

**Greater Norwich Local Plan**  
**Hearing Statement**  
**Matter 4 – Sustainable Communities**  
**and the Environment**

## 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](http://www.gnlp.org.uk)

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

## Issue 1: Is Policy 2 justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

### Question 1

Is Policy 2 clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals?

#### Response to question 1 -

1. Topic Paper Policy 2 ([D3.3](#)) explains the development of Policy 2 through the various stages of the local plan process and taking account of legislative and national policy requirements; consultation comments, including a consideration of the responses to the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission GNLP); evidence and assessments. It is concluded that the policy is appropriate and “sound” in accordance with the legislative requirements. However, it is accepted that some improvements for explanation / clarification could be made through minor wording changes as “additional modifications”. In addition, there are some instances where a change is sought by an objector and, although the Greater Norwich authorities do not accept that the change is necessary, the authorities have no objection to such a change being recommended as a Proposed Modification by the Inspectors if deemed to be necessary to make the Plan sound. These additional modifications and potential proposed “main” modifications to the policy and supporting text are set out in the authorities’ Schedule of Minor Modifications to the GNLP Strategy at Appendix C of the Submission letter to the Inspectorate ([A13](#)); responses to the Reg 19 representations on Policy 2 in Appendix 11a of the Statement of Consultation ([A8.19](#)) (pages 133 – 141) ; together with the Statements of Common Ground with Historic England ([D4.2](#)) page 11; and Natural England ([D4.7](#)) pages 9 – 12.
2. Although the Policy is “sound” as written, any modifications necessary to help ensure its clarity to all are supported by the Greater Norwich authorities.

### Question 2

Is the term ‘as appropriate’ sufficiently clear as to what kind and scale of development proposals Policy 2 would apply to? P62 of the Plan indicates that the policy would apply to minor developments. Is this all minor developments? If not, which ones would it apply to?

#### Response to question 2 -

3. Policy 2 is a wide-ranging policy that would be relevant to all the various types of development that would contribute to the achievement of “sustainable communities”; and so, although focused on residential development it would be generally applicable to any development concerned with social, economic and environmental factors that might relate to achieving sustainable communities. The introductory paragraph of the policy states: *“Development must be high quality, contributing to delivering inclusive growth in mixed, resilient and sustainable communities, to enhancing the environment, and to mitigating and adapting to climate change, assisting in meeting national*

*greenhouse gas emissions targets. To achieve this, development proposals are required, as appropriate, to:*” followed by various criteria that will need to be taken into account, depending on the development. Not all these considerations will be appropriate to every development. For example, the development of a recreational facility would not need to have regard to point 4 on housing densities. Hence, the use of “as appropriate” is a necessary acknowledgement of the fact that every element of the policy will not necessarily be applicable to every type of development.

4. The third bullet-point of paragraph 200, on page 62, states: “*All minor developments also being subject to the policy’s requirements. This will be assessed on a case by case basis, taking account of site characteristics and proposed uses. Minor developments are not required to submit a Sustainability Statement. This is in line with the threshold for national requirements for Design and Access statements for major developments only and ensures that planning application submission requirements are proportionate*”. The policy would apply to all minor developments, whether residential or non-residential, that were relevant to the achievement of sustainable communities. But, as stated in the text, “*This will be assessed on a case by case basis, taking account of site characteristics and proposed uses*”.

### Question 3

Does Policy 2 apply to all applications or only those that fall within the thresholds identified within sections i-iv of the Policy?

### Response to question 3 -

5. The second part of Policy 2 sets out four means to “*assist this broad-based approach*” of the criteria in the first part of the policy. As the second part is to “assist” in the achievement of the first and main part of the policy, it is not intended to be exclusive or imply that the policy does not apply to applications outside the thresholds specifically referred to in points (i) to (iv). Also, although the four points are essentially for larger developments, under point (i) as well as “major developments” it is made clear that “*Other developments will meet the policy requirements as appropriate dependent on site characteristics and proposed uses*”. Therefore, it is clear that all scales of development are included within the policy, and not just the larger scale developments that are referred to in points (i) to (iv).

### Question 4

Are the indicative minimum residential densities of 25 per hectare in the Plan area and 40 per hectare in Norwich justified and deliverable? Are they supported by the requirements on individual site allocations? Is it effective to describe minimum net densities as ‘indicative’ and does this imply that they are optional?

#### Response to question 4 -

6. Policy 2 criteria 4 states: *“Make efficient use of land with densities dependent on site characteristics, with higher densities and car free housing in the most sustainably accessible locations in Norwich. Indicative minimum net densities are 25 dwellings per hectare across the plan area and 40 in Norwich”*. This is explained more in the supporting text at Table 8, point 4 on page 59: *“In line with the NPPF, developments are required through this policy to make effective use of land. To do this, the policy establishes minimum net densities for different parts of the area. It requires higher densities in the most sustainable locations. These are mainly in Norwich and in the city centre where, dependent on design issues, high densities have and can be delivered. It also establishes a minimum density elsewhere to ensure the effective use of land. In determining the appropriate density for a development, regard will need to be had to the type and size of housing; for example, a greater number of 1- bedroom properties can be accommodated compared to 5-bedroom properties. The policy will be used with policy 3 which focuses on design creating a distinct sense of place and reflecting local character”*.
7. Therefore, whilst the policy focusses on the advantages of achieving the efficient use of land, it also acknowledges the difficulties of applying a density requirement at a strategic level. For example, other planning considerations, such as the character of an area, may mean that particularly high densities are not appropriate. More fundamentally, there is the difficulty of setting a density threshold that is generally applicable. If the requirement was set at 25 dwellings per hectare, the actual density created by 25 five bedroomed dwellings would be considerably greater than 25 one bedroomed dwellings. Similarly, the effect on density would depend on the type of dwelling, with bungalows, detached houses, semi-detached houses, apartment blocks etc all having different effects on density. And, of course, a mix of different types of dwelling adds to the complications. An alternative approach might be to set the threshold as an amount of floorspace per hectare, but this would be excessively prescriptive and restrict good design that was appropriate to a particular location. The aim of the policy requirement is to encourage efficient use of land, but not to the extent that it causes poor design.
8. In acknowledging these factors, the policy sets minimum density thresholds to encourage efficiency. But it also acknowledges that these should not be slavishly applied. What is appropriate will depend on the particular circumstances of a proposal and the characteristics of the site. Hence, the minimum thresholds are referred to as “indicative”, as a lower threshold may be justifiable in some instances. However, this does not mean that the threshold is “optional”. The starting point is the indicative minimum density, and to go lower would need to be demonstrated as justifiable by the particular circumstances of a development proposal.

