

Submission by Bryan Robinson

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Comments have been invited under Reg. 19 of the Town and Country Planning Act(Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 on the soundness of the draft Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 1.2. Soundness is defined as:
 - 1.2.1. **Positively prepared:** The plan should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent which achieving sustainable development.
 - 1.2.2. **Justified:** The plan should be the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.
 - 1.2.3. **Effective:** The plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.
 - 1.2.4. **Consistent with national policy:** The plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Policy Framework.
- 1.3. There are several reasons why I consider the Draft Plan in Reg. 19 is unsound but initially question the legitimacy of the changes in the Reg. 19 draft which fundamentally change the principles of the Reg. 18 consultation and on which the public are being denied representation which is patently unfair.

2. Fairness

- 2.1. It is trite law that a public body must adopt a fair procedure to decision-making to ensure that members of the public are given a fair and informed say before the decision comes into effect.
- 2.2. The draft Reg. 19 v 1.7 documents have significantly increased by 15% the housing provision over the life of the plan above the proposals in the Reg. 18 consultations initially citing Government proposals in the 'Planning for the future' consultation but later changing this to the fact that the 2018-based Government projections for Greater Norwich are higher than the 2014-based projections, as justification for going back on the intention for a further stage 18D consultation.
- 2.3. This approach of planning for the higher numbers in the 2018-based projections goes against the Government statement that the 2014-based projections should continue to be used in Local Plans.

- 2.4. If the Reg. 19 proposes to make an adjustment in the housing numbers for the 2018-based projections contrary to the Government announcement that the 2014-based projections should continue, further public representation should be invited.
- 2.5. The statement at para. 178 that the 2018-based projections would add a further 5,000 additional homes is disputed. The actual number from a comparison of table 406 in the respective publications is 3,423 (33,377 – 29,954).
- 2.6. However, this ignores the variants published for the 2018-based projections which give a range of international migration projections and also projections for internal migration only.
- 2.7. The low international migration and internal migration only figures both indicate **reductions** to the housing need of 1,424 and 2,408 respectively from the 29,954 the 2014-based principal projection used in Reg. 18.
- 2.8. It is not acceptable to simply state “*The potential growth indicated by the 2018-based projections would equate to the identification of around 5,000 additional homes*”, without an explanation of how this figure is calculated and confirmation that this mid-point net international migration figure reflects the UK target of 100,000 per annum, of which Greater Norwich would represent 0.62% of the total, based on population levels (GN 412,000 out of UK total of 66m).
- 2.9. Is the GNLP therefore saying that a minimum of 12,400 homes (620 each year) out of the base 40,541 housing requirement (32%) over its 20 years period are for the net international migration who will be filling 38% (12,00 out of 33,000) of the target jobs?
- 2.10. Whilst Planning Authorities, and the public, have to accept the Government methodology for calculations of housing need, GNLP must substantiate the **necessity** for proposed increases to this base which it has failed to do or consult on the proposal.
- 2.11. The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) Board papers of the meeting on 10 July 2020 proposed a further “focussed” Reg. 18D consultation on possible changes to the plan from 2 November 2020 to 14 December 2020, prior to the Reg. 19 process.
- 2.12. The minutes of the meeting confirm that the Board endorsed the revised timetable, including the additional Reg. 18D consultation.
- 2.13. At a subsequent Board meeting of 30 September 2020 the idea of a further Reg. 18 consultation was reversed in favour of progressing straight to the Reg. 19 consultation on soundness of the developing plan reflecting proposals in the

‘Planning for the future’ consultation and to ensure meeting transitional timescales.

