existing allocation for open space in the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations & Policies Document (2015). Given the development of the strategic allocation to the north of Hethersett, this site's value as open space for the local community will become greater. Its use as informal open space will also help to protect the archaeological interest on the land. The allocation is sound without modification.

*Land north of Berryfields, Brundall (BRU2)*

305. This site was allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016). However, planning permission has subsequently been granted for housing which has now been built on the site. The allocation therefore cannot be delivered and is not justified. **MM108** deletes the allocation and policy.

*Land east of the Memorial Hall, Brundall (BRU3)*

306. This site was allocated in the Broadland Site Allocations DPD (2016). However, planning permission has subsequently been granted for housing on this site and the allocation is therefore not justified. **MM109** deletes the allocation and policy.

*Costessey Contingency Site (GNLP0581/2043)*

307. This site lies on the western edge of Norwich. It is a large site of around 62 hectares. The policy provides for it to come forward as a contingency site for an urban extension including around 800 homes, open space, a local centre and education facilities. The policy sets out a trigger mechanism whereby it could

come forward. This is based on three consecutive years of completions being more than 15% below target and then a second test that the under-delivery of committed and allocated sites is a result of site-specific constraints.

308. The Framework requires planning authorities to review plans within five years following adoption. It is likely that three consecutive Annual Monitoring Reports would not be available until into mid 2026 at the earliest. If there was significant under delivery of housing, the local planning authorities would have to consider the issue as part of the review of the local plan. The second part of the proposed trigger mechanism would require evidence that the under-delivery was as a result of site-specific constraints.
309. It is not clear to us how this would work effectively and the processes and approval mechanisms which would have to be followed to confirm the contingency site could come forward. There would then need to be a planning application submitted and it would be likely to be a further few years before the site was delivering homes. At the hearings the Partnership considered it not unreasonable to assume a further two years beyond the three AMR years, before houses could be delivered. The Partnership acknowledged that, as a result, there could be five years of persistent under delivery before a house was built at the contingency site. The Partnership also indicated at the hearings that it had not done any analysis as to whether the Costessey site would actually make any material difference to an overall under delivery position. We are therefore not convinced that the trigger mechanism in the submitted Plan would actually address the issues which it is designed to resolve.
310. We have considered the alternative trigger mechanism wording set out by the site promoter in its hearing statement and in its responses to the modification consultation. We do not agree that such wording either could make the Policy effective or justified. Although this Plan is being examined under the September 2023 version of the Framework, planning decisions post adoption would be made having regard to the advice in the revised Framework. The requirement to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide a minimum of five years worth of housing sites would not apply for five years post adoption. The Housing Delivery Test would also not be a consideration for the local planning authority. We do not consider that it is justified to apply a different approach solely in the case of the contingency site.
311. Furthermore, we do not agree that the delay to progress on site delivery in the Plan area as a result of nutrient neutrality issues provides a justification for this policy. In this regard, we have carefully considered the impact of nutrient neutrality on affected sites in our assessment of land supply and the trajectory, and, through a new positively worded policy in the Plan for those sites yet to come forward.

312. We also do not agree that the case for a new sixth form college provides a justification for a contingency site allocation. If a school is needed to meet growth arising from housing sites in the Plan, then provision should be made on a site with certainty, not on a site which may only be delivered should completions on housing sites in the Plan area not progress as planned. That would leave the provision of the sixth form college reliant on other housing sites failing to deliver and that cannot be a sound basis for planning.
313. The Partnership told us at the hearings that the sixth form facility was not required to meet growth needs arising from the Plan. The site promoter takes a different view. However, the evidence before us is not convincing and it seems that there is a lack of co-ordinated planning between the education authority, the local planning authority and the site owner on this matter.
314. We conclude elsewhere in this report that there is a buffer of around 11% across the whole of the Plan area. We consider that this is sufficient to mitigate any slower than expected delivery on some sites and to provide flexibility in the market. We have arrived at that conclusion through a thorough and detailed assessment of each allocation and some of the larger commitments. It is also possible that there would be other options open to the Partnership to help address under-delivery which could be considered as part of a plan review or through decisions on planning applications.
315. For the reasons set out above, we consider that there is no convincing case for the site to be allocated as a contingency site, or as the site promoter seeks, a full allocation. The Policy is not justified and not effective and it is necessary to delete it.
316. **MM76 and MM149** are therefore necessary for the Plan to be effective and justified.

## **Gypsy & Traveller Allocations**

### *Land off Buxton Road, Eastgate, Cawston (Ref GNLP5004R)*

317. The site consists of an area of land on the northern side of Buxton Road, within the hamlet of Eastgate. It is located within a cluster of dwellings and is partially screened in longer views by mature trees and planting. Whilst the site was originally proposed for 4 pitches, that assumes an unrealistically high density for a site of this size. In this regard, it is likely to accommodate up to 2 pitches. The proposed access would be some distance from the bend in the road to the west, and sufficient space would be available to accommodate vehicle parking within the site. Accordingly, the allocation would not raise any highway safety issues, and the Highway Authority has not objected to the allocation on these grounds.