#### Question 5

Is it clear what purposes Strategic Gaps are intended to serve and how development proposals within them will be assessed?

## Response to question 5 -

9. Policy 2 criteria 5 states: “*Respect, protect and enhance local character and aesthetic quality (including landscape, townscape, and the historic environment), taking account of landscape or historic character assessments, design guides and codes, and maintain strategic gaps and landscape settings, including river valleys, undeveloped approaches and the character and setting of the Broads*”. This is explained more in the supporting text at Table 8, point 5 on page 59: “*The NPPF requires local plans to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and respect local character and the historic environment. Accordingly, the policy requires development to respect local character, based on existing and any future landscape, townscape or historic character assessments, and avoids harm to locally valued landscapes and the historic environment from inappropriate development. It continues the well-established approach in Greater Norwich of having strong landscape protection policies. To do this, it provides the continued strategic policy basis for more detailed, location specific development management policies covering the **strategic gaps** and landscape settings including river valleys, undeveloped approaches to Norwich and the setting of the Broads. This is the most suitable approach to landscape protection locally given that Greater Norwich does not have the exceptional circumstances required by Government to establish a Green Belt*”.

10. “Strategic gaps” are open areas between built-up areas where coalescence might occur; and, as such, are important elements of the local landscape and the character and identity of settlements and the communities that reside within them. Their inclusion in the policy recognises this importance. This continues a longstanding policy approach in the area, initially within the old County Structure Plan and continued into the existing Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Joint Core Strategy ([JCS](#)) in which Policy 2 Good Design includes: “*In particular development proposals will respect local distinctiveness including as appropriate: • the historic hierarchy of the city, towns and villages, maintaining important **strategic gaps***”. Also, the protection of strategic gaps is taken forward in existing Development Management Policy local plans, which are not to be superseded by the GNLP. The South Norfolk Development Management Policies 2015 ([SNDMP](#)) contains “*Policy DM 4.7 Strategic Gaps between settlements within the Norwich Policy Area - Development will be permitted in the **strategic gaps** identified on the Policies Map, between the development boundaries of the Settlements listed below, where it would not erode or otherwise undermine the openness of the Strategic Gap, and complies with other Development Plan policies*

- Cringleford – Hethersett
- Hethersett – Wymondham”.

And the Broadland Development Management DPD 2015 ([BDMDPD](#)) contains “*Policy EN2 Landscape – In order to protect the character of the area, development proposals should have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment SPD and, in particular, consider any impact upon as well as seek to protect and enhance where appropriate: (i) **gaps between settlements** ....”*

11. Accordingly, GNLP Policy 2 adequately provides the continued strategic context for maintaining the strategic gaps; with more detailed policy guidance contained within the other adopted local plans which are not to be superseded by the GNLP.

### Question 6

Is the proposed modification to Table 8 (in response to comments made by Natural England) justified? In order to be effective, should this be moved to the policy wording itself?

### Response to question 6 -

12. The Greater Norwich authorities have proposed a number of additional “minor” modifications to the GNLP. These additional modifications and potential proposed “main” modifications are set out in the authorities’ Schedule of Minor Modifications to the GNLP Strategy at Appendix C of the Submission letter to the Inspectorate ([A13](#)); responses to the Reg 19 representations in Appendix 11a of the Statement of Consultation ([A8.19](#)) ; together with the Statements of Common Ground on representations by certain bodies ([D4](#)). With regard to the representations by Natural England, they have sought changes to Policy 2 and, in response, the authorities have proposed some additional modifications to Table 8 in the supporting text. These representations, and the responses to them, are set out in the Statement of Common Ground with Natural England ([D4.7](#)).
13. Representation 24473 on Table 8 Issue 3 and representation 24472 on Policy 2 (pages 9 - 12 of D4.7) refer to the need to require off-site Green Infrastructure provision in developments where it cannot adequately be delivered within a development. Criteria 3 of Policy 2 requires development to “*Contribute to multi-functional green infrastructure links ....*” and this could be met through provision that is on-site, off-site, or both. It does not exclude any of the options. Hence, the authorities’ view is that although the supporting text would benefit from some explanation, it is not necessary to include this in the policy. Hence a change to Table 8 is proposed as an additional modification:

*“Where it is not possible to deliver sufficient quality GI on site it will need to be provided off-site nearby, either directly by the developer or through a financial contribution to deliver it”; and “The aim is to provide an overall strengthening of GI networks, which will entail avoiding loss or severance and the enhancement of existing GI networks, as well as creating new elements”.*

The response to this by Natural England is:

