

Greater Norwich Local Plan

Hearing Statement

Matter 1 – Compliance with statutory procedures and legal matters

Inspectors Matters Issues and Questions (Part 1)

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Introduction

This Hearing Statement has been produced by Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council, working with Norfolk County Council as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP).

The Document Library for the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Examination and further information can be found on the GNLP Examination website:

www.gnlp.org.uk

The Councils have responded to each question directly in the body of the Hearing Statement.

Issue 1: Has the Partnership met the statutory duty to co-operate as set out under sections 20 (5) (c) and 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004?

Question 1

Has the Council submitted robust evidence to demonstrate that the duty to cooperate has been met?

Response to question 1 -

1. Yes, the Greater Norwich Authorities have produced a Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate [\(A9.1\)](#) . This sets out how production of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) has complied with the duty to cooperate. This has included: the production of joint evidence to inform decision making on a collaborative basis across the three districts and wider areas including county wide as appropriate; extensive engagement throughout the production of the GNLP with relevant bodies; Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with prescribed bodies and confirmation from relevant organisations that the duty has been met (see Appendices 3-6q of document A9.1). Paragraph 5.5 of document A9.1 provides a summary of the responses received from the prescribed bodies confirming that the duty has been met.
2. Most significantly, the document references the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) first produced in 2019 [\(B2.2\)](#) and the more recent update endorsed in 2021 [\(B2.3\)](#). The NSPF covers all of the Norfolk local planning authorities, providing further evidence that duty to cooperate has been met. This is explained in the introduction on page 7 of the 2021 NSPF which states: *‘This document continues to fulfil the requirement for Norfolk local planning authorities to produce a statement of common ground setting out the effective and on-going joint working across the county on strategic planning matters. A number of working groups have been tasked with updating the document. These groups consist of Local Authority staff assisted by other organisations including the Environment Agency, Natural England NHS Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), Anglian Water, UK Power Networks, Active Norfolk and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership’.*
3. The conclusion of the Statement of Compliance [\(A9.1\)](#) on page 44 states: *“The GNLP team and GNLP members have worked with a wide range partners in the production of the local plan and joint evidence base to address the strategic cross boundary matters and formulate strategic and site policies. The NSPF: Shared Spatial Objectives for a Growing County and Statement of Common Ground (2021) and (2019) documents show how the Norfolk planning authorities maintain effective cooperation between themselves, with the neighbouring district and county planning authorities, and with other key relevant agencies and utilities”.*
4. Therefore, the Greater Norwich authorities are confident that duty has been demonstrated as set out under sections 20 (5) (c) and 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 and Localism Act 2011.

Question 2

Have all relevant strategic matters been identified and has the process for identification been robust?

Response to question 2 -

5. Yes, all relevant strategic matters have been identified through a robust process.
6. Paragraph 20 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local plans to address a broad range of strategic issues, such as housing, the economy, health, climate change, infrastructure and the environment. These issues have therefore been covered through the NSPF Statement of Common Ground. Pages 2-6 of the 2021 NSPF list thirty-one wide area joint agreements which cover the relevant strategic issues for Greater Norwich, Norfolk and neighbouring authorities.
7. Page 7 of the NSPF (2021) ([B2.3](#)) highlights that one of its aims is to “*Demonstrate compliance with the duty to co-operate and consistency with the revised National Planning Policy Framework*”. This involved assessing the need for work within Norfolk and with its neighbours on the various strategic matters which the NPPF requires. As such, the NSPF meets the requirements of NPPF paragraph 27 for co-operation through a statement of common ground. In particular, it addresses the key outcome required by paragraph 26 of the NPPF that “*Joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere*”. Accordingly, the NSPF sets out agreements and information on infrastructure requirements to be included in each local plan and requires the Norfolk district council planning authorities, including Greater Norwich, to meet their own housing needs within their boundaries.
8. The NSPF includes the Norfolk Planning Health Protocol ([B2.1](#)), an engagement protocol between the local planning authorities, public health and health sector organisations in Norfolk. This confirms that the Partnership has submitted robust evidence to demonstrate the Duty to Cooperate has been met on health issues.
9. Section 4 of the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate ([A9.1](#)) identifies how the NSPF strategic issues have been addressed in the GNLP, as well as showing how additional partnership working has contributed to addressing certain strategic matters.