Moreover, the site would have reasonable access to services and facilities in Cawston, which is around 1 km away.

318. This site is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. **MM150** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.

*Land at the Oaks, Reepham Road, Foulsham (GNLP5022)*

319. This site comprises an extension to the rear of an established Gypsy and Traveller site fronting onto Reepham Road. The proposed extension would have limited visibility in the surrounding area, and the site-specific policy requires that further landscaping and tree planting be undertaken. This would ensure that any impact on the landscape would be limited. Whilst the site is in a rural location, it has reasonable access to services and facilities in Foulsham, which is around 2 km away. Part of the site is subject to surface water flood risk, however, the site-specific policy wording requires that development in this area be avoided. In this regard, there is scope to accommodate 5 additional pitches without developing this area. In addition, the proposed extension of the site would not be of a scale that would dominate the nearest settled community.

320. This site is available and is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. **MM151** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.

*Brick Kiln Road Hevingham (Ref GNLP5027)*

321. This site comprises an extension to the rear of an existing Gypsy and Traveller site. It is set back from the road and has limited visibility in the surrounding area. A small part of the site is subject to surface water flood risk, however, the site-specific policy requires that development in this area be avoided. In this regard, there is scope to accommodate 5 additional pitches without developing this area. The site would take access from a relatively straight section of Brick Kiln Lane and would generate only a modest amount of traffic. Moreover, the Highway Authority has also not objected to the allocation on safety grounds. In addition, the number of pitches proposed would not be of a scale that would dominate the nearest settled community.
322. This site is available and is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. **MM152** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.

*Land north of Shortthorn Road, Stratton Strawless (GNLP5019)*

323. This site comprises an extension to an established Gypsy and Traveller site on Shortthorn Road that would comprise 4 additional pitches. It would not be prominent when viewed from the road and would be seen in the context of the existing Gypsy and Traveller site and other neighbouring development. Whilst the site is adjacent to mature trees and grassland, this has not prevented the development and expansion of the adjoining site. It is around 2 miles from services and facilities in Horsford, which would provide a reasonable level of accessibility. The site is available and is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. **MM153** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.

*Romany Meadow, The Turnpike, Carleton Rode (GNLP5020)*

324. This site comprises an extension of 6 pitches to an established Gypsy and Traveller site on The Turnpike. It is in a relatively prominent position next to the B1113, although mature trees and planting along its frontage partially screen the site from the road. The site-specific policy requires that further landscaping and tree planting be provided, and this would ensure that its visual impact would be minimised. Any residual views of the site from the north east would also be seen against the backdrop of the existing site. Whilst the site is in a rural location, it has reasonable accessibility to services and facilities in nearby villages. The scale of the allocation is proportionate to the existing site and its surroundings, and it would not dominate the nearest settled community, either alone or in combination with other sites. Part of the site is subject to surface water flood risk, however, the site-specific policy wording requires that areas subject to flood risk be avoided.

325. This site is available and is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. **MM154** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.

*Land off Ugate Street, Carleton Rode (GNLP5024)*

326. This is an existing under-utilised Gypsy and Traveller site, which contains 2 pitches at present. Given its size, there is scope to increase this number to 6 within the existing site boundary. The site is surrounded by mature hedgerows which screen it within the surrounding area, and the impact on the landscape would therefore be limited. Whilst the site is in a rural location, it has reasonable accessibility to services and facilities in nearby villages, including a primary school. There is no indication that the existing point of access has led to any highway safety issues, and the Highway Authority do not object to the

allocation. The scale of the site is such that it would not dominate the nearest settled community, either alone or in combination with other sites.

327. This site is available and is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. **MM155** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.

*Land east of Station Lane, Ketteringham (GNLP5013)*

328. This site is owned by South Norfolk Council and is currently used as a depot for refuse collection vehicles. It is a brownfield site with reasonable access to services and facilities in Hethersett. The Council is seeking to relocate the depot and the site will become available in the medium term. It is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation for around 10 pitches, and based on the available evidence, is likely to come forward in the timescales envisaged. **MM156** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.

*Land at Strayground Lane, Wymondham (Ref GNLP5028 A & B)*

329. This site consists of 2 parts - a cleared area of land to the south and a smaller recycling centre to the north. The recycling centre is due to be relocated to an alternative site in 2025, and the larger cleared area has been promoted as an allocation by the landowner. Both would be accessed via Strayground Lane, which is a narrow single-track road that leads onto Whartons Lane, and the junction with the B1172. Whilst this is a narrow route, the proposed Gypsy and Traveller allocation would generate significantly less traffic than the existing recycling centre. Evidence has also been submitted to show how existing passing places could be improved. Moreover, no collisions have been recorded at the junction between Whartons Lane and the B1172 in the last 5 years.
330. In these circumstances, we consider that access matters are capable of being dealt with at the planning application stage. The Partnership and site promoter will need to work with the Highway Authority to agree the necessary highway improvements consistent with the requirements of the policy. On the basis of the evidence before us, including the position of the Partnership who have proposed this site following consultation, we consider that the principle of the allocation is justified.
331. Given the reduction in traffic that would occur compared to the existing use, the allocation would not result in any harm to the attractiveness of Strayground Lane as a walking route. The site-specific policy also requires that boundary landscaping is installed which would enhance this route compared to the

existing situation. In terms of the proximity of the level crossing to the south, Network Rail have raised no objection to the allocation on this ground. Any pollution or ecological implications of the allocation are also capable of being dealt with at planning application stage.