- 2.14. It is acknowledged that **possible** significant changes in the preparation of local plans and calculation of Housing Requirements were included in the Government’s ‘Planning for the future’ consultation subsequent to the Greater Norwich Reg. 18 consultation, which could affect the GNLP, **if implemented**.
- 2.15. As noted in the 30 September 2020 Board papers for this meeting it would mean that the previously agreed Reg. 18D would not now go ahead depriving the public an opportunity to consider any changes in housing numbers of which they not only had an expectation but have the right to expect if significant changes are proposed.
- 2.16. Mitigation measures were proposed in the papers to moderate this lack of consultation which included prior *“limited parish council focussed consultation on small sites and settlement boundaries which **would be available for wider comment**”*¹. [Emphasis added]
- 2.17. There is no evidence that this has been undertaken or made available for wider comment.
- 2.18. The papers also confirm that *“since contingency and reasonable alternatives have been consulted on throughout Greater Norwich, these sites could consequently be used to increase the number of housing allocations (SIC: to meet the significantly increased housing numbers in the Government planning policy) in advance of submission should this be considered acceptable”*².
- 2.19. These statements are disputed as there was no specific consultation on contingencies and reasonable alternatives in the Reg. 18A questionnaire.
- 2.20. It is irrefutable that the draft Reg. 19 v 1.7 GNLP document and supporting studies which GNLP Board proposes to submit for inspection include significant changes to the subject matter on which the public were consulted in Reg. 18A questionnaire and incorporated into the Reg. 18C proposals.
- 2.21. There are 15 new evidence documents in Reg. 19 (3 Nr. - Economy/Employment; 1 Nr. - Energy; 2 Nr. - Equality; 2 Nr. - Green Infrastructure; 1 Nr. - Infrastructure Needs; 4 Nr. - Sustainability; 2 Nr. - Viability and 1 Nr. - Water) on which the public has not had the opportunity to comment and are prevented from doing so under the restriction of soundness only for Reg. 19.
- 2.22. Following a very cursory look at these documents, I have concerns which may have implications on the GNLP and which show that the wider public, many of

¹ 30 September 2020 Board papers Para. 29aii

² 30 September 2020 Board papers Para. 29aiii

whom have expertise in the various subjects, should be given a chance to comment.

2.23. These concerns relating to the new evidence in Reg. 19 are added as Appendix A.

3. Background

- 3.1. Concerning justification for increasing housing numbers, it is acknowledged local plans under preparation were thrown into confusion because of **possible** changes to the policies governing the preparation of local plans and calculation of Housing Requirements by the announcement of the Government in its 'Planning for the future' consultation between August and October 2020, subsequent to the Greater Norwich Reg. 18 consultation.
- 3.2. These changes were tentative and would only alter the underlying Reg. 18C principles if they were implemented, which they were not.
- 3.3. The decision was made prior to the Government reporting on its planning consultation as the subsequent GNDP Board meeting Agenda of 7 December 2020 that *"Changes have been made to provide the opportunity and flexibility to accommodate around 5,000 additional homes to recognise that the 2018-based household projections indicate that growth may be higher than in the 2014-based projections which are used in the plan"*³
- 3.4. The 30 September 2020 GNDP meeting agreed to a new timetable for the Reg. 19 process; however it is also clear from the meeting that the housing numbers were not agreed as the following extracts from the minutes:
- *"(A Member) voiced concern about the number of dwellings that would be put forward for the Reg. 19 and questioned if it would be the number in the existing Plan or whether there would be a safety margin included and, if so, what that figure would be";* and
 - *"In response, the Chairman confirmed that the **intention was to proceed with the existing numbers set out in the Plan and he noted that this had not included windfall sites, so there would be additional capacity for more housing to be included in this number.**"* [Emphasis added]
- 3.5. The interpretation of the Chairman's statement is that the windfalls could provide additional housing numbers to help achieve extra need which might result from a revised Government methodology without the need for further allocations.
- 3.6. It is acknowledged that the Reg. 18A strategy reported that *"Based on recent trends and projected future delivery, it is estimated that an additional supply of up to 5,600 dwellings could be provided during the plan period on "windfall" sites"*.

³ 7 December 2020 Board papers Table 2 (Policy 1)

- 3.7. It also noted “Therefore the 10% delivery buffer provided by allocations could rise to as much as **24%** if historic levels of windfall development are delivered”.
- 3.8. The number of new homes was increased to circa 49,000 in Reg. 19 document submitted to and approved by the GNDP Board on 7 December 2020, pre-empting the Government’s response to its ‘Planning for the future’ consultation.
- 3.9. The breakdown of the new figure is given Table 6⁴ in the Reg. 19 v 1.7 which includes 2,864 additional new allocations (from 7,840 in Reg. 18C to 10,704), 1,296 windfalls plus 800 houses under policy 7.5.
- 3.10. Policy 7.5 – Small Scale Windfall Housing Development in Parishes is by any definition more windfalls, albeit specific in locations and development size.
- 3.11. It is evident that an increase in general allocations is now included contrary to the GNDP Chairman’s statement at the Board meeting of 30 September 2020 that there was a capacity in windfall sites to increase the housing numbers and there is no **evidence** as to why additional site allocations and a percentage of anticipate windfalls are still deemed necessary after the Government announcements of 16 December 2020.
- 3.12. The Greater Norwich 5 Year Land Supply submissions make a percentage allowance (up to 66%) of historic windfalls within the base supply before the buffer is added and it seems incongruous that this should not apply in the plan.
- 3.13. The current historic level of windfalls for the 3 Councils (excluding garden sites) in the 2028/19 returns averaged 344⁵ per annum which would be equivalent to 6,536 for the remaining 19 years of the Plan.
- 3.14. There is therefore still more capacity in the plan through the remaining windfalls which could increase numbers in Reg. 19 to 52,646 (49,492 + 4,450 – 1,296 as the Explanation at table 6), which is a buffer of 30% above need, if projections are realised.
- 3.15. The reason given to Councils in papers for the increased numbers was “while the strategy continues to address local housing need as identified using the 2014-based projections as required by the Government’s standard methodology, it also recognises that the **2018-based projections for Greater Norwich indicate that household growth may be higher**. This also responds to the likely direction of travel for higher housing numbers for the area strongly indicated by Government”. [Emphasis added]