Question 3

Has the Council carried out effective engagement with neighbouring local authorities and other prescribed bodies on all relevant strategic matters? In particular, has effective engagement taken place in respect of development within the Cambridge – Norwich corridor and the impact on infrastructure requirements?

Response to question 3 -

10. Yes, the Greater Norwich authorities have carried out effective engagement with neighbouring local authorities and other prescribed bodies on all relevant strategic matters through the NSPF.
11. As referred to above, section 4 of the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate [\(A9.1\)](#) highlights how the Greater Norwich authorities have engaged with relevant organisations on specific issues.
12. Specifically related to infrastructure, paragraphs 4.28 – 4.59 on pages 21-26 of the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate reference the infrastructure related actions, evidence base and outcomes including NSPF Agreements 23-26 covering strategic infrastructure on which the LPAs have the most influence on delivery. Also, paragraph 5.5 provides a summary of the feedback from neighbouring local authorities and prescribed bodies which confirm that the duty to cooperate has been met.
13. The NSPF 2021 [\(B2.3\)](#) page 44 para 5.4.2. on the Cambridge Norwich Corridor states that *'the corridor is identified as a key growth corridor in the New Anglia LEP's Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy [\(B18.1\)](#), the New Anglia Local Industrial Strategy [\(B13.1\)](#) and the Covid 19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan.*
14. Further to this, appendix 3 of the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate [\(A9.1\)](#) contains a specific Statement of Common Ground signed between the Greater Norwich authorities and Breckland District Council. This covers more specific strategic cross boundary issues relating to: power supplies, water resources, economic development in the tech corridor and potential new settlements in the next local plan for Greater Norwich. The Statement of Common Ground with Breckland District Council addresses infrastructure requirements in respect of development within the Cambridge – Norwich corridor, confirming that there are not outstanding issues and that the duty to cooperate has been met.
15. Therefore, the engagement with neighbouring planning authorities and prescribed bodies on the tech corridor has been effective as confirmed by the list of signatories and acknowledgments of other organisations which have supported the production of the NSPF (see page 2).

Issue 2: Does the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) including the addendum, adequately assess the environmental, social and economic effects of the Plan in accordance with legal and national policy requirements?

General response to issue 2 -

16. Yes. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (Reg 19 report Vol.1 [A6.1](#) , Vol.2 [A6.2](#), Vol.3 [A6.3](#), GNLP response [A6.4](#), Addendum re consultation response [A6.5](#), addendum re Initial Question 7 [D1.6](#); and early stages at [B23](#)) has consistently used a tool called the SA Framework to evaluate environmental, social and economic effects of the GNLP. The SA Framework was prepared as part of the SA Scoping Report [March, 2017] ([B23.1](#)) and was subject to consultation with the statutory consultees that are identified in the SEA Regulations 2004, SI1633: Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
17. The SA Framework consists of 15 objectives. These reflect the topics presented in section 6 of Schedule 2 of the UK SEA Regulations as well as additional social and economic topics.
18. The legal requirement for sustainability lies in s.19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In accordance with the Act, a sustainability appraisal has been prepared alongside the GNLP at all major stages of its preparation including those at Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 (see the answer to question 1 below).
19. The SA incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004 (SI1633).
20. The [NPPF](#) specifies in paragraph 32 that local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal. In accordance with national policy guidance the SA of the GNLP (January, 2021 with supporting addendums) has identified significant positive and adverse impacts of the plan. Wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts have been pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures have been proposed.

Question 1

Have the likely environmental, social, and economic effects of the Plan's policies and proposals been adequately assessed in the SA?