332. This site is appropriate to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. **MM157** allocates the site and introduces a site-specific policy that is necessary to guide its development and to ensure that the site is occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and their families only.
333. In terms of delivery timescales, most of the site is currently disused, and the site promoter stated that they are in discussions with a provider. Whilst the recycling centre would need to be relocated to free up the smaller element, that is only likely to accommodate a single pitch. In light of the above, there is a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within 5 years.

## Conclusion

334. Subject to the abovementioned MMs, the site allocations are consistent with the Spatial Strategy and the evidence, are justified and effective, and can be delivered in the timescales envisaged.

## Issue 8 – Does the Plan set out a positively prepared strategy for the supply and delivery of housing development that is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

### Overall Housing Supply

335. The Plan as submitted identified a total housing supply of 49,492 new homes, which provided a buffer of around 22% above the housing requirement. This supply included completions, commitments, windfalls, Plan allocations, and a contribution from the emerging SNVCHAP. As set out in this report under Issue 1, we consider that the overall housing supply is less than this at around 45,041 during the Plan period, which nonetheless provides for a significant buffer of around 11% above the housing requirement. This buffer will provide choice, flexibility, and mitigation against any under or non-delivery of housing sites within the Plan area. In addition, and as set out below, the assumed windfall allowance is very cautious and in practice is likely to be significantly exceeded.
336. During the examination, the Partnership updated its housing supply evidence to a base date of 31 March 2022. The submission of the updated evidence was at our request to ensure that the examination was based on the most up to date evidence. This provides an additional two years of housing completion data from that which is set out in the Plan. In total, it shows that there were 8,728

completions between 2018/19 and 2021/22. Updating the housing supply to 31 March 2022 has also led to an increase in extant planning permissions, from 31,452 to 34,688 dwellings. The updated supply evidence also takes account of errors and omissions and some updated information on site delivery.

337. The updated housing supply evidence also makes a change to the ratio at which student accommodation counts towards housing completions. This change now brings the ratio in line with the PPG. We consider this approach to be justified. Similarly, the proposed change in respect of how specialist older persons accommodation is converted into a housing figure is also justified.
338. As set out under Issue 7, some of the proposed housing allocations are not justified and the Plan has been modified in order to delete these sites. It is necessary to amend the housing trajectory to reflect this.
339. We have also altered certain assumptions regarding start dates, lead in times, and delivery rates on other allocations in the Plan. These assumptions are based on the evidence before us at the examination, including hearing statements, statements of common ground, industry research such as 'Start to Finish', our site visits, and answers given at the relevant hearing session. For example, the Partnership put forward updated expected delivery information for Sprowston (Ref GNLP0132) which led to a reduction in its contribution in the Plan period of 660 homes. For the larger strategic allocations such as the ENSRA, these assumptions are set out elsewhere in this report.
340. As set out above, nutrient neutrality emerged as a major issue during the examination following the receipt of a letter from Natural England in March 2022. It affects most of the Plan area, including the entirety of the Norwich urban area and the main towns of Wymondham and Aylsham, and initially led to a hiatus in the granting of planning permission for new housing. Significant work has been done on this, including the formation of a Joint Venture Company with other affected Norfolk Councils to create a trading platform for nutrient mitigation credits. It has also sought to retrofit existing Council-owned properties with water saving appliances, which has provided sufficient mitigation to allow for the development of Anglia Square to proceed. Many larger housing developments will also be capable of providing their own nutrient mitigation, as is proposed at several of the sites that are currently allocated in Area Action Plans. The Partnership has updated its Trajectory to reflect the impact of nutrient neutrality issues and based on the evidence before us and the answers given at the relevant hearing sessions, we consider this to be robust.
341. In terms of the assumed windfall allowance, this is based on an assessment of past windfall completions between 2008/09 and 2017/18 on sites of less than 10 dwellings in Broadland and South Norfolk, and on all such sites in Norwich. The gross annual rate of windfall completions was then heavily discounted in order



to produce the assumed windfall contribution. The size of this discount is such that it presents a very cautious view of future windfall delivery. In addition, an analysis has been undertaken of the types of sites that have come forward over the trend period, including conversions, sub-divisions, affordable housing exception sites, etc, which shows that such sites have come forward reliably. These sites are not generally picked up in the HELAA, which only considers land of 0.25 ha or above. Moreover, the recent expansion of permitted development rights to convert existing buildings to housing is likely to increase the rate at which windfalls come forward in the years ahead.