*“We welcome and support the proposed amendment to the explanatory text, although we consider that the policy wording needs to be amended to reflect this”. And: “Whilst we welcome and support the proposed amendment to the explanatory text under Table 8, we maintain that the policy wording (under point (3)) needs to be amended to ensure the delivery of quality GI both on-site and off-site, and the protection and enhancement of existing GI networks. We suggest under (3) of Policy 2 the following amended wording: **“Create and Contribute to multi-functional green***

***infrastructure links, whether provided on-site or off-site, including through landscaping, to make best use of site characteristics and integrate into the surroundings, whilst protecting and enhancing existing green infrastructure networks, ~~taking account of having regard to relevant green infrastructure strategies and delivery plans.~~***

14. Also relevant to the issue is Policy 3 which is the primary policy on Green Infrastructure provision. This requires development to be “*designed to respect and retain, and add to, natural assets*”; and “*development will deliver net biodiversity gain through the provision of on-site or off-site natural features, creating new or enhancing existing green infrastructure networks that have regard to and help to achieve the local green infrastructure strategies*”. Hence, it is clear in policy that green infrastructure provision is not necessarily solely on-site. Also, that existing green infrastructure networks should be protected and enhanced. It is not necessary to repeat this in Policy 2, though explanation in the supporting text would be beneficial.
15. The GN authorities’ view remains that the intended modification to Table 8 in the supporting text is sufficient. It is not necessary, nor appropriate, to repeat elements of Policy 3 in Policy 2.
16. The Greater Norwich authorities have proposed a number of additional “minor” modifications to the GNLP. These additional modifications and potential proposed “main” modifications are set out in the authorities’ Schedule of Minor Modifications to the GNLP Strategy at Appendix C of the Submission letter to the Inspectorate ([A13](#)); responses to the Reg 19 representations in Appendix 11a of the Statement of Consultation ([A8.19](#)) ; together with the Statements of Common Ground on representations by certain bodies ([D4](#)). With regard to the representations by Natural England, they have sought changes to Policy 2 and, in response, the authorities have proposed some additional modifications to Table 8 in the supporting text. These representations, and the responses to them, are set out in the Statement of Common Ground with Natural England ([D4.7](#)).
17. Representation 24473 on Table 8 Issue 3 and representation 24472 on Policy 2 (pages 9 - 12 of D4.7) refer to the need to require off-site Green Infrastructure provision in developments where it cannot adequately be delivered within a development. Criteria 3 of Policy 2 requires development to “*Contribute to multi-functional green infrastructure links ....*” and this could be met through provision that is on-site, off-site, or both. It does not exclude any of the options. Hence, the authorities’ view is that although the supporting text would benefit from some explanation, it is not necessary to include this in the policy. Hence a change to Table 8 is proposed as an additional modification:

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18. Also relevant to the issue is Policy 3 which is the primary policy on Green Infrastructure provision. This requires development to be “*designed to respect and retain, and add to, natural assets*”; and “*development will deliver net biodiversity gain through the provision of on-site or off-site natural features, creating new or enhancing existing green infrastructure networks that have regard to and help to achieve the local green infrastructure strategies*”. Hence, it is clear in policy that green infrastructure provision is not necessarily solely on-site. Also, that existing green infrastructure networks should be protected and enhanced. It is not necessary to repeat this in Policy 2, though explanation in the supporting text would be beneficial.
19. The GN authorities’ view remains that the intended modification to Table 8 in the supporting text is sufficient. It is not necessary, nor appropriate, to repeat elements of Policy 3 in Policy 2.

## Question 7

Is it justified to require housing development to meet the higher optional standard for water efficiency, and non-residential development to meet the BREEAM “Very Good” water efficiency standard, or any equivalent successor?

## Response to question 7

20. The Water Cycle Study for the Greater Norwich area ([B27.4](#)) includes consideration of water supply issues within the Greater Norwich area.
21. Section 2 of the GNLP ([A1](#)) sets out a profile of the Greater Norwich area. At para 121 it explains: “*Relatively low rainfall totals and extensive agricultural water use demand mean that the whole area is defined as suffering from serious water stress (44). Local planning policy and water company strategy (45) place a focus on promoting water efficiency*”. Footnote 44 refers to the Environment Agency’s Water Stressed Areas – final classification document ([EAWSA](#)); and footnote 45 refers to Anglian Water’s Water Resources Management Plan ([AWWRMP](#)).

22. Also, under Table 8 point 9, on page 60, it is explained: *“Government policy expects local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to adapt to climate change, taking account of water supply and demand considerations. It allows local plans to set a higher standard of water efficiency than the Building Regulations where evidence justifies it. For housing development, only the higher Building Regulations standard for water prescribed by Government (110 litres per person per day) can be applied through local plans and more demanding standards cannot be set. If the potential to set more demanding standards locally is established by the Government in the future, these will be applied in Greater Norwich. For non-housing development, broadly equivalent standards can be required using BREEAM assessments. In Greater Norwich, evidence and justification on the need for water efficiency measures includes:*

- The Environment Agency (EA) has identified Greater Norwich as water stressed in its ‘Water Stress Area Final Classification (2013), the primary source of evidence which supports a tighter water efficiency standard;*
- The need for water efficiency is particularly significant in Greater Norwich given its proximity to internationally protected water environments, including the River Wensum and the Broads;*
- Anglian Water’s strategic approach to providing water supplies to meet growth needs includes a major focus on water efficiency measures;*
- The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and the key relevant organisations, the Environment Agency and Natural England, all support retaining this approach which has been in place in Greater Norwich since 2011;*
- The cost of such a policy, implemented using water efficient fixtures and fittings, is negligible. It can be easily achieved through a flexible variety of measures to suit different types of homes and buildings. The cheapest approach is the use of water efficient fixtures and fittings. Solutions can also include the use of greywater recycling and rainwater capture. It will have no effect on development viability and will lead to financial savings for householders and users of other developments, along with carbon emissions reductions.*