Response to question 1 -

21. Yes. The SA has consistently used a tool called the SA Framework to evaluate environmental, social and economic effects of the GNLP (Greater Norwich Local Plan) ([A1](#)). The SA Framework was prepared as part of the SA Scoping Report [March, 2017] ([B23.1](#)) and was subject to consultation with the statutory consultees that are

identified in the SEA Regulations 2004, SI1633: Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.

22. The SA Framework consists of 15 objectives.

23. The SA process has evaluated all parts of the GNLP, including the policies, as the plan has evolved, on an iterative basis using the SA Framework. The following table has been derived from Table 2.1 in section 2.2.1 of the R19 SA Report (Main Report, January 2021) ([A6.2](#)) and summarises the SA outputs that have been prepared at each stage of plan making. It includes two additional SA outputs, specifically two addendums, that have been prepared to provide supporting information to that of the R19 SA Report.

Date	Local Plan Stage	Sustainability Appraisal
2016 to 2018	Call for Sites (GNDP) This process enabled landowners who wished to promote parcels of land for a particular use or development to submit the land for consideration.	
September 2016	Stakeholder Workshops These workshops discussed relevant issues in relation to the GNLP and informed the early stages of the plan making.	
March 2017	n/a	SA Scoping Report (GNDP) This report identified the scope and level of detail to be included in the SA.
January to March 2018	Stage A Regulation 18 Consultation of Site Proposals, Growth Options and the Interim Sustainability Appraisal	Interim Sustainability Appraisal (GNDP) This report assessed the GNLP options for growth, which included six options for the spatial strategy and policy options.
October to December 2018	Stage B Regulation 18 Site Proposals Addendum and HELAA Addendum	No SA report prepared.
January 2020	Stage C Regulation 18 Draft Strategy consultation Draft strategy including vision, objectives and strategic policies, a sites document and supporting evidence documents.	Regulation 18C SA Report (Lepus) This report assessed 285 reasonable alternative sites and eleven draft strategic policies.
January 2021	Publication Draft Plan The GNLP is split into two documents: The Strategy and Site Allocations. The Strategy Document sets out the profile of Greater Norwich, the Plan vision and objectives, and the strategic policies. The Site Allocations Document sets out the site allocations of the GNLP.	Regulation 19 SA Report (Lepus) The Regulation 19 SA Report has been prepared to summarise the SA process to date and help inform the examination stage of the preparation of the GNLP. The Regulation 19 SA presents the findings of the sustainability appraisal of the GNLP, which is composed principally of twelve strategic policies and 138 site policies. This report also contains an assessment of additional 107 reasonable alternative sites.
September 2021	n/a	Consultation response: Addendum to the Regulation 19 SA/SEA Report This Addendum to the Regulation 19 SA Report has been prepared in order to address responses related to the SA/SEA received by the GNLP during the Regulation 19

		consultation, specifically in relation to the testing of reasonable alternatives and selection process for the chosen spatial strategy and distribution of growth in the Plan area.
December 2021	n/a	Inspectors' Initial Questions: Reasonable Alternatives for Housing Number Options This Addendum to the Regulation 19 SA Report has been prepared in order to address initial questions from the Inspectors, specifically in relation to the testing of reasonable alternatives for housing number options. Two additional housing number options were tested, both at a smaller scale than the four housing options assessed in 2018.

24. The R19 SA Report (Main Report, January 2021) ([A6.2](#)) explicitly identifies positive and negative significant effects for all topics identified in section 6 of Schedule 2 of the UK SEA Regs.
25. Section 5.5 of Chapter 5 of the R19 SA Main Report, Vol 2, ([A6.2](#)) pp.66-69, includes details about the approach to appraising policies.

Question 2

Has the Sustainability Appraisal, including the addendum, properly assessed the likely significant effects of all reasonable alternatives including a reduced housing provision buffer?

