



**James Bailey**  
**PLANNING**

**Document:** Hearing Statement: Matter 8 - Strategic Growth  
Areas Allocations - 2nd Hearing Session  
**Title:** Examination of the Greater Norwich Local Plan  
2018-2038  
**Client:** Welbeck Land III Limited  
**Date:** June 2022



## **Hearing Statement**

**Matter 8 - Strategic Growth Areas Allocations 2<sup>nd</sup> Hearing Session**

**Statement on behalf of Welbeck Strategic Land III Limited in relation to Land  
North of Tuttle Lane East, Wymondham**

**Examination of the Greater Norwich Local Plan 2018-2038**

**June 2022**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On behalf of Welbeck Strategic Land III Limited (Welbeck Land), James Bailey Planning Ltd (JBPL) are instructed to submit Hearing Statements to the Greater Norwich Local Plan Examination (GNLP).
- 1.2 The site that these Statements relate to is “Land north of Tuttle Lane east, Wymondham.” This was previously assigned the site reference GNLP0006 and has been referred to as such in the course of our Hearing Statements.
- 1.3 The Regulation 18(c) GNLP document identified the town of Wymondham as having the need for a contingency of 1,000 dwellings. The site of land North of Tuttle Lane East was identified as a reasonable alternative site which could assist with this delivery. This proposal has subsequently been removed from the pre-submission version of the Local Plan.
- 1.4 The site area is 53.68ha, with a masterplan strategy for the delivery of 700 dwellings and associated infrastructure including land for a new sixth form centre for Wymondham High School.
- 1.5 It remains the view of Welbeck Land and JBPL that the GNLP is proposing a spatial growth strategy that is fundamentally flawed, and therefore “unsound.” There is an over reliance on long standing strategic site proposals; there is a change in policy direction towards Village Clusters sites which remains unjustified; whilst there is a reduction in proposing development towards more sustainable locations, notably the GNLP’s Main Towns.

### *Matter 8 – June 2022*

- 1.6 This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client Welbeck Land in respect of Matter 8 **Strategic Growth Areas Allocations** (Policy GNLP0360/3053/R10) of the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) for the Examination of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.
- 1.7 Welbeck Land believe the ENSRA Hearing Session should take place alongside the housing supply and housing trajectory Hearing Sessions. It is also believed that the overall figure for the site remains unjustified.
- 1.8 The Statement is intended to assist the Inspector’s review of the questions raised for the second Matter 8 Hearing, which is due to be considered for the discussion at the Examination Hearing Session on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022. This extra Hearing Session was requested because the Inspectors have asked for additional information relating to the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area site during the original matter 8 hearing session.
- 1.9 This Hearing Statement follows on from the representations made to the Regulation 19 Stage by JBPL, and to Regulation 18(c) Stage by Bidwells, on behalf of Welbeck Land. They should be referred to by the Inspector’s during the course of the Examination.

## **Issue 1: East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area (ESRA)**

**Question 1. The work undertaken for the Stage 2 illustrative masterplan indicates that the capacity of the site should be reduced to 3,362 from the 4,000 identified in the submitted plan. Is this capacity justified by the evidence and does it adequately reflect the site constraints?**

- 1.10 The information omitted from the Part 1 Hearing Sessions for this site, was the absence of the Stage 2 Masterplan in particular the key assessment of infrastructure provision, phasing, viability and deliverability. This was previously referred to in our original Matter 8 Hearing Statement which raised issues such as the existing complex underground infrastructure particularly on the Utilities Site, the adjacent mainline railway line and associated activities, access uncertainties, and flooding concerns. These have not been adequately assessed at this stage in sufficient detail as part of the Stage 2 Masterplan which still casts doubt on the overall quantum of development. A follow up session to allow for consideration of this now published masterplan is only right and proper and is welcomed. However, it is uncertain why this Hearing Session is taking place ahead of the Hearing Sessions dealing with the housing land supply, housing trajectory, and Nutrient Neutrality, which are being left until Autumn. It would appear that these issues and the ENSRA site are inextricably linked.
- 1.11 The initial number of units for this site was 2,000 at the Regulation 18 Stage, which then jumped to 4,000 for the Regulation 19 publication document. As reported to the November 2021 cabinet meeting the figure was then lowered to 3,469. We now have a figure of “*in the region of*” 3,362 after issues raised during the part 1 hearing session including the removal of 271 homes from the Broads Authority area which will be delivered through the Broads Local Plan and not the GNLP area.
- 1.12 The reduction of 271 homes from the original 3,469 figure leaves 3,198. It is not clear how the revised figure of 3,362 has been obtained and the Inspectors should ensure they are satisfied with how this figure has been reached. To our mind, this remains unjustified at present.
- 1.13 The Government recognised last year that sites allocated for residential or commercial are still being delivered on sites at risk from flood risk. This has brought about further rewording of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) in July 2021 regarding flood risk and a focus on ‘all sources’ of flooding (Paragraph 161). The impact on the delivery of this site is considerable particular in relation to the Deal site (GNLP0360) and the Utilities site (R10).
- 1.14 Paragraph 161 of the NPPF states; “*All plans should apply a sequential, risk based approach to the location of development, which must take into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change, with the purpose being to avoid flood risk to people and property*”.