*Implementation of the standards for water efficiency will be supported by an updated advice note“.*

23. This reflects the findings of the Water Cycle Study for the Greater Norwich area ([B27.4](#)) which included consideration of water supply issues. Section 5.4 explains: *“In 2013, the Anglian Water supply area was classified by the Environment Agency as an ‘Area of serious water stress’ based on a ‘Water Exploitation Index’ as derived by the European Environment Agency. Part of this classification is based on climate change effects as well as increases in demand driven by Local Plan growth targets. This creates a very strong driver for new homes in the next 25 years to be made as efficient as economically possible to safeguard the future resources to be made available by AWS in the GNA”.* And it recommends (at section 7.4.2): *“WS1 – Water Efficiency in New Homes and Buildings In order to move towards a more ‘water neutral position’ and to enhance sustainability of development coming*

*forward, a policy should be developed that ensures all housing is as water efficient as possible including maximisation of water re-use, and that new housing development should go beyond mandatory Building Regulations requirements, with a minimum of the optional requirement of 110 l/h/d”.*

24. Therefore, there is a clear case that the GNLP has to plan for the area being under serious water stress. To adequately address this through the local plan water efficiency measures on development will be required. The measures set out in the policy are at an appropriate level for the situation and having regard to national policy on the matter. This accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paras 20, 30 and 153; and the Governments recent statement on reducing demand for water ([UIN HCWS140](#)) made on 1 July 2021 announcing measures that the Government will take forward to support water efficiency in homes, including:
- “Write to local authorities to encourage them to adopt the optional minimum building standard of 110 litres per person per day in all new builds where there is a clear local need, such as in water stressed areas”; and “In 2022 develop a roadmap towards greater water efficiency in new developments and retrofits, including the exploration of revised building regulations and how the development of new technologies can contribute to meeting these standards”.*

### Question 8

Is it justified for Policy 2 to refer to a future optional water efficiency standard when any such standard, and the conditions for its adoption, are currently unknown?

### Response to question 8 -

25. The Recent Government statement on reducing water demand ([UIN HCWS140](#)) referred to under Q7 above, also states that the Government will:
- “In 2022 develop a roadmap towards greater water efficiency in new developments and retrofits, including the exploration of revised building regulations and how the development of new technologies can contribute to meeting these standards”.*
26. It is clear from this, that there is a distinct possibility that the Building Regulations relating to water efficiency will be revised in the efforts to achieve greater water efficiency. It would be logical for any higher standards to be applied within the areas at serious water stress, including the Anglian Water area which includes Greater Norwich. Therefore, there is a significant possibility that higher standards for water efficiency will be able to be applied in the Greater Norwich area in the near future. Hence, it is appropriate for this issue to be acknowledged and addressed in the GNLP.
27. One would assume that any changes to Building Regulations on this matter would be either a direct requirement for a higher standard, or optional e.g. in areas of serious water stress, similar to the current situation. If it is the former, a direct requirement in Building Regulations, then the GNLP policy requirement would be superfluous. If it is the latter, optional e.g. in areas of serious water stress, then the requirement under Policy 2: *“If the potential to set more demanding standards locally is established by the*

*Government, the highest potential standard will be applied in Greater Norwich”, would apply provided any conditions for its adoption (as set out in the Regulations or national policy) were met. Also, such a situation would not prevent other considerations being taken into account. In particular, if the optional requirement resulted in a development not being viable, then this would be taken into consideration, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 58. Therefore, inclusion of that part of the policy ensures that any optional standards that are applicable can be applied straightaway, and so help to meet national objectives; it is advantageous to set this out in the Plan now so that they can apply rather than waiting the considerable time for a review to be undertaken. However, if their application meant a development was not deliverable because of viability issues then this could still be taken into consideration. Consequently, its inclusion is appropriate, reasonable, and beneficial for planning purposes.*

### Question 9

Is it justified for Policy 2 to require new development to provide a 19% reduction against Part L of the 2013 Building Regulations? The policy states that it will apply to “all new development” – is this justified?

### Response to question 9 -

28. GNLP (A1) Policy 2 criterion 10 includes:

*“Minimise energy demand through the design and orientation of development and maximise the use of sustainable energy, local energy networks and battery storage to assist growth delivery. This will include:*

*o All new development will provide a 19% reduction against Part L of the 2013 Building Regulations (amended 2016);*

*.....*

*except where a lower provision is justified because the requirement would make the development unviable”.*

29. This is explained further in the supporting text under Table 8, point 10 on pages 60-62, including:

*“This approach to energy in new developments is required as:*

- Evidence (Greater Norwich Energy Infrastructure Study) shows that a positive approach to promoting energy efficiency and locally generated sustainable sources of energy, as well as promotion of the use of battery storage, is required to address local energy network capacity constraints and to ensure the timely delivery of growth;*
- The NPPF requires a positive approach to be taken to promoting energy efficiency. In doing so, policy 2 anticipates the Government’s “Future Homes Standard” currently scheduled to be introduced by 2025, which will require all new build homes to have low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency. When the Government implements the Future Homes Standard it will strengthen (or replace) the GNLP policy approach by providing further measures”.*