Response to question 2 -

26. Yes, the SA has properly assessed the likely significant effects of a comprehensive range of reasonable alternatives including a reduced housing provision buffer. This has been achieved by using the SA Framework. The SA methodology draws on criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment as set out in schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
27. The methodology (see Chapter 4 of the R19 SA Main Report, Vol 2, ([A6.2](#)) pp.27-50) has been published as part of all SA reports and includes information about assumptions.
28. The SA process has identified, described and evaluated different types of reasonable alternatives. These have included: alternative housing options, spatial options that consider the distribution of housing and employment floor space and site allocations alternatives. For more details, see Chapter 5 of the R19 SA Main Report, Vol 2, ([A6.2](#)) pp.51-72.

29. The R19 SA Report (January, 2021; Vol 2) ([A6.2](#)), includes an outline of the reasons the alternatives were selected and rejected. Appendix G sets out the reasons for selection and rejection of all of the reasonable alternative sites considered through the SA process.
30. The SA Addendum ([D1.6](#)) of housing numbers with lower buffers (1% and 10%) has used the same SA Framework and methodology to appraise the lower buffers. The high-level nature of the appraisal process and associated limitation of the scoring matrices produced matching scores for the lower buffers, so it is important to read the accompanying narrative which is the place where differences between sustainability performance of the two lower buffer housing options, where possible to discern, are presented.
31. An explanatory note on the SA addendum has been produced by the Greater Norwich authorities and is appendix 1 to this Matter 1 response.

Question 3

Have all potential site allocations been assessed on a comparable basis?

Response to question 3 -

32. Yes. The same method has been used throughout the plan making process. As has the same receptor data. If new evidence arose during the plan making process, it was factored into the appraisal of reasonable alternatives in a particular group that possess the same attributes e.g.: housing options, spatial options, site allocation options.

Question 4

Is it clear how the SA has influenced the Plan and the choice of spatial strategy? Does it support the spatial strategy or is there anything in the SA which indicates that changes should be made to the plan?

Response to question 4 -

33. The spatial strategy has been formed and shaped based by using proportionate evidence, including that presented in the SA report, taking into account the reasonable alternatives.
34. Chapter 18 of the R19 SA Main Report, Vol 2, ([A6.2](#)) pp.200-203, presents details about how the SA has influenced the plan. Para 18.2.4 has been reproduced here to help answer the question about potential changes that should be made to the plan: *“The identified residual adverse effects (see Table 18.2 of the SA Report, Vol 2) are generally minor, but some are associated with greater levels of uncertainty and potentially could be considered to be greater in magnitude, for example residual adverse effects associated with air quality and climate change. These require careful attention outside of and beyond the GNLP; notwithstanding such uncertainties, these*

aspects are included in the recommendations for monitoring. Whilst the Plan includes positive mitigation measures, the Plan alone cannot address these matters in their entirety; these are effects that are predicted to happen with or without the Plan. The Plan includes measures to reduce these effects, however, when considered cumulatively, a residual adverse effect would still be likely to occur”.

35. Reference is also made to the Sustainability Appraisal in the Topic Papers for the Policies ([D3](#)).
36. In regard to the Sustainability Appraisal, the spatial strategy is an appropriate strategy and no changes should be made to the Plan.

Issue 3: Has the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) been undertaken in accordance with the Regulations and is it robust?

Question 1

Has the final Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS) been approved and adopted by the respective Norfolk local planning authorities? If not, when is it anticipated that this is likely to happen?

Response to question 1 -

37. Topic Paper Policy 3 ([D3.4](#)) (and also Topic Paper Policy 2 ([D3.3](#))) refer to the GIRAMS ([B6.1](#)). At paragraph 17 of D3.4 it is explained that: “A GIRAMS Interim Statement of Common Ground between the Greater Norwich Authorities and Natural England ([B6.2](#)) has been produced, setting out an agreed position for the adoption of the GIRAMS”. Also, at paragraph 37: “Hence, the finalisation and adoption of the GNLP is dependent on the prior approval and adoption of the GIRAMS by the Norfolk local planning authorities in order to comply with the HRA. A joint interim statement with Natural England on the GIRAMS issue has been produced ([B6.2](#))”.
38. Since the topic papers were produced, discussions have progressed between the Norfolk local planning authorities (through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum) on the adoption and implementation of the GIRAMS. The planning authorities have produced a new draft statement applying to all the local planning authorities and Natural England. This has been supplied to Natural England for their views, and these are awaited. The Statement of Common Ground with Natural England ([D4.7](#)) refers to this (at paragraph 4), and that “if agreed, it will supersede the Interim Statement”. The proposed new statement is appendix 2 of this response.
39. Subject to approval by Natural England, the statement will go through the approval procedures of the individual authorities. The statement includes “It is intended that all the local authorities will adopt and start to apply the GIRAMS tariff not later than 31st March 2022”. Therefore, it is expected that the GIRAMS will be approved and adopted by all the Norfolk local planning authorities before 31 March 2022.