- 1.15 Paragraph 162 states the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source: *“Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding”*.
- 1.16 For sites which are currently subject to a Sequential Test, the scope of the SFRA needs to be widened to consider the flood risk posed by surface water, groundwater, and other flood sources. It is therefore our belief that notwithstanding the fact that the Deal site has outline planning permission (which may not in any event be implemented), the changes to the NPPF now question its deliverability.

**Question 2. Is it justified to assume that the development of the site will be completed before the end of the plan period? Are the assumed lead-in times, annual delivery rates, and phasing assumptions for each part of the site robust?**

- 1.17 It seems premature to ask questions about delivery rates, lead in times when housing trajectory is not going to be discussed until Autumn when we assume more evidence will be released.
- 1.18 Based on the East Norwich Regeneration Delivery Area (B30.1) the 4 parts of the ENSRA are proposed to deliver as follows:

Parcels	Residential sales
Carrow Works	1,693
May Gurney	1,102
Deal Ground	157
Utilities	682

- 1.19 Paragraph 3.15 and Table 9 of the East Norwich Regeneration Delivery Area Viability Report (B30.2) refer to "high level assumptions on timings" and how long it will take for pre-construction, construction and sales. These assumed timescales look unrealistic, in particular the May Gurney site, which for 1,102 dwellings has an unrealistic construction and sales time. Using Lichfields ‘Start to Finish’ report, which the Partnership referred to originally in D3.2, the build out rates and the construction assumptions do not appear robust. For example, for schemes of 2,000+ dwellings the Lichfields report states 160 dwelling per annum is the average annual build rate. Whilst a build out rate is not stated in the latest evidence it appears unrealistic set against this average.
- 1.20 It is also not clear how the total months for Table 9 have been calculated, as there doesn’t seem to be any consistency with how the figures have been reached for each site.
- 1.21 The trajectory in the East Norwich Delivery Justification Report projects for both the 33% and 20% affordable housing scenarios that the ENSRA sites will be delivered by 2034. This appears optimistic for delivery of all of the homes

proposed considering there are 4 landowners, numerous stakeholders involved and the overall site is made up of 60% flats. As reported during the Matter 15 Hearing Session, we heard that the price growth of flatted homes in Norwich has been flat between 2007 and 2021. This, set against such a high proportion of the types of homes in the ENSRA, also raises concerns on how these could provide the significant infrastructure contributions. As raised in our original Hearing Statement, the Reserved Matters for the 670 dwellings originally approved on the Deal ground and May Gurney sites, The Street, Trowse (2011/0152/SNC) shall be made to the Local Planning Authority not later than the expiration of ten years beginning from the date of outline permission. This would therefore expire on 12 July 2023, and the deliverability on this site in the form of a reserved matters application seems wholly unrealistic in the time remaining as well as the Partnership assuming that housing sales will start in 2027.