⁴ Page 47

⁵ GNPAMR 201819 Appendices pages 121 - 123

- 3.16. The Reg. 19 v 1.7 amplifies this by the inclusion at paragraph 178 that the higher buffer provides *“the **potential** to accommodate higher growth rates as signalled both by the Government’s “Planning for the Future” consultation and by the **2018-based projections for Greater Norwich which are somewhat higher than the 2014-based projections”***. [Emphasis added]
- 3.17. It is acknowledged that the household projections for the 3 combined District Authorities between 2018 and 2038 are 29,954 and 33,377 using the 2014-based and 2018-based table 406 figures respectively in the ONS principal positions.
- 3.18. However, the 2018-based projections introduced variants presenting alternative tables for higher and lower international migration and internal migration only. If the GNLP is determined to use the later published projections, contrary to Government dictates, it should assess the most appropriate variant table concerning migration levels, particularly after Brexit and the Government annual net international immigration target of 100,000.
- 3.19. In any case, the reasons presented to the 3 Cabinets and at paragraph 178 of Reg. 19 were overturned in the 16 December 2020 Government Response to its national consultation⁶ which
- Confirmed that the existing methodology of calculating housing numbers would continue using the 2014-based projections; and
 - The direction of travel for higher growth rates of housing numbers was clarified as applicable to 20 specific urban areas by the addition of a 35 percent uplift in the requirements. Greater Norwich is not one of these areas.
- 3.20. The Government response goes on to insist on the fact that the standard method *“does not override other planning policies, including the protections set out in Paragraph 11b of the NPPF (which specifically allows for a divergence from the standard method in cases where the scale of development would cause harm). It is for local authorities to determine precisely how many homes to plan for and where those homes are most appropriately located. In doing this they should take into account their local circumstances and constraints”*.
- 3.21. This flexibility suggests that there is no need to increase the Housing Requirement beyond the number derived by the standard methodology, and instead it could be used to set lower targets due to local circumstances and constraints.
- 3.22. The issue of Reg. 19 v 1.7 post-dates this Government announcement but persists with the increase in the buffer despite the Government continuance of the

⁶<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system/outcome/government-response-to-the-local-housing-need-proposals-in-changes-to-the-current-planning-system>

existing methodology confirming the housing need calculation of 40,541 and negating any necessity to revise numbers from those in the Reg. 18C consultation.

- 3.23. Whilst the caution expressed by GNDP Board due possible implications of the proposals in the Government consultation is understood, this need for prudence was subsequently proven to be unnecessary by the 16 December 2020 Government announcement.
- 3.24. Inexplicably, no consideration was given to this reversal of the Government position by the Cabinets of the 3 Councils in January 2021 when determining that the draft as it stands should progress to Reg. 19 public consultation.
- 3.25. As noted above the buffer with the additional potential number of windfalls is 30% which will result in putting Greater Norwich close to the category of larger urban areas which the Government did not consider appropriate in its consultation response.
- 3.26. At a GNDP Board meeting on 16 December 2020, members were aware of the likely Government response to the 'Planning for the future' consultation to be announced later in the day but determined to approve the Reg. 19 v 1.4 iteration with authority to officers to check the plan after the formal announcement and make revisions as necessary.
- 3.27. Reg. 19 v 1.7 is the version subsequently sent to Council Cabinets for approval in January 2021 after officer revisions to Reg. 19 v 1.4 approved by GNDP on 16 December 2020 which did not revert to the housing numbers proposed in Reg. 18C despite the reason given in the Board papers no longer being valid.
- 3.28. The unsubstantive superseded reasons given to the Councils for the increased housing numbers are unsafe and do not justify any change from the calculations for Reg. 18C.
- 3.29. The Cabinets of the 3 Councils have approved that the draft Reg. 19 v 1.7 should be sent to public consultation on soundness.
- 3.30. At a subsequent Cabinet meeting of Norwich City on 11 February 2021 discussing climate change, the question was raised concerning the implications for this critical issue of increasing the buffer to 22% in the Reg. 19 draft.
- 3.31. The response by a planning officer was that GNDP Board was in the process of commissioning an updated Housing Needs study which would be due in May 2021 and it is **expected** that this will support the housing numbers in the plan.
- 3.32. An expectation of future confirmation of one of the critical aspects of the Plan from a report yet to be commissioned cannot be considered as sound or fair.