Question 2

Is the GIRAMS Strategy robust and is it likely to be effective?

Response to question 2 -

40. The introduction to the GIRAMS ([B6.1](#)) explains that it has been produced by consultants under the guidance of a steering group comprising the Norfolk local planning authorities, Natural England and the Forestry Commission (section 1.1). Other members were the Environment Agency, Wild Anglia (the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Partnership) and officers from the Norfolk County Council Environment Team. Wildlife and other bodies have also been engaged in the production of the GIRAMS (see appendix A5 of the GIRAMS as an example).
41. The GIRAMS document also sets out the rigorous process that has been followed, leading to its recommendations. The process followed has been informed by other work that has been undertaken elsewhere in the country, and the results are similar to what has been found elsewhere (for example the [Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy](#)).
42. Most importantly, Natural England have raised no issues for the GIRAMS being used as the basis for elements of the GNLP policies and their use in the determination of applications for planning permission.
43. The effectiveness of the GIRAMS will depend on its application through the planning system by all the Norfolk local planning authorities (except the minerals and waste authority). For the Greater Norwich area, the GNLP will be a key part of achieving this.
44. Also, it will be necessary to have an effective process to implement the mitigation measures set out in the GIRAMS. This is proposed to be done through a joint Norfolk authorities governance body that is in the process of being devised. It is acknowledged by the Norfolk authorities that the implementation of the strategy will need to be monitored and reviewed and revised as necessary. Measures for this are already being discussed as part of the governance arrangements. These issues are addressed in the proposed statement in appendix 2 of this response.
45. Consequently, there is confidence that the GIRAMS is robust and will be effective in addressing the potential recreational impacts from residential development on the European sites. Accordingly, the Habitat Regulations Assessment ([A7](#)) of the GNLP concludes, in this respect, that “*subject to GIRAMS adoption there would be no adverse affect upon the integrity of any European site*” (para 11.3.1).

Question 3

The 'Interim Statement of Common Ground between the Greater Norwich Authorities and Natural England on the GIRAMS' states that: "the Partners and other LPAs are mindful that the governance, success factors for the scheme and other process points including apportionment, joint decision-making and prioritisation still need to be finalised". When is it anticipated that these arrangements will be finalised?

Response to question 3 -

46. As referred to in the response to question 1, it is expected that the proposed joint statement for the Norfolk local planning authorities and Natural England (appendix 2 to this response) will be approved before 31 March 2022.
47. The proposed statement also acknowledges "*the LPAs are mindful that the governance, success factors for the Action Plan and other process points including distribution, joint decision-making and prioritisation still need to be finalised. Whilst these matters are being finalised, the LPAs, will individually collect the Tariff*".
48. Discussions on these governance arrangements for implementing the GIRAMS measures are progressing. No specific date has been set for adoption of the governance arrangements, but it is expected that it would be before the timetabled adoption date of the GNLP.

Issue 4: Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with other legal and procedural requirements?

Question 1

Does the Plan conform with the respective Local Development Schemes?

Response to question 1 -

49. Yes, the Greater Norwich Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Broadland Local Development Scheme ([A15](#)), the South Norfolk Local Development Scheme ([A16](#)) and the Norwich Local Development Scheme ([A17](#)).
50. The Local Development Schemes (LDSs) provide a profile of the GNLP, covering its role and content, status, conformity with higher order policies, geographical coverage, joint working arrangements, relationship with adopted plans, the timetable for production, monitoring and how the plan will be reviewed.
51. Therefore, the GNLP conforms with this legal and procedural requirement. The LDSs could be updated to reflect any timetable changes, if necessary, during the examination.