**Question 3. Does the evidence suggest that the delivery of the site, along with the proposed supporting infrastructure, is viable?**

- 1.22 There are very real doubts about the viability of delivery of the site and considerable further work is required to create a viable scheme. £153m of infrastructure costs need to be provided to underpin the regeneration and the stage 3 masterplan work will need to further establish where, and how, equitable apportionment of infrastructure costs can be made. There is still a level of uncertainty, and further future work brings into question the deliverability of this site and their contribution to the GNLP within its Plan period. £40,000 per dwelling towards infrastructure costs was mentioned during the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 Cabinet [youtube](#) stream, which is stated as comparable with other regeneration schemes. However, this does seem particularly high and the deliverability is therefore questioned when usual viability assumes closer to £20,000 / dwelling. This is particularly doubtful when 60% of the ENSRA growth is flatted development where profit margins are likely to be slimmer.
- 1.23 The viability report (B30.2) states that the base appraisal results in a negative profit output of £130.7m which equates to -14.5% on GDV. The total costs on the scheme (33% affordable housing) is £1,025,657,022. Taking into account developers' profit the amount of public sector funding required is likely to be far greater than the £129m stated in the viability report.
- 1.24 The Partnership's consultants present two scenarios to achieve reasonable levels of profit more in line with market expectations. Version 1 assumes removing the marina costs and reducing the Low and Zero Carbon heating and power network allowance from 15% base construction cost to 5% and sufficient public sector grant to achieve 15% developer profit GDV. Version 2 assumes the same as version 1 but introduces sufficient public sector grant to achieve 20% profit. The report states: "*Based on the sensitivity analysis around the base case, to achieve a base level of the developer's required return (c.15% on GDV blended across uses) would require public sector support of c.£56m. To move this to a blended profit level of c.20% would require public sector support of equate to approximately £129m*".

- 1.25 Paragraph 4.6 of the viability report states "*We have tested the scheme at grant levels considered to be commensurate to a large-scale regeneration scheme of this nature, however, dialogue with public sector bodies is critical to ascertain whether these levels are realistic and achievable in the current climate*". Paragraph 4.9 refers to the need for business cases to be provided: "*Clearly, specific business cases will be required at the time of bidding to demonstrate how any project meets the criteria of the specific fund.*" It is clear that the site cannot be delivered without very substantial public funding. As public funding has not been secured there is uncertainty that the infrastructure can be delivered and it is our view that the delivery assumptions within the GNLP relating to the ENSRA are not sound as it is not 'effective'. There are very real doubts as to whether this site can make a meaningful contribution to housing land supply in the Plan period. That is not to say it should not be allocated, but the funding shortfall is so pronounced that the Plan should allocate further sites which can be delivered without public funding to ensure that supply is not compromised by delays at the ENSRA.
- 1.26 The viability report states the total project duration is 149 months and the base appraisal results are in a negative profit output of £130.7m. The viability report concludes that significant public sector grant is required. The East Norwich – Infrastructure Delivery Plan – states a 2 forms of entry (FE) school is costed at £12.9m within the Cost Plan but this isn't included as the Local Education Authority has confirmed it would be paid for from existing CIL and DfE funding. This is slightly confusing as the ENSRA developments will be paying CIL, as accounted for in the Developers Contingency and the new primary school will be funded through CIL.
- 1.27 Nutrient Neutrality is now a major issue in the County, and the Partnership, in response to the Inspectors, have been asked to provide a Nutrient Neutrality Mitigation Strategy. This will almost certainly have ramifications for the trajectory and site-by-site assessment of the implications of nutrient neutrality. Nutrient Neutrality is understood to hit brownfield land the hardest, as it is more difficult to demonstrate neutrality on-site.

**Question 4. Does Policy GNLP0360/3053/R10, including the suggested modifications proposed by the Partnership, provide an effective framework for the delivery of the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area?**

- 1.28 The revised policy wording updates the position on the masterplan and that it will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. Revised paragraph 334 does mention an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Phasing Plan which will establish a framework for assisting with unlocking development opportunities and framework for securing funding. The certainty of cost and funding therefore remains a concern despite the latest information provided.
- 1.29 The lack of a comprehensive Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the whole GNLP and an IDP for the ENSRA is concerning as it highlights that other sites elsewhere in the area do not have the same level of costing information to demonstrate whether they are deliverable.

1.30 Furthermore beyond the above framework for bringing forward development at East Norwich, it is accepted in paragraph 3.34 that further in depth assessments and studies (Flood Risk Assessment, Archaeology, Heritage Impact Assessment) will need to be undertaken in order to inform the decision making process at the planning application stage. It is therefore still very uncertain that the figure of 3,362 homes can be reliable.

**June 2022**  
**JBPL**





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