- 3.33. The Reg. 19 approach to housing numbers is against the Government latest direction and contrary to the principles outlined in Reg. 18 on which the public made representation and which still apply after the 16 December 2020 Government response.
- 3.34. It is difficult to follow the exact projections for windfalls which seem to change with the wind direction and fluctuate from 5,600 in Reg. 18A, 3,780 in Reg. 18C and 4,450 in Reg. 19, none of which match the average annual total of 344 reported by GNDP in the 2028/19 5 year Land supply submission.
- 3.35. The windfalls in Reg. 19 at Table 6 are changed from Reg. 18 to 4,450 of which 29% (not 30% as stated) is include as part of the potential delivery.
- 3.36. It should be noted that there are also 800 homes under Policy 7.5 which are also windfalls in limited village locations and on small sized sites. By any definition these are also windfalls and therefore the total potential windfall in Reg. 19 is 5,250 of which 2,096 only are allocated in the housing potential.
- 3.37. These are tabulated below for comparison.

		Reg. 18A	Reg. 18A Option with Windfalls	Reg. 18C	Reg. 19	Reg. 19 Option with full Windfalls
		A	B	C	D	E
Local Housing Need	(i)	38,988	38,988	40,541	40,541	40,541
Delivery	(ii)			2,938	5,240	5,240
Existing commitment	(iii)	35,665	35,665	33,565	31,452	31,452
Shortfall	(iv)	3,323	3,323	4,038	3,849	3,849
New allocations	(v)	7,222	7,222	7,840	10,704	10,704
Homes through Policy 7.5	(vi)				800	800
Windfalls	(vii)		5,600		1,296	4,450
Housing Delivery/Potential		(iii)+(v)	(iii)+(v)+(vii)	(ii)+(iii)+(v)	(ii)+(iii)+(v)+(vi)+(vii)	(ii)+(iii)+(v)+(vi)+(vii)
		42,887	48,487	44,343	49,492	52,646
Buffer above Need		10%	24%	9%	22%	30%

Column A is the **Preferred Alternative** at Reg. 18A assuming new allocations include Windfalls.

Column B is the Reasonable Alternative with Windfalls extra to new allocations which was not presented in Reg. 18A.

Column C is the Proposal at Reg. 18C after earlier consultation feedback assuming Windfalls to be in the new allocations.

Column D is the Single Proposal at Reg. 19 as presented and without further consultation.

Column E is Reg. 19 if all the 4,450 Windfalls are built out.

Cell A(i) and B(i) are years 2017 to 2036. Cells C(i), D(i) and E(i) are years 2018 to 2038

Cell C(ii) is delivery to 2018/19. Cells D(ii) and E(ii) are to 2019/20

Row (vi) are Small Windfall sites in villages under Policy 7.5

Cell E(vii) is the total of Windfalls as stated in Reg. 19 table 6

4. Windfalls

- 4.1. The consultations are unclear on how to account for windfalls and Reg. 19 includes an allowance of 30% of historic windfall levels which is at odds with the current 5 year land supply calculations using up to 66% and which, in the absence of any proposals to the contrary, there was an expectation would be adopted for the GNLP as part of the existing commitment.
- 4.2. NPPF allows windfalls to be reflected in plans as paragraph 70 “Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of **anticipated supply**, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends. Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area”. [Emphasis added]
- 4.3. GNDP confirms this evidence in the 2019 5 year land supply submission⁷.
- 4.4. As noted above, the reliable source of supply for windfalls should be the latest 5 year land supply submission at Appendix D1⁸ for which the annual average for the three authorities over the past 10 years is 344, excluding garden developments, which equates to 6,536 over the 19 years remaining after deducting delivery to end of financial year 2019/20.
- 4.5. There are allowances for windfalls in the calculations on a staggered progression basis of Nil, 20%, 45%, 66% and 66% of this annual average for years 1 - 5 in the calculations.
- 4.6. An explanation is required why 66% is considered reasonable as an allowance in the 5 year land supply but should not be similarly discounted from the new sites allocations in the GNLP which would, if applied, negate the need for additional new allocations above the Reg.18C proposals.
- 4.7. The calculations should be on the same basis, if an allowance for 66% of the proven historic windfalls is included in the base calculations for the 5 year land supply to which a buffer is then added, why should not this principle be followed in the Plan?
- 4.8. By adopting the same principle for windfalls in the GNLP as that used in the 5 Year and supply for the figures in Reg. 18C table 6 the Housing Need and existing commitment including windfalls compare favourably negating the need for any new allocations.

