

Greater Norwich Local Plan

Subject: Supporting statement relevant to Matter 10

Author: Trevor Bennett, Aylsham Town Council

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This supporting statement is in relation to:

Main Towns

h. Land at Norwich Road, Aylsham (Ref GNLP0596R)

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

All the comments below are in respect of the decision to put forward two sites in Regulation 19, as against the one site in Regulation 18.

1. Is the allocation justified and is it supported by the evidence?

- The second allocation was not justified in relation to consultation, as no consultation took place for Regulation 19. There was consultation on Regulation 18, when the two sites and 5 others were considered, but only for one site. Therefore, it was not a sound decision to add a second site.
- The evidence for a second site was based on the increase in housing numbers from Regulation 18 to 19 based on the 2018 projection, rather than the 2014 projection as used in Regulation 18. The proposed White Paper was cited as a reason for the increase. This Paper has now been withdrawn. These factors lead to an increase in housing need from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19 of 22%.
- However, the increase for the proposed new housing for Aylsham from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19 is 83.3%. There is no evidence to support this level of increase.

2. Have the environmental and other constraints to development and the implications for infrastructure been properly assessed and, where necessary, can appropriate mitigation be achieved?

The evidence gathering on the infrastructure implications lacked proper research in the following areas:

- **Medical care:** The GNLP did consult with the NHS Trust, but there was no consultation from either the GNLP or the NHS trust with the two Aylsham surgeries as to how they could cope with another significant increase in the population of Aylsham. In 2021, Aylsham Town Council consulted with both surgeries. They have had to cope with a 44.9% increase in the population of Aylsham in the last 10 years. They are not in a position to meet the needs of a further 550 new homes and a 90-bed care home. There has been no examination from the GNLP of the medical facilities, in particular the buildings and expansion possibilities. Both surgeries say there is very little room to expand the properties to cope with this growth. They may be able to cope with one site and no care home. In addition, both dental practises in the town have reached capacity.
- **Transport:** Aylsham is a market town with a street layout which has changed little since Medieval times. The Town Council has appointed traffic consultants to work with the Town Council Traffic Management Group to undertake a detailed and in-depth

examination of the significant traffic problems caused by the recent increase in population, with the intention of addressing these issues with particular regard to road traffic, cycle networks, pedestrian footfall, and parking.

Any additional increase in population will exacerbate these problems even further.

There is no evidence that the GNLP conducted any meaningful examination of the impact of a further 550 houses on the existing road network in Aylsham, nor has the highways department of Norfolk County Council.

- **Education:** The GNLP accepted the need for more primary school provision in Aylsham. However, as yet, they have not entered into any full discussion with the Town Council or the church as to the appropriate location for the re-siting of St Michael's school which is a church school not a county council school. At present the GNLP and Norfolk County Council proposed site conflicts with the views of the developers, the Town Council, and the local schools, as to where in the site the school should be located nor when building will commence.

There is no consideration of the impact of the proposals on the existing infrastructure, particularly on traffic management.

The proposed location of the school will mean a significant increase in road traffic at the same point, where the High School traffic enters Burgh Road.

- **Water:** There are issues with water supply, drainage, and sewerage. There are plans for improvement, but neither the Town Council or the developers are clear whether this will be done before the developments or after the houses were built. There has been no effective discussion with the GNLP on this issue.
- **Environment:** There is considerable concern that building two developments at the same time will have a critical impact on the well-being of Aylsham residents – through visual impact, stress on water supply etc, loss of farm land, and an increase in pollution, traffic and the carbon footprint.

There will be a significant impact on wild life, fauna and flora through the loss of small areas of open space and hedgerows. These act as connection routes to other areas of open space.

The Town Council is adopting a positive approach to the concerns of the environment by adopting a Climate Emergency and forming a committee with members of the public.

There is no evidence in Regulation 19 that these factors were considered regarding Aylsham. These detrimental impacts on the town would be lessened if there was only one development.

3. Has the availability, viability and deliverability of the site been robustly assessed?

The two sites have been assessed and the developers of both sites have been in consultation with the Town Council. These meetings have been cordial and productive, but have highlighted issues that need addressing. The developers and the Town Council have found it impossible to have meaningful consultations with the County Council, who should be assessing issues connected with the sites.

4. Does the evidence support the delivery of the housing units on the expected trajectory? (Document 3.2C)

If there are two sites they need to be phased. The evidence points to the fact that the housing units will be developed by 2038, but in reality, according to the developers, it will be 2028.

5. Are the detailed policy requirements that would apply to the allocation justified and effective?

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- The Town Council has had positive discussions with the developers. However, there are certain areas that require attention.
- The GNLP Regulation 19 states that there will be access through Copeman Road. This is not on the developer's plan, as they do not have access.
- The developers will produce a footpath into Buxton Road, though at present that road does not have pavements and if it is to be a route into the town centre, there need to be significant improvements.
- A bus shelter will be relocated, but it will need to be replaced by a shelter of similar quality.
- Further discussions on footpaths and crossings are required.
- There needs to be clarity on the provision of community land. This will be dependent on the findings of the consultations with regard to traffic management.
- There is real concern about the care home (see above).

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

- Again, the Town Council has had positive discussions with the developers which revealed that there are certain areas that require closer consideration.
- Burgh Road has been a major concern of the town for many years. The current proposals for changes to Burgh Road will exacerbate the problems. The findings of the Traffic Management Group indicate that there could be proposals that would have a major impact on this area of the town.
- There are concerns over the location of the Primary School (see above).

What changes should be made to the plan?

With regard to Aylsham, there should be only one site as per Regulation 18.

The reduction of 250 houses from the total 49,492 would not have a significant impact particularly with the large buffer in the plan.

If there are two sites, certain changes could be made:

- Phase the two developments to accommodate major changes anticipated in the medical care provision and transport review.
- Place the care home in a different location in Broadland. The existing medical facilities will not cope with 550 new houses and a 90-bed care home.
- Significant funds for GP practises are needed for them to expand or take on new premises.

Medical care problems indicate the need to phase the two developments.

- The Aylsham Traffic Group currently investigating the problems with the roads, cycle and pedestrian network will be producing a major report on what changes are needed. This will include provision for a safe crossing of the A140, which must be either over or under the road, not across the road. In addition, the consultants employed to assist the Council are likely to put forward changes to the transport network, which would mitigate some of the detrimental aspects of the developments. **Transport challenges indicate the need to phase the two developments.**
- Further discussions will be required between the Town Council, St Michael's Church School, the GNLP, the education department and the developers as to the location of the movement of the existing St Michaels Primary School.