342. The assumed delivery from windfalls sites has been reduced compared to that set out in the submitted version of the Plan. This is due, firstly, to an assumption that no windfalls will be delivered in 2023/24 and 2024/25 due to nutrient neutrality issues, and secondly, to the updating of the housing supply to 31 March 2022, which means there are now fewer years remaining in the Plan period. We consider both of these adjustments to be robust. In these circumstances, we consider that compelling evidence has been presented that windfalls will provide a reliable source of supply over the Plan period.
343. Policy 7.5 has been modified so that it now relates solely to self and custom build housing. In this regard, there is a clear demand for this type of housing (discussed under Issue 6) and this policy will open up new development opportunities that were not previously available. In these circumstances, a contribution of 800 dwellings from this source is justified. Moreover, as the sites permitted under Policy 7.5 will be on land where housing has previously been restricted, any overlap with the assumed windfall contribution will be minimal.
344. In addition, we consider the 1200 dwellings assumed on sites to be identified in the SNVCHAP to be reasonable over the period of this Plan. Those sites are to be allocated separately in that document.
345. With regard to the larger sites with planning permission, and those allocated in Area Action Plans, we have made some alterations to the supply and delivery assumptions in addition to those proposed by the Partnership at the hearings. In particular, we have discounted any contribution from the Norwich RFU site (allocated in the Growth Triangle AAP - Ref GT13) as there is little evidence to indicate that it is still available or that a relocation site for the Club has been secured. This reduces the supply by 250 homes. In addition, the Partnership acknowledged that delivery at the North Rackheath site (Ref GT16) will be reduced by 180 dwellings due to a dampening effect caused by concurrent development of nearby site GNLP0172 by the same developer. However, based on the submitted evidence and discussions at the hearings, we consider that the delivery assumptions for the sites at Beeston Park, Land at Brook Farm & Laurel Farm, and Long Stratton, to be robust.

346. As a consequence of the above, the housing trajectory set out in Appendix 6 of the Plan needs to be amended for it to be justified and effective. Appendix 6 is therefore replaced by Appendix 4 in **MM20**.

### **Five Year Supply**

347. The expected adoption date of the Plan means that the relevant 5 year period is 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028. This is the most up to date housing supply information before the examination and therefore accords with the PPG that strategic policies should identify a five year supply from the date of adoption.

348. We have taken the updated evidence presented to us in the Partnership's March 2023 hearing statement which was based on September 2022 published housing supply data and which informed the hearing sessions. We have assessed each of the sites against the tests in the Framework and PPG in respect of whether they are deliverable or developable, based upon the evidence presented to us at the examination. We have also considered the impact of nutrient neutrality on the deliverability of sites in the period 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2028, as is set out in relation to the overall supply. We have also taken into account the progress made towards identifying mitigation solutions in considering the 5 year supply position.

349. We recognise that the evidence on which we rely to examine the 5 year supply position is data from September 2022 discussed and tested at the hearing session in March 2023. It is possible that circumstances on some sites may have altered since then. However, this is the most practical up to date evidence before us across the whole portfolio of sites to reach a conclusion on 5 year supply. To wait for further evidence would significantly delay the end of the examination and the adoption of the Plan. Other evidence could become out of date. There has to be a cut off, and a reliance made upon the most up to date evidence practically available to the examination. This is that position.

350. In most cases we agree with the Partnership's view on deliverability, but on some sites, we consider that the evidence does not support the site contributing to the 5 year supply. We have made reference to this in some of the site specific matters set out in Issue 7. For example, we do not consider that the 5 year supply contribution from the ENSRA is as great as the Partnership proposed.

351. In submitting the Plan, the Partnership has asked us to confirm the five year supply position. We have not been provided with evidence that the Partnership explicitly made it clear at the Regulation 19 stage that it was seeking to confirm the existence of a 5 year supply through the plan-making process as set out in the PPG. However, this was clearly set out in the submission letter and concerns in this regard were not raised by participants at the hearing sessions. The PPG is guidance, but in any event, it is clear that the Partnership has engaged positively with developers and others in assessing housing delivery

and this includes the many statements of common ground agreed on a significant number of allocations and commitments. Furthermore, those with an interest in housing delivery were able to submit statements and take part in the hearing sessions on housing supply at the examination, including to consider our specific questions on 5 year supply.

352. In accordance with the Framework, in this position, a buffer of 10% should be added. There is no need to add a further buffer. The 5 year housing requirement is 9,950 homes from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028. A 10% buffer takes this requirement to 10,945 homes.

353. Taking into account all of the evidence before us, we consider that the 5 years supply for the Plan area is 12,632 homes, which is a supply of 5.77 years. This is lower than the 6.05 years supply which the Partnership considered it would have. The summary table setting out the 5 year supply position is set out in the replacement Housing Trajectory annex which **MM20** addresses.

### **Supply of Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

354. The need for 52 Gypsy and Traveller pitches set out in the GTAA is disaggregated as follows: 30 in years 1-5, 10 in years 6-10, and 12 in years 11-16 of the Plan. Sites that are capable of accommodating 38 pitches have been identified to meet the 5 year requirement. In this regard, Joint Delivery Statements have been agreed with the landowners for each of the proposed Gypsy and Traveller allocations that support the Partnership's delivery assumptions. Based on these, the other submitted evidence, and the discussions that took place at the hearings, we are satisfied that these sites are deliverable. The Plan will therefore be able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches upon adoption.