⁷ GNDPAMR – 201819 Appendices

⁸ GNDPAMR – 201819 Appendices

Housing Need	40,541	
Delivery deducted	2,938	
Remainder over 19 years	37,403	
Existing Commitment		33,565
Add Windfalls @66% of historic levels ⁹		4,314
Total potential		37,879

- 4.9. There should be clear policy on windfalls, outside those under Policy 7.5, which ensures that each should not be considered solely on its individual site merits but only approved if it compares **more favourably** on environmental and sustainability criteria than other sites already designated in Reg. 19.
- 4.10. Ideally, if a highly sustainable windfall is approved it would seem logical to then remove a lesser development of equivalent size within the hierarchy.
- 4.11. However, it will be apparent that sites already included in the plan cannot later be removed which is why allocations should be kept at a minimum to allow proper comparative sustainability and environmental appraisals.
- 4.12. Any land required to meet the housing numbers should be released on an environmental hierarchical basis of all registered interests at the time.
- 4.13. It is suggested that if the GNDP now wishes to change (1) the principles being applied to windfalls and (2) the basis of the buffer provision which is not supported by the latest Government response to its 'Planning for the Future' consultation but will be supported by a study yet to be published, both modifications should be offered back to another Reg. 18 consultation, which has previously been mooted by the GNDP Board, as and when the study is available so that the public can assess the actual evidence.
- 4.14. It must be remembered that the Housing Need figure already includes a buffer to the annual household projection figures to account for affordability and if one takes this into account the GNLP is proposing a staggering 76% buffer above household projections between 2018 and 2038 $[(52,646 - 29,954) \div 29,954 = 75.76\%]$.
5. Inconsistencies and Anomalies in Consultation Documents

Housing Requirement

- 5.1. Reg. 18C and Reg. 19 both still fail to state a **Housing Requirement** to meet the Local Housing Need (LHN) after taking into account constraints and opportunities, instead they focus on allocations numbers to ensure the LHN can be delivered.

⁹ As 2018/19 5 Year land supply App D1 66% of 6,536

- 5.2. This is not the purpose of a Strategic Plan and the deviation from the standard language of Government publications makes understanding what is being proposed very difficult.
- 5.3. The variances in numbers with or without windfalls, with or without the necessity of a buffer to ensure delivery do not determine the **Housing Requirement**.
- 5.4. It is worth repeating paragraph 4.19 of Reg. 18A in full which helped define the basis of the first public consultation.

*The plan can provide for **additional dwellings to support economic growth**. The **Government's draft standard methodology means the OAN already includes a significant uplift to address lack of affordability** of around 400 dwellings per year (7,600 over 19 years). This uplift to support affordability also **provides for homes to support other needs such as economic growth**. The City Deal seeks to deliver an additional 13,000 jobs by 2031 on top of the 27,000 jobs planned for in the JCS. The SHMA calculates how many homes would be required in the GNLP to support this enhanced growth. **A simple recalculation of the SHMA assessment to rebase to 2017 suggests that around 40,700 dwellings would be needed to support potential jobs growth (forecast growth plus City Deal aspirations)**. Therefore, the OAN of **38,988 dwellings provides for the majority of the additional housing growth required to support the City Deal, although around 1,700 further dwellings could be required**. Neither the SHMA nor the standard methodology requires this additional growth to be included in the OAN. However, to support our City Deal and ensure economic potential can be met, the GNLP would need to allocate sufficient opportunities to allow for this additional housing growth to come forward. [Emphasis added]*

- 5.5. There is only one interpretation of this paragraph that the 38,988 housing requirement will meet growth ambitions of Greater Norwich including all but 1,700 of the target jobs figure.
- 5.6. On this interpretation the Housing Need including the affordability adjustment should also be the Housing Requirement which should be reflected in the GNLP and not confused with all the alternative numbers and terms used in Reg. 18C and Reg. 19.
- 5.7. The later documents are fixated on land supply with delivery buffers between 9% and 30% and ignore the fundamental of the **Housing Requirement** to meet the growth taking into account constraints and opportunities.
- 5.8. The 2012 version of the NPPF (applicable at the time of Reg. 18A) required plans to *"take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and **set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for***

development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities.”¹⁰ [Emphasis added]