30. The authorities' Topic Paper Climate Change ([D3.14](#)) also discusses the issue. Of particular relevance are:
- para 5 references to the National Planning Policy Framework ([NPPF](#)) and the requirement for the planning system to help “*shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions ....*”.
  - para 10/11 references to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework ([B2.2](#) and [B2.3](#)) and the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions including through higher energy efficiency in development and use of renewable / low-carbon energy sources;
  - para 16 references to the Greater Norwich Energy Infrastructure Study ([B4.1](#) - see page 43) and the suggestion for planning policy to minimise energy demand from new development by exceeding Part L Building Regulations requirements;
  - para 16 where it is explained: “*In terms of reducing energy demand, regard was also had to the UKGBC New Homes Policy Playbook – Driving Sustainability in Local Authorities Feb 2021 ([B16.1](#)) and the earlier version of September 2018 which recommended a 19% reduction against the Target Emissions Rate in Part L of the Building Regulations. The latest Playbook referred to a potentially higher figure, but as this arose late in the local plan process the original figure of 19% was included in the Regulation 19 GNLP*”.
31. Hence, the policy requirement addresses a national policy objective to tackle climate change and reducing emissions including through minimising the energy demand of new development. It is in accordance with national policy, local strategic policy, and reflects an achievable level of reduction similar to what has been applied elsewhere in the country. Therefore, the policy requirement is justified.
32. This element of the policy applies, in principle, to “all new development” where Part L of the Building Regulations is applicable. It applies to individual dwellings as well as larger developments, as each individual dwelling will have its impacts and these combine with the impacts from other developments. It is not just larger developments that create emissions, and so each should make its own contribution to reducing emissions. However, the policy does make provision for an exception where “*a lower provision is justified because the requirement would make the development unviable*”.

### Question 10

Is it justified for Policy 2 to require ‘appropriate’ non-housing development of more than 500 square metres to meet the BREEAM “Very Good” energy efficiency standard, or any equivalent successor? How will it be determined whether a proposal is ‘appropriate’ in this regard?

### Response to question 10 -

33. GNLP ([A1](#)) Policy 2 criterion 10 includes:  
“*Minimise energy demand through the design and orientation of development and maximise the use of sustainable energy, local energy networks and battery storage to assist growth delivery. This will include:.....*”

*o Appropriate non-housing development of 500 square metres or above will meet the BREEAM “Very Good” energy efficiency standard, or any equivalent successor;*

*except where a lower provision is justified because the requirement would make the development unviable”.*

34. Energy demand, and emissions, arises from many types of development, not just housing. Therefore, it is important that these other developments also contribute to reducing emissions and use of energy, for the same reasons as set out in response to Q9, and so the policy requirement is justified. The BREEAM standard is seen as being a reasonable measure to apply to such developments. Again, it is accepted in the policy for an exception where “*a lower provision is justified because the requirement would make the development unviable”.*
35. Whether a development is “appropriate” for the policy requirement to be applied will depend on the nature of the proposal. For example, it would not apply to non-built development such as open space.
36. It is acknowledged by the Greater Norwich authorities that the policy addresses a complicated issue. And the policy has been worded to reflect this. As stated in the supporting text of the policy (Table 8, point 10) the approach of the policy is to be flexible, as the defined standards are not prescriptive in the measures that should be taken but allow for either a “fabric first” approach to reducing energy use, or the use of on-site sustainable energy, or a mixture of both. Also, it is acknowledged that there may need to be further guidance produced on these matters to assist developers. The guidance would also have the advantage of being able to be easily revised to reflect any changes, such as to legislation or national policy.
37. GNLP ([A1](#)) Policy 2 criterion 10 includes:  
“*Minimise energy demand through the design and orientation of development and maximise the use of sustainable energy, local energy networks and battery storage to assist growth delivery. This will include:.....*
- o Appropriate non-housing development of 500 square metres or above will meet the BREEAM “Very Good” energy efficiency standard, or any equivalent successor;*
- except where a lower provision is justified because the requirement would make the development unviable”.*
38. Energy demand, and emissions, arises from many types of development, not just housing. Therefore, it is important that these other developments also contribute to reducing emissions and use of energy, for the same reasons as set out in response to Q9, and so the policy requirement is justified. The BREEAM standard is seen as being a reasonable measure to apply to such developments. Again, it is accepted in the policy for an exception where “*a lower provision is justified because the requirement would make the development unviable”.*

39. Whether a development is “appropriate” for the policy requirement to be applied will depend on the nature of the proposal. For example, it would not apply to non-built development such as open space.
40. It is acknowledged by the Greater Norwich authorities that the policy addresses a complicated issue. And the policy has been worded to reflect this. As stated in the supporting text of the policy (Table 8, point 10) the approach of the policy is to be flexible, as the defined standards are not prescriptive in the measures that should be taken but allow for either a “fabric first” approach to reducing energy use, or the use of on-site sustainable energy, or a mixture of both. Also, it is acknowledged that there may need to be further guidance produced on these matters to assist developers. The guidance would also have the advantage of being able to be easily revised to reflect any changes, such as to legislation or national policy.

### Question 11

The explanatory text states that master planning using a community engagement process will be required on sites for more than 500 dwellings or 50,000 square metres. However, the policy wording does not refer to this requirement. The policy wording does however refer to master planning being encouraged on larger sites and particularly for proposed developments of 200 dwellings or 20,000 square metres plus. Should the policy be modified to address this inconsistency? Does the policy need to be made clearer in this regard to be effective?