355. Beyond the 5 year period, the Council-owned Ketteringham Depot is allocated as a site that will become available in the medium term. This timescale is to allow for the depot to be relocated and is supported by a Joint Delivery Statement agreed with the landowner. In our view this is a developable site. In terms of the windfall allowance that is proposed, this is supported by historic rates of windfall delivery that show a consistent pattern of unanticipated sites coming forward. The proposed criteria-based approach in Policy 5 would also allow windfall sites to continue to come forward in the future. Windfalls are only assumed to contribute to the later years of the Plan period and at a rate of 1-2 per year. This is a cautious approach, and we are satisfied that compelling evidence exists that windfalls will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.

356. Including the windfall allowance, the Plan identifies a total supply of 60 pitches to meet the requirement, which includes a modest buffer to allow for choice and

under-delivery at any of the allocated sites. This approach is positively prepared, justified, likely to be effective, and consistent with national policy.

## Conclusion

357. On the basis of the evidence before us, and subject to modifications, the Plan sets out a positively prepared strategy for the supply and delivery of housing development that is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The Plan, with modifications, provides both a plan period and five-year supply of housing sites.

## Issue 9 – Will the Monitoring Framework provide a sound and effective basis for monitoring of the Plan?

358. The Monitoring Framework in the submitted plan is based on themes and indicators. However, to be effective it needs to set out targets, triggers, and actions. **MM19** replaces the Monitoring Framework in the submitted Plan with the revised version which we consider provides a sound and effective basis for monitoring the Plan.

## Overall Conclusion and Recommendation

359. The Plan has a number of deficiencies in respect of soundness for the reasons set out above, which mean that we recommend non-adoption of it as submitted in accordance with Section 20 (7A) of the 2004 Act. These deficiencies have been explained in the main issues set out above.

360. The Partnership has requested that we recommend MMs to make the Plan sound and capable of adoption. We conclude that the duty to cooperate has been met and that with the recommended main modifications set out in the Appendix the Greater Norwich Local Plan satisfies the requirements referred to in Section 20(5)(a) of the 2004 Act and is sound.

361. We conclude that if adopted promptly (with the recommended MMs) the Plan establishes a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites for the Plan area. Accordingly, we recommend that in these circumstances the LPAs will be able to confirm that a five-year housing land supply for the Plan area has been demonstrated in a recently adopted plan in accordance with paragraph 75 and footnote 40 of the Framework.

*Mike Worden and Thomas Hatfield*

This report is accompanied by Appendices containing the MMs.

## WYMONDHAM PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

- Report Authors:** Rodney Fincham, Assistant Director - Finance  
t [01508 533982](tel:01508533982)  
e [rodney.fincham@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:rodney.fincham@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk)
- George Denton, Assistant Director – Economic Growth  
t [07971 659850](tel:07971659850)  
e [george.denton@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:george.denton@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk)
- Portfolio Holder:** Leader
- Ward(s) Affected:** Wymondham
- Purpose of the Report:** To set aside funds towards public realm improvements in Wymondham.

### Recommendations

That Council:

- 1 Accepts the key points from the Wymondham Town Council resolution.
  - 2 Allocates the following sums toward public realm improvements in Wymondham.
    - The full capital receipt (less costs of sale) from the sale of Middleton Road.
    - £234,457 from the Co-Investment Fund, subject to a successful application and supportive business case.
    - £15,543 from the in-year surplus (in order to fully match the £250,000 Wymondham Town Council contribution).
- And agrees to use the in-year surplus to increase the CAF, rather than using some of the proceeds from the sale of Middleton Road.
- 3 Agrees that a formal agreement is entered into by all the parties, to govern how this project will be managed.
  - 4 Agrees the Terms of Reference for the Working Group as detailed in Appendix A (in line with the approach that was successfully used in Harleston).

## 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Budget in 2023 challenged local partners to form a co-investment fund for public realm improvements in Wymondham predicated on an assumption that the full receipt from the sale of Council-owned premises in Middleton Road would be used to help fund the works.
- 1.2 At the time of the last Council Meeting, on 21 February 2024, it has not been possible to gain the necessary co-investment commitment or in principle agreement to deliver a scheme in partnership with others.
- 1.3 Therefore, rather than this capital receipt from the sale of Middleton Road just sitting unallocated, it was agreed that £100,000 of this sum would be redirected to increase the CAF fund to allow additional projects across the wider district to progress.
- 1.4 It was further agreed at that meeting that up to £50,000 would be made available (from the in-year additional investment income) to support design creation and community participation for Public Realm improvements for Wymondham.

## 2 UPDATE ON SALE OF MIDDLETON ROAD PROPERTY

- 2.1 The freehold interest in Middleton Road was advertised for offers in the region of £425,000, and the sale is due to complete on 22 March 24.

## 3 UPDATE ON WYMONDHAM TOWN COUNCIL POSITION

- 3.1 On 5 March 2024, Wymondham Town Council discussed and unanimously agreed the following motion.