52. South Norfolk's LDS update is currently scheduled to go to Council for ratification on 22 February, 2022. As soon it is approved it will form part of the evidence base.

Question 2

Does the Plan comply with the respective Statements of Community Involvement and have the minimum consultation requirements set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 been met?

Response to question 2 -

53. The plan complies with the respective Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs) which are included in the Document Library as [A18.1](#), [A18.2](#), [A19](#), [A20.1](#) and [A20.2](#). These include temporary updates to the South Norfolk and Broadland SCIs (July 2020) in response to Covid-19 guidance. The authorities believe that by complying with the respective SCIs the plan meets the minimum consultation requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Question 3

Does the Plan accord with Section 19 (1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and national policy in respect of climate change?

Response to question 3 -

54. The plan accords with legislative requirements on climate change. Paragraph 4 of the GNLP topic paper on Climate Change ([D3.14](#)) states that the requirement for local plans in Section 19 (1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is that "*Development plan documents must (taken as a whole) include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change*". Footnote 50 to the climate change statement in the GNLP Strategy ([A1](#)) lists other legislation together with national policy and guidance that regard should be had to in relation to climate change policy in local plans.

55. The climate change statement following paragraph 157 of the GNLP Strategy identifies that the plan takes a wide-ranging policy approach to seize the opportunities available locally to promote low carbon development and address climate change. It shows how this will be done through both the strategic location of growth and specific policy approaches taken on a range of issues such as the design of development to promote active travel, address flood risk and support energy and water efficiency.

56. The GNLP does not, and cannot, address wider issues relating to climate change that are outside the remit of the planning system such as emissions from existing development, national energy and transport policy, agricultural practices and individual's choices. Accordingly, indicator 16 in Appendix 3 of GNLP commits the plan

to contributing to national targets to reduce emissions (see paragraph 20 of the Climate Change topic paper [D3.14](#) for further details).

57. Therefore, the GNLP contributes to addressing climate change as required of local plans through legislation as part of wider overall measures being taken forward at national, local or individual levels.

Appendix 1

Note by the Greater Norwich Authorities on the Sustainability Appraisal Addendum relating to housing delivery buffers

1. An addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) was produced following a request set out in the Inspectors' Initial Questions as part of their examination of the GNLP. This was:
"7. Each of the 'reasonable alternatives' identified in the Sustainability Appraisal for the housing requirement include a 20% delivery buffer (which includes the windfall allowance in some scenarios). In our view, the Sustainability Appraisal should also model both smaller and minimal supply buffers as 'reasonable alternatives'. Please could the Partnership prepare an addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal to address this point".
2. In the SA four options for the additional housing numbers to be included in the GNLP had been assessed. These were:
 - 1. GNLP Housing Requirement is equal to Objectively Assessed Need (OAN). Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20%. Forecast Windfall Housing does not form part of the Delivery Buffer.
 - 2. GNLP Housing Requirement is equal to OAN. Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20%. Forecast Windfall Housing forms part of the 20% Delivery Buffer.
 - 3. GNLP Housing Requirement is Equal to OAN plus Housing Response to City Deal. Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20%. Forecast Windfall Housing does not form part of the Delivery Buffer.
 - 4. GNLP Housing Requirement is Equal to OAN plus net Housing Response to City Deal. Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20% OAN. Forecast Windfall Housing forms part of the 20% Delivery Buffer.
3. Potential options with a delivery buffer of below 20% were not included in the original SA as they were not deemed to be reasonable alternatives. This was because a low delivery buffer would not give adequate flexibility, minimise the risk of under-delivery or take adequate account of the "City Deal", which is a longstanding commitment to seek to deliver higher levels of economic growth. It would be extremely unlikely for all potential housing provision identified in a Plan to be delivered. For example, it is often the case that a site that has planning permission or is allocated for development does not progress to being developed. Therefore, if only a low or minimal buffer is allowed for in the housing numbers, it would likely mean that there was not sufficient housing built to meet the level of housing need that has been identified. Consequently, a minimum delivery buffer of 20% was seen as being reasonable to ensure that adequate delivery was achieved, and so economic and social objectives were not prejudiced.
4. At the request of the Inspectors an addendum to the SA was produced which considered a "smaller" delivery buffer (deemed to be 10% of OAN) and a "minimal"