### Response to question 11 -

41. The second part of GNLP ([A1](#)) Policy 2 sets out supporting measures to assist in meeting the policy criteria. Point (ii) states: “*Master-planning using a recognised community engagement process will be encouraged on larger sites and particularly for proposed developments of 200 dwellings or 20,000 square metres plus*”. Reference to this, and an additional reference, is also made in the supporting text at para 200: “*The policy also encourages master planning using a community engagement process on larger sites (200 dwellings plus or 20,000 square metres for non-residential development) and requires it on sites of 500 dwellings plus or 50,000 square metres*”; giving a discrepancy between the Policy wording and that of the supporting text.
42. This discrepancy originated in the Regulation 18C consultation stage of the Plan ([Reg 18C](#)) in (Policy 2 and supporting text at para 175) with the reference in the supporting text to the requirement on sites of 500 dwellings or 50,000 square metres reflecting a reference in the earlier Reg 18A Growth Options consultation document ([Reg18A](#)) (para 6.54) to the current policy in the Joint Core Strategy.
43. The Policy wording takes precedence over supporting text. And, as the policy has been subject to two stages of consultation (Reg 18C and Reg 19) it would not be appropriate to amend it at this stage. The reference in the supporting text to “*and requires it on sites of 500 dwellings plus or 50,000 square metres*” is incorrect and should be deleted from the supporting text. This could be as a proposed main

modification, or perhaps as an “additional modification” for clarification, to correct the error.

## Question 12

Is it clear what form any master planning and community engagement is expected to take? Has any such requirement been considered in the assumed lead-in times for the delivery of larger sites?

## Response to question 12

44. The second part of Policy 2 states: “(ii) *Master-planning using a recognised community engagement process will be encouraged on larger sites and particularly for proposed developments of 200 dwellings or 20,000 square metres plus*”. The Plan is not prescriptive on what form the master-planning and community engagement should take, nor should it be. Flexibility is given to the applicant to determine what is the most appropriate form of master-planning and engagement. This will vary depending on a range of factors, such as the type of development, its scale, location, proximity to residences or other sensitivities etc. Any specific requirements in policy could only be very general in nature and, therefore, would likely be unnecessarily constraining on many proposals.
45. In producing a development proposal, the applicant has to project manage and plan out the development, including the process for producing the necessary information for an application as well planning the design of the development. This process is not dissimilar to what is entailed in producing a “masterplan”; and the scale of the work would generally reflect the scale of the development proposal. Also, applications for major development, as defined in [article 2](#) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015, (i.e. for 10 or more dwellings or above 0.5 ha) are required to submit a Design and Access Statement for the development.
46. The national Planning Practice Guidance ([NPPG](#) para 031) states that:  
“A *Design and Access Statement must:*  
(a) *explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and*  
(b) *demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.*  
*A development’s context refers to the particular characteristics of the application site and its wider setting. These will be specific to the circumstances of an individual application and a Design and Access Statement should be tailored accordingly. Design and Access Statements must also explain the applicant’s approach to access and how relevant Local Plan policies have been taken into account. They must detail any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues, and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed development. Applicants must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the proposed development have been addressed.*”

*Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 14-031-20140306*

*Revision date: 06 03 2014”.*

As such, the development needs to be planned or “master-planned” in order to provide an adequate Design and Access Statement. Also, although consultation is not explicitly required, it is implicit that it is seen as being of benefit in producing an appropriate statement.

47. Consequently, the reference in the policy to master-planning with community engagement being encouraged, is reflecting what major developments should be doing in terms of their Design and Access Statements. It is not an onerous additional requirement being placed on development. It can be easily linked or part of the work that the major developments should already be doing. And, as such it should not need to add to the timescale of the work that needs to be done.
48. In compiling the trajectory for the delivery of housing sites, due regard has been given to the time needed to be spent on the initial stages for planning the development and associated work, such as site investigations, community engagement, design etc. Therefore, time required for master-planning, community engagement etc has been adequately taken into account in the assumed lead-in times.
49. For details of why each site allocation is placed where it is in the housing trajectory see Topic Paper 1 ([D3.1](#)), and most particularly Appendix 4 ([D3.2](#)). A more recent update of the housing trajectory was also provided in November 2021 ([D3.2B](#) and [D3.2C](#)).

### Question 13

Is the requirement for developments of more than 100 dwellings to be accompanied by a delivery statement justified and effective? How would this work in situations where planning permission is secured in outline, or with the intention of disposing the land to a developer?

### Response to question 13 -

50. The second part of Policy 2 states: “(iii) *Delivery plans are required with planning applications for 100 dwellings plus to set out the timing of the delivery of developments*”. This is included because a key aim of Local Plans is to provide for development that will meet identified needs. Therefore, it is not just about identifying suitable sites for development; the ultimate aim is for development to be delivered and so meet people’s needs. Unfortunately, it can be the case that even though a site is allocated or has planning permission for development it is still not brought forward for development.
51. In terms of the allocations in the GNLP, efforts have been made to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that sites will come forward for development, including through the production of joint Delivery Statements / Statements of Common Ground with the landowners / site promoters ([D2](#)).

52. However, more detailed timings are also beneficial at the application stage to help the local planning authorities ascertain the rates of delivery and whether action might need to be taken by them, for example to assist in the delivery of development or do a specific local plan to identify additional development sites. Therefore, the delivery plans will be an important element of planning for the area. In addition, they will also be of great value to the infrastructure providers so that they can better plan their works.
53. In situations where the applicant is not a developer and is seeking an outline permission or intending to sell the site on to a developer, the information that will be able to be provided will be more limited than for a full application by a developer. However, it would still be useful to the local planning authorities and infrastructure providers. For example, the Delivery Plan could include information on the intentions for submitting a reserved matters / full application and marketing intentions. This would still be useful information to help in planning for the meeting the identified development needs.
54. Without such Delivery Plans being provided there is a potential impact on the key planning purposes of delivering necessary development and the associated infrastructure that is necessary for it. Consequently, the requirement for the statements is both justified and effective.

#### Question 14

Is Policy 2 and the Plan in general, consistent with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of climate change?