- 5.9. There is uncertainty and confusion on the terms “**Total Housing Figure**” (Reg. 18C – Table 6), **Housing Growth Needs** (Heading Reg. 18C - before paragraph 157 and Reg. 19 before paragraph 176) and “**Housing Potential Figure**” (Reg. 19 – Table 6) and how they relate to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement that the “**Housing Requirement**” is that which should be in the Plan.
- 5.10. Unfortunately, the Glossaries offer no assistance in understanding these terms.
- 5.11. Housing numbers calculations consulted under Reg. 18A are set out in paragraphs 4.18 to 4.25 using the 2017 SHMA report prior to the introduction of the simplified Government’s standard method of calculating Local Housing Needs to replace the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) methodology.
- 5.12. The conclusion, on which comments were sought, was that a 9% buffer was required to ensure delivery of the OAN with the ancillary question of whether this buffer should include windfalls.
- 5.13. The retrospective assumption implied from the GNDP Chairman’s statement at the 30 September 2020 Board meeting is that if all windfalls progressed this would help ensure a higher housing need if necessitated by a change in the calculation methodology could also be met and therefore also implies that a delivery buffer would not be necessary.
- 5.14. The housing numbers stated against **Total Housing Figure** in Reg. 18C and **Housing Potential Figure** in Reg. 19 are misleading in that the former does not include any windfalls and only a proportion is included in the latter, giving a misleading indication of anticipated totals if all the windfalls are realised.
- 5.15. The inclusion of a percentage of the anticipated windfalls in Reg. 19 reverses the previous stance of GNDP proposed for Reg. 18C without explanation as why this principle is now an acceptable methodology.

Reasonable Alternatives

- 5.16. The 30 September 2020 GNDP Board papers state that “Reasonable Alternatives” have been the subject of consultation and the extra sites can therefore be allocated to meet the extra housing numbers which at that time were under review through the Government planning consultation.
- 5.17. It is acknowledged that the Interim SA as part of the Reg. 18 evidence set out 4 scenarios as Reasonable Alternatives for determining the Housing Requirement.

¹⁰ NPPF 2012 Para. 17

- 5.18. However, it is clear that while these were stated as the basis of the Interim SA they were not translated into the Reg. 18A questionnaire and contradicted by other sections within the Interim SA.
- 5.19. Both the Reg. 19 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) perpetuate this misconception that Reasonable Alternatives have been the subject of consultation with the following quoted extract from the Interim SA¹¹
- *GNLP Housing Requirement is equal to Objectively Assessed Need (OAN). Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20%. Forecast Windfall does not form part of the Delivery Buffer.*
 - *GNLP Housing Requirement is equal to OAN. Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20%. Forecast Windfall forms part of the Delivery Buffer.*
 - *GNLP Housing Requirement is equal to OAN plus Response to City Deal. Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20%. Forecast Windfall does not form part of the Delivery Buffer.*
 - *GNLP Housing Requirement is equal to OAN plus Response to City Deal. Delivery Buffer is Approx. 20%. Forecast Windfall forms part of the Delivery Buffer.*
- 5.20. For clarity, the three specific questions in Reg. 18A (4, 5 and 6) for Reasonable Alternatives for housing growth numbers offered to the public were:
- (4) Do you agree that the OAN for 2017-2036 is around 39,000 homes?
- (5) Do you agree that the plan should provide for a 10% delivery buffer and allocate additional sites for around 7,200 homes?
- (6) Do you agree that windfall development should be in addition to the 7,200 homes?
- 5.21. The consultation offered no alternative for housing numbers apart from the question of whether windfalls should be within or extra to the buffer.
- 5.22. The single preferred option was presented as 42,887 homes (OAN as 38,988 + 10% buffer). Without any site allocations in the Reg. 18A consultation it is unclear whether this was including or excluding windfalls.
- 5.23. What is clear from the Draft Statement of Consultation Responses, September 2018 is that a majority (110 against 45) considered that windfalls should be part of the 7,200 houses and therefore within the buffer.