### **Council notes:**

1. Decision by previous administration to allocate £250,000 from CIL money to a town centre regeneration project to improve the public space in Wymondham.
2. It has not been possible confirm funding for this project as the CIL has not been realised the Council's earmarked reserves do not include the previously agreed sum.
3. The current Town Council has been provided with information about the proposed town centre regeneration works at previous meetings but Councillors have expressed concerns about the lack of detail of proposals and that allocating this funding may prevent delivery of other projects.
4. The decision of South Norfolk District Council to provide £50,000 to support a process of community engagement with design of the town centre regeneration works.
5. The decision of South Norfolk District Council to reduce the sum available from the sale of the former offices at Middleton Street in view of other uses for the money. It might be possible to get this funding restored if Town Council confirms allocation of £250,000 to the public space project at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

### **Council resolves**

1. To agree £250,000 funding to be earmarked as a reserve for the town centre regeneration works so that discussions about the detail of works and the nature of the partnership can proceed and Wymondham can benefit from the full value of the sale of the former offices on Middleton Street.
2. That this in principle agreement is conditional on South Norfolk District Council **confirming in writing** that the **full** proceeds of the sale of the former offices at 14 Middleton Street will be allocated to the town centre regeneration works spaces and

that the £250,000 earmarked by Wymondham Town Council will **be matched** by a further sum of at least £250,000 from South Norfolk District Council to bring the total available close to the £1 million that was suggested would be available.

3. That Finance & General Purposes Committee will agree changes to the earmarked reserves to allow creation of the £250,000 reserve for the town centre regeneration works.
4. That spending of the sum reserved for the town centre regeneration works is subject to agreement by the Town Council of the detail of works to be funded and the establishment of partnership arrangements that ensure the Town Council remains in control of how its contribution is spent.

#### 4 UPDATE ON CO-INVESTMENT FUND

- 4.1 £2,000,000 of funding has been allocated to the Co-investment Fund, across two financial years 22/23 and 23/24.
- 4.2 The total awarded sum across the three projects to date (Cringleford, Stoke Holy Cross and Easton) totals £1,765,543.  
This leaves an **underspend of £234,457** from the first two years of the fund.
- 4.3 This balance could be earmarked for Wymondham.

#### 5 SUMMARY OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

- 5.1 The following table sets out the total funding now available for public realm improvements in Wymondham.

	At present	Proposed
<b>Receipt from Sale</b>		
Receipt from the sale of Middleton Road (Note)	Approx £425,000	Approx £425,000
Less costs of sale	Approx -£20,000	Approx -£20,000
Less sum reallocated to CAF.	<u>-£100,000</u>	
	£305,000	£405,000
<b>Investment from SNC</b>		
Design creation and community participation (From additional in year investment income)	Up to £50,000	Up to £50,000
Co-Investment Fund		£234,457
Additional sum from the in-year surplus to fully match the WTC contribution		£15,543
<b>Investment from Town Council</b>		
Wymondham Town Council Funding		£250,000
	<b>£355,000</b>	<b>£955,000</b>

Note: The receipt from Middleton Road is currently shown as £425,000, which is the price that this property was advertised for.

- 5.2 Regarding no longer using £100,000 of the sale proceeds to increase the CAF, this will instead be funded from the in-year surplus.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- 1 Accepts the key points from the Wymondham Town Council resolution.
- 2 Allocates the following sums toward public realm improvements in Wymondham.
  - The full capital receipt (less costs of sale) from the sale of Middleton Road.
  - £234,457 from the Co-Investment Fund, subject to a successful application and supportive business case.
  - £15,543 from the in-year surplus (in order to fully match the £250,000 Wymondham Town Council contribution).

And agrees to use the in-year surplus to increase the CAF, rather than using some of the proceeds from the sale of Middleton Road.

- 3 Agrees that a formal agreement is entered into by all the parties, to govern how this project will be managed.
- 4 Agrees the Terms of Reference for the Working Group as detailed in Appendix A (in line with the approach that was successfully used in Harleston).



## Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the Working Group

### Purpose of Group

To enable a detailed approach to the development of the town centre to achieve improvements to the public realm.

### Objective of Group

- To extend the trading day.
- To enable the town centre to be more commercially viable.
- To expand the town centre to have a variety of uses.
- To develop an improvement plan, initially utilising the £50,000, to work up designs, pay for any associated fees and ensure that widespread public consultation is undertaken.
- To review the consultation as part of the final proposal development.

### Membership

- The working group to be made up of four district councillors (politically balanced), one county councillor, three Town councillors, plus the Chair.
- The SNC Portfolio Holder for Stronger, Greener Economy to chair the working group. The vice-chair to be appointed at the inaugural meeting of the working group.
- Where members are dual hatters then it needs to be clear which authority they are representing on the working group.

### Quorum

The minimum number of five members must be present to transact any business of the working group.

### Procedures

The Chair of the working group shall be responsible for maintaining order and the effective conduct of business at meetings of the group.

The working group meetings will be held without the press and public attending.

Any member of the district council or town council may attend the meeting and observe.

At the discretion of the Chair, any member attending the working group may speak or may put questions to any other participant.