delivery buffer (deemed to be 1% of OAN). This is the Sustainability Appraisal Addendum – Dec. 2021 ([D1.6](#)).

5. Table 3.2 of the SA Addendum summarises the likely effects of the different levels of housing numbers, based on the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for homes plus allowances for different “buffers”, against the SA objectives. Broadly, this shows that the higher the number of homes planned for, there are greater potential environmental impacts and greater potential economic and social benefits. Also, it shows that Option 2 (OAN +20% buffer), the Option most closely reflecting the approach taken in the GNLP, and the new options, Option 5 (OAN + 10% buffer) and Option 6 (OAN + 1% buffer), are broadly the same. The text of the addendum gives more explanation of the assessment, including slight differences between the options. Overall, the assessment concludes: *“On balance, and drawing on the precautionary principle, especially since much of the assessment is prepared at a high level with the limitations cited in chapter 2 in mind, the lower quanta options (5 and 6) should be considered more sustainable because some of the identified environmental impacts are irreversible...”* (paragraph 4.1.6). And *“overall, both”* (i.e. Options 5 and 6) *“are likely to perform better overall when delivering sustainable development than the higher quanta options such as 1, 3 and 4”*.
6. In considering the results of the assessment, there are a number of factors that need to be taken into account:
 - The SA assesses the housing number arising for each option, this being the OAN plus additional elements to give a “buffer”. In doing the comparison, the SA assumes that the total number for each option will be built; though in reality all the options cannot be correct, and so they should be seen as a theoretical measure rather than absolute. Achieving sufficient homes to meet the OAN is seen as a primary objective of local plans (as set out in NPPF paragraph 11b). Higher numbers of homes, above OAN, may be needed within the Plan period as allowed for in the housing number options. However, this will not necessarily occur. If the actual number of homes built reflects OAN, then the actual impacts will be the same whichever option is included in the Plan. If it turns out that more homes are needed (i.e. above OAN) then having an additional buffer in the Plan will help to address these needs and avoid the social and economic impacts that might otherwise result.
 - The additional buffer helps to ensure that sufficient homes are delivered. All identified sites for homes (planning permissions and allocations) do not necessarily progress to being developed. Therefore, it is necessary to “over-provide” in the Plan to make up for such losses or “fallout”. It is common for typical fallout rates to be circa 10%, and as the housing provision in Greater Norwich includes a number of very large sites, the risk of fallout needs to be acknowledged and addressed in the Plan.
 - Economic aims for the Greater Norwich area (as identified in the New Anglia LEP Economic Strategy [B18.1](#)) may give rise to an increase in the need for new homes. If

such potential additional needs are not provided for it would likely have an impact on the economic growth of the area.

- The need for homes arises partly from the existing population and partly from people moving into the area. It is likely that people will move into the area (for employment, retirement, life-style choices etc) irrespective of whether sufficient additional homes are delivered. This will not only likely put significant pressure onto the local housing market but will also have environmental and social impacts. A lower housing provision number in the Plan will not necessarily mean a complementary lowering of the additional population that occurs, and the impacts that arise from that additional population.

7. Having regard to the SA, and also other considerations relating to it as set out above, the Plan makes adequate and appropriate provision for homes. The housing provision number in the Plan includes a 20% buffer above OAN, reflecting Option 2 in the SA. The assessment of Option 2 shows that this is very similar to the new Options 5 and 6. Although the SA addendum concludes that, on balance, Options 5 and 6 are “more sustainable” because of prominence given to environmental factors, the differences between these options and Option 2 are only slight. It is necessary to take account of other considerations including: the aim of meeting OAN; making an allowance for “fallout” of identified sites; having regard to strategic economic objectives and the likelihood that population increase (and its impacts) will occur even if sufficient additional homes are not provided. Taking these considerations together, it is clear that it is necessary for the Plan to make adequate provision for additional homes and that this needs to be significantly above OAN. Options 5 and 6 would not adequately do this. A housing number of 20% above OAN, as included in the Plan, is, on balance, an appropriate amount.