¹¹ Para. 7.3 of Interim SA (pages 27 – 30)

- 5.24. It must be remembered that the 7,200 homes in these Reg. 18A questions relate to the allocation on new sites which are required over and above existing commitments to achieve the stated housing target of circa 42,900 over the plan period.
- 5.25. Reg. 18A consultation offered 6 growth options for location distribution of the planned housing growth, all providing a total provision of **42,865** homes, including 7,200 new allocations, with a note that the final selection may be a combination of the alternatives.
- 5.26. Preferences for distribution options were the subject of further questions in the Reg. 18A consultation.
- 5.27. The responses to all of the specific questions on numbers are summarised in the draft Statement of Consultation, September 2018 and presumably have been given consideration in the Reg. 19 drafting.
- 5.28. It is beyond doubt of the housing numbers proposed for consultation in Reg. 18A is 42,865 rounded to 42,900.
- 5.29. The public were not asked specific questions on the options in the Interim SA although there was a general invitation to make representations on this separate accompanying document.
- 5.30. It is difficult to understand the logic of the Reasonable Alternatives for Housing Requirement section of the Interim SA as it explicitly contradicts the consultation questionnaire which states at paragraph 4.22 *"A delivery buffer lower than 10% would make it much less likely that needs would be met. A higher figure might be expected to increase the likelihood that housing need would be delivered, but it would also increase uncertainty for both housing developers and infrastructure providers, potentially risking delivery."* [Emphasis added]
- 5.31. The relevance of the section becomes more unreliable in that, notwithstanding the selected preferred alternative for the Housing Requirement should be the OAN plus a Delivery Buffer of 20% **including** windfalls, paragraph 7.5.7 then calculates a housing provision of 48,465 which adds 5,600 windfall allocations, representing a 24% buffer.
- 5.32. Paragraph 7.5.16 of the Interim SA then reverts to the Reg. 18 requirement for 7,200 new allocations in addition to the existing commitments and confirms the 6 distribution alternatives for the total of **42,865** homes as the Reg. 18A questionnaire.
- 5.33. The 4 Reasonable Alternatives, all with the 20% buffer, in the Interim SA are inconsistent with both the main Reg. 18A questionnaire and other data within the Interim SA.

- 5.34. Due to its inconsistency with the remainder of the consultation proposals, this section in the Interim SA for reasonable alternatives must be disregarded as it has not been taken forward in any of the housing calculations.
- 5.35. The subsequent Reg. 18C consultation, January to March 2020, changed the housing numbers proposed from those in Reg. 18A from circa 42,900 to 44,343 which was assumed to reflect the change of the plan period from 2017 – 2036 (19 years) to 2018 to 2038 (20 years).
- 5.36. This minor change was considered to be in line with the principles of the earlier Reg. 18A document, confirming the erroneous nature of the section in the Interim SA for a 20% buffer.
- 5.37. Again there is no doubt on housing numbers proposed in the Reg. 18C is 44,343.
- 5.38. No further supporting SA or HRA documents accompanied the Reg. 18C consultation which must assume that a conclusion had been reached that the contradictory alternative housing numbers in the Interim SA should not apply or has been discounted.
- 5.39. It is now disappointing that the final Reg. 19 SA and HRA documents try to give credibility and predominance to this anomalous section of the Reg. 18 suite of supporting documents.
- 5.40. Table 6 at paragraph 158 in the Reg. 18C Strategy states that the housing numbers provide a **9% buffer** to cater for any non-delivery of sites to ensure delivery of local housing need. **The publication version of the plan will aim to provide a minimum 10% buffer** (a minimum of a further 250 homes) which is likely to be provided through a combination of additional sites proposed through this consultation and contingency sites identified in this draft plan. [Emphasis added]
- 5.41. Notwithstanding the deliberate ill defined wording in the table to give wriggle room on numbers, paragraph 159 is more definitive stating *“In line with the above figures, **policy 1 provides for around 44,500 new homes, with a 9% buffer to ensure delivery.** In addition to the existing commitment of 1,349 homes, a minimum of 1,200 of these homes will be provided in village clusters in South Norfolk. Sites to provide these homes will be allocated in the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Site Allocations document.”* [Emphasis added]
- 5.42. The basis of the Reg. 18 Consultations indicated housing numbers with a 9% buffer addition, the only contradiction to this proposal is the section for reasonable alternatives in the Interim SA document which is itself contradicted by other sections in the Interim SA which support the housing numbers with the 9% buffer.