### Voting

Voting shall be by a simple majority show of hands.

In the event of an inequality of votes the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

### Supporting the Group

South Norfolk Council will provide clerking services to the working group and officers as appropriate.

# Agenda Item 5



**Council**  
**25 March 2024**

## **Housing Complaints Policy**

**Report Author(s):** Richard Dunsire  
Strategic Housing and independence senior manager  
01508 533620  
Richard.Dunsire@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

**Portfolio:** Supporting People

**Ward(s) Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

To present the Housing Complaints Policy for approval

### **Recommendations:**

1. To approve the Housing Complaints Policy attached at Appendix 1.
2. To require the Monitoring Officer to determine the correct committee to receive the report on the annual self-assessment and to update the relevant committee's terms of reference accordingly.

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report introduces the appended Housing Complaints Policy and seeks approval for implementation.
- 1.2 This complaint policy is for Housing complaints only, specifically for those that need to complain about their temporary accommodation as we currently do not provide other types of housing. This policy does not cover anyone who wishes to complain about their Housing and Homelessness case. These complaints will remain under the current complaints policy.
- 1.3 The policy clarifies how the council will support tenants in making their complaint and how it will deal with said complaint.
- 1.4 It also explains how we will use the complaint to continually improve our services and use the information to learn from.
- 1.5 The policy is applicable to tenants of South Norfolk Council.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme should have in place for considering complaints against them following consultation on the code. It also placed a duty on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with a code of practice that it has issued. The Ombudsman consulted on the code and its intended approach to the duty to monitor in late 2023. This is the first statutory Complaint Handling Code ('the Code') and it will take effect from 1 April 2024; the duty to monitor compliance will go-live at the same time.
- 2.2 Guidance regarding implementation was provided to officers on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 regarding implementation timeframes, and their unrealistic nature within local government governance processors however the Housing Ombudsman made it clear that a policy must be in place by April 2024.
- 2.3 The Ombudsman believes all members should comply with all provisions in the Code as this represents best practice in complaint handling.
- 2.4 The Local Government Organisation has also provided guidance which aligns with the Housing Ombudsman's recommendations however with far more achievable deadlines. This will be presented to cabinet and council in September and October. Officers will aim to align the approach so that the new policy presented to member in September will incorporate both the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government Ombudsman approach.

## **3. Proposed action**

- 3.1 The aims of this Policy are to:

1. To show how the Council handles complaints through increased transparency, accessibility, and complaint handling governance, demonstrating that residents are core to its service delivery and good complaint handling is central to that.
2. It aims to support the earliest resolution of complaints while the matters are still within the Council's own procedure. This can avoid issues escalating with potentially prolonged detriment to the resident, as well as requiring significantly more time and resource by the landlord to remedy.
3. It provides a guide to residents of what to expect if they make a complaint, as well as improving access and awareness to the procedure when they need it.
4. Ensure that the policy operates consistently within The Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance and other South Norfolk Council priorities and policies.

#### **4. Other options**

- 4.1 Council may choose not to adopt but the consequences of this would be that the Council would not meet The Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance and therefore be at risk of challenge.

#### **5. Issues and risks**

- 5.1 The Council will not be compliant with The Housing Ombudsman's Code of Guidance if it doesn't adopt a fit for purpose Housing Complaints Policy from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
- 5.2 **Resource Implications** – there are no resource implications associated with this report.
- 5.3 **Legal Implications** – If this policy is not adopted we would not comply with the requirements of being a Registered Provider by not being compliant with The Housing Ombudsman's Code of Guidance.
- 5.4 **Equality Implications** – There are equality implications associated with this report.
- 5.5 **Environmental Impact** – There are no environmental impact implications associated with this report.
- 5.6 **Crime and Disorder** – there are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report
- 5.7 **Risks** – the appended policy has taken into account all risks

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 As a Registered Provider we need to operate with an adequate Housing Complaints Policy and comply with The Housing Ombudsman's Code of Guidance.

## **7. Recommendations**

1. To approve the Housing Complaints Policy attached at Appendix 1.
2. To require the Monitoring Officer to determine the correct committee to receive the report on the annual self-assessment and to update the relevant committee's terms of reference accordingly.

## **South Norfolk Council**

### **Housing Complaint Handling Policy**

This complaint policy is for Housing complaints only, specifically for those that need to complain about their temporary accommodation as we currently do not provide other types of housing. This policy does not cover anyone who wishes to complain about their Homelessness case.

At South Norfolk Council we are committed to continually improving our services and ensure that we put our communities and residents at the heart of everything we do.

In order to do this, we encourage our residents, businesses, visitors, community groups and any other group or individual that uses or are affected by our temporary accommodation services (referred in this policy as complainants) to tell us when things go wrong. This is important because then we can put things right and learn from our mistakes. This policy sets out how we handle complaints from our complainants in a simple and timely way that is open and transparent.

#### **Definition of a Complaint**

We define a complaint as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents’.

A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction we will give them the choice to make complaint.

A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative will be handled in line with this code.

#### **Definition of a Service Request**

A service request is a request from a resident to us requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but we will record, monitor and review these regularly.