#### Response to question 14 -

55. The GNLP's consistency with legislation and national planning policy is explained in the responses to Matter 1, Issue 3, Question 3 and Matter 2, Issue 1, Question 5.
56. With regard specifically to Policy 2, Topic Paper Policy 2 ([D3.3](#)) (paras 10 – 12) references key elements of national planning policy, as does Topic Paper Climate Change ([D3.14](#)) (paras 5 – 6) in relation to climate change issues.
57. In particular, National Planning Policy Framework ([NPPF](#)) Chapter 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change includes: *“The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”* (para 152). And, *“Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-*

*term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures” (para 153).*

58. Therefore, local plans have an important role in ensuring new development both mitigates climate change and is adapted to a changing climate. Policy 2 is an important element of the GNLP’s approach to addressing this and reflects the national planning policies on the matter as set out in the NPPF.
59. The Topic Paper Climate Change ([D3.14](#)) (at paras 25 – 29) also sets out how the climate change issue has been addressed in the GNLP. In particular, reference is made to the Climate Change statement in the GNLP ([A1](#)) (at para 157) and the accompanying table which explains how different measures, related to land-use and development, are addressed by individual policies within the Plan. The table sets out six measures for addressing climate change, and how the GNLP policies relate to this. With respect to Policy 2, this is identified as being relevant to all the measures except for one that relates to having an effective monitoring regime, which is dealt with separately in the plan.
60. Consequently, it is clear that the GNLP, and specifically Policy 2, is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of Climate Change.

### Question 15

Have all of the proposed requirements in Policy 2 been subject to viability testing?

### Response to question 15 -

61. The requirements of Policy 2 are factored into the viability appraisal of the GNLP. This is contained in the GNLP Viability Appraisal Dec. 2020 ([B26.3](#)) and appendices ([B26.4](#)) and the Supplementary Appendix May 2021 ([B26.5](#)) and relates to: density of housing, water efficiency, energy efficiency, space for recreation, and the quality of place-making.
- In respect to housing densities, the lowest is 24 dwellings per hectare for the South Norfolk Village Clusters typology, and the highest is 200 dwellings per hectare for the Urban Centre typology (see Table 2).
  - As to water efficiency, £9 per dwelling is added to account for meeting the standard of 110 litres per person per day (see paragraphs 211-216).
  - On energy efficiency to fund solutions that exceed Part L of the 2020 Building Regulations a cost is allowed of £5,000 per dwelling (see paragraphs 211-216).
  - A rate of 2.5 hectares per 1,000 people is factored in to provide for children’s place space, older children’s play, playing pitches, adult recreation space, and allotments (see paragraph 259).
  - For ensuring developments are planned to a high quality, professional fees are calculated at 10% of construction costs, which is slightly above the most frequently seen rate of 8% (see paragraph 250).

## Issue 2: Is Policy 3 justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

### Question 1

Does Policy 3 provide an appropriate policy framework for the conservation and enhancement of the areas built and natural environment? Is it consistent with national policy in this regard?

### Response to question 1 -

62. Topic Paper Policy 3 ([D3.4](#)) explains the development of Policy 3 through the various stages of the local plan process and taking account of legislative and national policy requirements; consultation comments, including a consideration of the responses to the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission GNLP); evidence and assessments. It is concluded that the policy is appropriate and “sound” in accordance with the legislative requirements. As such, it provides an appropriate policy framework for the conservation and enhancement of the areas’ built and natural environment. However, it is accepted that some improvements for explanation / clarification could be made through minor wording changes as “additional modifications”. In addition, there are some instances where a change is sought by an objector and, although the Greater Norwich authorities do not accept that the change is necessary, the authorities have no objection to such a change being recommended as a Proposed Modification by the Inspectors if deemed to be necessary to make the Plan sound. These additional modifications and potential proposed “main” modifications to the policy and supporting text are set out in the authorities’ Schedule of Minor Modifications to the GNLP Strategy at Appendix C of the Submission letter to the Inspectorate ([A13](#)); responses to the Reg 19 representations on Policy 3 in Appendix 11a of the Statement of Consultation ([A8.19](#)) (pages 142 – 154) ; together with the Statements of Common Ground with the Environment Agency ([D4.1](#)); Historic England ([D4.2](#)) pages 12 – 31; and Natural England ([D4.7](#)) pages 13 – 16.
63. With regard to national policy, the Topic Paper ([D3.4](#)) includes a specific section on national policy (paras 9 – 11) setting out the main relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework ([NPPF](#)), to which regard has been had in developing Policy 3. Accordingly, Policy 3, together with related elements of Policy 2, provides an appropriate policy framework for the conservation and enhancement of the areas built and natural environment in accordance with the NPPF.

### Question 2

Is Policy 3 consistent with the HRA?

### Response to question 2 -

64. Topic Paper Policy 3 ([D3.4](#)) explains the development of Policy 3 through the various stages of the local plan process and taking account of legislative and national policy requirements; consultation comments, including a consideration of the responses to the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission GNLP); evidence and assessments. This

includes a section on the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) ([A7](#)) at paras 27 - 37.