Appendix 2

Draft Statement of Common Ground on GIRAMS

Statement between Breckland District Council, Broadland District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, South Norfolk Council, The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk District Council, Norwich City Council, and the Broads Authority and Natural England on GIRAMS (Green Infrastructure and Recreational impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy)

The Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (March 2021) – is owned by the above listed Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk who have a duty to test if new plans or project proposals could significantly harm the designated features of a European site and mitigate likely significant effects.

Norfolk local planning authorities are working collaboratively to adopt and deliver a GIRAMS to ensure that the cumulative (in-combination) impacts of additional visitors arising from additional qualifying developments to designated sites will not result in likely significant effects.

Natural England in their role as statutory conservation adviser will support the Norfolk local planning authorities (LPAs) in their duty to produce Local Plans that are compliant with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 "the Habitats Regulations" by providing advice about recreational pressure, disturbance, and appropriate mitigation.

The Norfolk LPAs have identified the nature of visitor pressures and put together an interim Action Plan of mitigation measures ("the Action Plan"), from which a quantum of cost has been calculated in accordance with a mitigation scenario outlined in Table 10 of the Norfolk GIRAMS. This forms the best available estimate of quantum of likely action and cost at this time.

On the basis of this, each LPA has agreed that they will bring forward procedures for the collection of the county wide tariff of £185.93 per new dwelling ("the Tariff"). Should mitigation measures be revised, this will be reflected in an updated tariff. It is intended that all the local authorities will adopt and start to apply the GIRAMS tariff not later than 31st March 2022.

Having established a best available calculation of financial requirement, the LPAs are mindful that the governance, success factors for the Action Plan and other process points including distribution, joint decision-making and prioritisation still need to be finalised. Whilst these matters are being finalised, the LPAs, will individually collect the Tariff.

All LPAs commit to an early review of both the Action Plan and the Tariff, with such a review to be completed within 18 months from adoption of the GIRAMS by all the Norfolk local planning authorities as listed above ("the Review"). The Review will consider all aspects of the GIRAMS recreational impact avoidance and mitigation measures as specified in Section 3 and Table 10 of the GIRAMS, and the associated revenue/capital funding of any revised GIRAMS actions if deemed to be necessary.

The Norfolk LPAs accept that any strategy for mitigation must be implemented in a manner which meets the legal requirements and delivers the objectives of the Habitats Regulations. To that end, the parties agree that robust governance, prioritisation and success factors/measures need to be incorporated into any action plan developed alongside a workable process model so it is clear to those who have paid the charge in particular locations precisely where their contributions have been applied, and how.

Policies and procedures will ensure the apportionment of resources to ensure the effectiveness of the overall mitigation package is maximised over the life of the Action Plan. Natural England will support the LPAs by providing advice on any proposed amendments to the strategy.

The mitigation delivered as a part of the Action Plan will be monitored and the outcomes fed into any subsequent review(s) of the Action Plan and Tariff (below) to assess the effectiveness of the mitigation.

Any revisions to the Tariff or Action Plan as may be recommended in the Review must meet the following criteria: they must be legally robust, deliverable, and effective in that they mitigate additional qualifying-development recreational pressures and disturbance impacts in such a way that there will be no likely significant effect on the integrity of specifically-designated habitats sites across the county.

Providing the above criteria are met and that implementation does not conflict with any of the Partners statutory responsibilities, either under the Habitats Regulations or any other legislation, all Norfolk LPAs commit to implementing any agreed revisions to the mitigation GIRAMS package identified by the completed review as soon as is reasonably possible, no later than 6 months.