We will raise a complaint when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with our response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. We will not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.

## **Exclusions**

We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will evidence our reasoning. We will consider each complaint on its own merits.

We may exclude a complaint for the following reasons:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago (we may apply discretion to complaints issued after this time frame).
- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will give an explanation to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell us to take on the complaint.

We will not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints, we will consider each complaint and its circumstances individually.

## **The Complaint Handling Process**

When a complaint is logged, we will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes that the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we will seek clarification from the resident.

When we acknowledge a complaint, we will be clear which aspects of the complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.

At each stage of the complaints process, our complaint handlers will:

- a) deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;
- b) give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;
- c) take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and
- d) consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.

If we need longer to respond to a complaint, we will agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.

## **Complaint Stages**

### **Stage 1**

We will acknowledge a resident's complaint **within 5 working days of the complaint being received.**

We will issue a response to complaint **within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.**

If an extension to this timescale is required when considering, we will inform the resident of the expected timescale of response. An extension will be no more than 10 working days without good reason and if this is the case, the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the resident.

When we inform a resident of the extension to the timescale, we will provide the contact details for The Ombudsman.

We will issue a response to the complaint when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions to the request have been completed. Any outstanding actions will be tracked and actioned promptly with updates provided to the resident.

If the resident raises additional complaints during the investigation and these are related to the same complaint, we will incorporate these into the Stage 1 complaint if the Stage 1 response hasn't been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues will be logged as a new complaint.

When we respond to the complaint at Stage 1 we will include in our response, in clear plain language:

- a) the complaint stage;
- b) the complaint definition;
- c) the decision on the complaint;
- d) the reasons for any decisions made;
- e) the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
- f) details of any outstanding actions; and
- g) details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.

In line with the councils complaints policy the response will be investigated and replied to by a senior manager/head of service

### **Stage 2**

If the complaint hasn't been resolved to the resident's satisfaction at Stage 1, we will escalate this to Stage 2. Stage 2 is our final response.



We will acknowledge, define and log a request for Stage 2 **within 5 working days of the escalation request being received.**

Residents are not required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. We will make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of our stage 2 response.

The complaint handler considering the Stage 2 complaint will be a different person to the complaint handler at Stage 1.

We will issue a final response to the complaint **within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.**

If an extension to this timescale is required when considering, we will inform the resident of the expected timescale of response. An extension will be no more than 20 working days without good reason and if this is the case, the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the resident.

When we inform a resident of the extension to the timescale, we will provide the contact details for The Ombudsman.

**When we respond to the complaint at Stage 2 we will include in our response, in clear plain language:**

- a) the complaint stage;
- b) the complaint definition;
- c) the decision on the complaint;
- d) the reasons for any decisions made;
- e) the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
- f) details of any outstanding actions; and
- g) details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.

In line with the councils complaints policy the response will be investigated and replied to by the relevant Assistant Director

### **Putting Things Right**

Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and set out the actions we have already taken, or intend to take, to put things right. These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices

Any remedy we offer will reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.

We will be clear in our remedy offer what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy we propose will be followed through to completion.

We will take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

### **Self-assessment, Reporting and Compliance**

We will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge which will include:

- a) the annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the our complaint handling performance. Which will also include a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept;
- c) any findings of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code by the Ombudsman;
- d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
- e) any annual report about our performance from the Ombudsman; and
- f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our work.

This will be completed and reported to the relevant committee of the Council. The timeline for publishing will be in line with the Housing ombudsman guidance. The team responsible for publishing and collecting data will be customer experience and insight team with significant support from the Housing and Homelessness service.

### **Next Steps**

If you have been through all stages of our complaints procedure and are still dissatisfied, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman to review your complaint. The Ombudsman investigates complaints in a fair and independent way - it does not take sides. It is a free service.

**Contact Details taken from the Housing Ombudsman website:**

**Complaint form:** Fill in the [online complaint form](#)

**Email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

**Phone:** [0300 111 3000](tel:0300 111 3000)

Calls are recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

**Write to:**

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 152  
Liverpool  
L33 7WQ

**Fax:** 020 7831 1942

**Please note:** We would strongly encourage customers to use [email](#) or the [online complaint form](#) rather than sending post to the PO Box address in Liverpool as there will be delays. Please do not send original documents by post as we are unable to post them back to you. Also note that we will not be able to deal with large bundles of documents by post.

### **Other Types of Feedback or Enquiries**

The following will not be dealt with under this policy but will be dealt with under their own policy/procedure:

- Complaints about a Homelessness case
- Complaints of fraud or corruption
- Whistleblowing
- Hate incidents
- Information requests
- Member misconduct

### **Retention Guidelines**

The following sets out our retention guidelines for all complaints received: Stage 1 & Stage 2 Complaints

- Destroy 2 years after the closure of the complaint. Unless the complaint has been escalated to the Ombudsman (see Ombudsman retention guidance).
- Files will be reviewed and destroyed on a monthly basis.

Ombudsman Complaints

- Destroy 6 years after the closure of the complaint.
- Files will be reviewed and destroyed on a quarterly basis.