65. The Habitat Regulations Assessment followed the various stages of the GNLP. In developing Policy 3 regard was had to this, with requirements in Policy 3 for development “to conserve and enhance the natural environment (including ..... biodiversity including priority habitats”; and “creating new or enhancing existing green infrastructure networks that have regard to and help to achieve the local green infrastructure strategies”; and, in particular, “All residential development will address the potential visitor pressure, caused by residents of the development, that would detrimentally impact on sites protected under the Habitats Regulations Directive through: the payment of a contribution towards the cost of mitigation measures at the protected sites (as determined under the Norfolk Green infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy plus an allowance for inflation) ; and the provision or enhancement of adequate green infrastructure, either on the development site or nearby, to provide for the informal recreational needs of the residents as an alternative to visiting the protected sites. This will equate to a minimum of 2 hectares per 1,000 population and will reflect Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard”.
66. This latter element on the potential impacts from visitors to the European status wildlife sites, specifically addresses a key finding of the HRA discussed in sections 4.3 – 4.5; and, in particular, at paras 4.10.6 – 7 where it is concluded: “It is considered that the GIRAMS measures described above would be sufficient that the assessment is able to ascertain no adverse effect upon the integrity of any European site, subject to the adoption of the GIRAMS and its implementation by the local planning authorities”. This is reflected in the conclusion (at para 11.3.1): “It is concluded that subject to GIRAMS adoption ..... there would be no adverse affect upon the integrity of any European site”.
67. Hence, Policy 3 is fully consistent with the findings of the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

### Question 3

The supporting text refers to a contribution of £205 per new home made towards mitigation measures on protected sites. Policy 3 refers to this. Does this apply to all residential development across the Plan area including single dwellings? Is it justified and how would it be implemented?

### Response to question 3 -

68. Topic Paper Policy 3 ([D3.4](#)) explains the development of Policy 3 through the various stages of the local plan process and taking account of legislative and national policy requirements; consultation comments, including a consideration of the responses to the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission GNLP); evidence and assessments. This includes the GIRAMS ([B6.1](#)).

69. The supporting text of the GNLP ([A1](#)) at paragraph 220 refers to the requirement for the “*contribution of around £205 (plus allowance for inflation) from each new home is to be made towards direct mitigation measures on the protected sites*”. The sum reflects the calculated cost of mitigation measures set out in the GIRAMS. Initially in the draft GIRAMS this “tariff” was calculated at £205, but subsequently amended to £185.93 for the final version. A main modification to paragraph 220 is proposed to correct the figure.
70. As set out at para 3.4.1.1 of the GIRAMS ([B6.1](#)), “*A per dwelling tariff has been calculated by dividing the total cost of the Norfolk RAMS mitigation package by the total number of houses still to be delivered over the Local Plans period i.e. any houses already consented having come forward early, are not included in this calculation. Contributions cannot be collected from developers to pay for mitigation necessary to avoid impacts from consented residential development.*”. Therefore, it includes all new dwellings that do not already have planning permission. Single dwellings are necessarily included within this. Logically, even small or individual dwelling sites will create visitor pressures. Although a single plot may have negligible effects in isolation, the in-combination effects (i.e. lots of little sites together with the large sites) have to be taken into account in assessing the overall impacts. The impacts of individual / small sites cannot be passed on to be addressed by larger developments, each development has to address its own impacts. Therefore, the tariff has to be applied to every dwelling. If not, there would still be harmful impacts to the European sites.
71. With regards to implementation, the GIRAMS recommends at section 3.4.2: “*that RAMS contributions are sought through s106 where there are other contributions to be collected and a Section 111 agreement (instead of a UU (unilateral undertaking)) where this is the sole developer contribution*”. An example of such an approach can be seen on the Ipswich Borough Council website: [Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy \(RAMS\)](#) . The approach for the authorities in Norfolk is still to be confirmed, but is likely to follow the recommendations in the GIRAMS on this matter.

#### Question 4

Map 8A sets out the Green Infrastructure Corridors in the Plan area. These are not reflected in Policy 3. How do these corridors relate to Policy 3? Should the policy include provision to preserve and enhance the Green Infrastructure Corridors?

#### Response to question 4 -

72. Map 8A on page 70 of the GNLP ([A1](#)) illustrates the Green infrastructure (GI) Corridors in Greater Norwich, with the following Map 8B showing the GI corridors in the Norwich urban area. The supporting text at para 221 explains: “*The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework includes county-wide policy objectives on environmental protection, landscape protection and biodiversity. Work supporting the*

*NSPF includes a county-wide green infrastructure network map which provides the basis for more detailed mapping to support and inform local plans, including the GNLP. The updated green corridors map for Greater Norwich, including links to neighbouring areas, is in maps 8 A and B below*". Hence, the GI corridors in map 8A/B are shown at a strategic level. They are not sufficiently well defined to show the exact areas for GI corridors. Also, they are not comprehensive as they do not encompass all the areas that might be, or potentially become, GI corridors. Therefore, they should be seen as being indicative of the main strategic GI corridors, rather than defining the precise areas where a policy might apply. As such, if a policy was applied to "preserve and enhance" the specific corridors in Map 8A/B, it would exclude other possible areas, potentially causing opportunities to be missed in those other areas.

73. In considering GI corridors in relation to a development proposal, regard would need to be had to more detailed information, such as the existing Green Infrastructure Strategy / Study, the proposed new GI Strategy when completed, and GI mapping that has been undertaken within the Greater Norwich Area; and also from an assessment of that development proposal and the opportunities that it may give rise to.
74. Hence, it is not appropriate to specifically define the GI corridors under Policy 3; and doing so would potentially be harmful to the overall enhancement of GI as sought by Policy 3. As currently worded, Policy 3 adequately addresses the preservation and enhancement of GI by requiring development: "*to conserve and enhance the natural environment (including ..... biodiversity ....., networks ....., ancient trees and woodlands;*"; and "*development will deliver net biodiversity gain through the provision of on-site or off-site natural features, creating new or enhancing existing green infrastructure networks that have regard to and help to achieve the local green infrastructure strategies*". It should not be limited to just the GI corridors that are shown indicatively on map 8A.