6. Is a Delivery Buffer required and, if considered necessary, what is a reasonable percentage?
- 6.1. The dictionary definition of a buffer in this context is – an extra supply of sites to prevent a shortage occurring to meet the need.
- 6.2. It has nothing to do with Housing Need or Housing Requirement.
- 6.3. References to “buffer” in NPPF are restricted to having relevance to the 5 Year land supply only and are not mentioned as being relevant to Plan making.
- 6.4. These extra allocations act as a contingency but by inclusion within the plan they become an integral part of it, at a stroke creating a **surplus** which is not necessary to meet the housing need, inevitably leading to cherry picking of the easiest and more profitable sites which are not necessarily those which will have the least impact on the environment or are the most beneficial for the climate.
- 6.5. The housing provision without a buffer is not explored in the consultations but is considered by many not only to be one reasonable but the preferred alternative, particularly relative to environmental protection and climate change.
- 6.6. Both the Reg. 18 and 19 consultation proposals also note a single site for 800 homes at Costessey as a contingency outside the Plan. In effect this is a further contingency to the buffer contingency in the GNLP.
- 6.7. The key to ensuring adequate land supply is regular robust monitoring and management practices and not the reliance on an excessive overprovision in the Plan.
- 6.8. What is the purpose of a buffer for land supply in the Plan, if the real management of this aspect is though the annual 5 year land supply compilations and returns?
- 6.9. NPPF requires policies in local plans and spatial development strategies to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy. Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future.
- 6.10. This requirement for review at a maximum of five yearly intervals negates the need for excess provision planned over 20 years, particularly if the principle has not been adequately tested through fair consultation.

- 6.11. Paragraph 179 of Reg. 19 GNLP Draft Plan confirms that the land supply in the annual 5 year land supply will be measured against the annual need over the remaining period of the plan after deducting completions to date for past years of the plan which it states to be **1,961** per annum.
- 6.12. In which case one has also to ask what is the purpose of an annual housing requirement of **2,475** for 20 years?
- 6.13. The Government also mandates Councils to annually submit figures under its Housing Deliver Test (HDT) over a three year cycle to determine whether the application of the penalty should be applied to the annual 5 year land supply calculations.
- 6.14. This requires the housing requirement in the calculations, for adopted plans less than 5 years old, to be the lower of EITHER the latest adopted housing requirement OR the minimum annual local housing need figure.
- 6.15. What is the relevance of creating an excessive notional average annual housing need figure of 2,475 over the 20 year life of the plan when the most recent HDT returns for Greater Norwich from 2015/16 to 2019/20 have been 1,693, 1,676, 1,634, 2,050 and 1,853 as reported in the published Government statistics?¹²
- 6.16. It appears from the returns that the housing need for GN can vary by 25% from one year to the next i.e. 2017/18 to 2018/19.
- 6.17. On 16 December 2020 the Government published an Indicative Housing Needs calculation for the whole of England. The annual projection for Greater Norwich is 2,008 p.a. based on the current calculation methodology, giving a need of 40,160 for the 20 years 2018 to 2038. This number is comparable with the 40,541 base housing needs in the draft plan.
- 6.18. Is there a point to having an average housing need which has been projected over a 20 year period stated in the plan when the annual LHN in the annual HDT submissions are so variable?
- 6.19. Common sense would suggest that the buffer allowance allocations and the contingency site should be listed separately outside the Plan in order of environmental preference to be activated as necessary to maintain the five year land supply as existing commitments are built out or delayed.
- 6.20. A controlled phased release of land would help environmental regeneration.
- 6.21. NPPF requires that a 5 % buffer should be added as default and a maximum of 20% as a penalty for failure to met delivery targets in the 5 year land supply calculations.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-delivery-test>

- 6.22. These buffers are in addition to any windfalls which may have been included in the base allocation, which is up to 66% in the GN 2019 5 year land supply submission.
- 6.23. Housing numbers, land supply and delivery are better controlled through management rather than setting arbitrary excessive targets for each in the GNLP.
- 6.24. The only figure which requires incorporation in the GNLP is the minimum housing need over the period which could change annually dependent upon delivery.
- 6.25. It is known that there are several relatively large sites which have been approved by planning committees since the draft Reg. 19 and awaiting agreement on S106 documentation etc. Presumably these sites will be part of the windfalls and should influence whether a buffer is required.

7. Deliverability

- 7.1. The Reg. 18 Stage C noted that “The plan promotes a pro-active approach to delivery through only allocating housing sites where a reasonable prospect of delivery, taking account of policy requirements in this plan, can be evidenced”. A footnote is added to this statement that “THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS IN THIS DRAFT PLAN WILL ONLY BE CARRIED FORWARD TO THE SUBMISSION VERSION OF THE PLAN IF EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED TO SHOW THAT THEY **WILL** BE DELIVERED BY 2038”. [Emphasis added]
- 7.2. This certainty has been downgraded in the Reg. 19 documents to a **reasonable prospect of delivery**, begging the question of whether allocations should be restricted to guaranteed delivery sites as those with a lower chance of progression should be classified as part of the windfalls, should they progress.
- 7.3. There is no certainty of delivery in the GNLP either annually or over the timescales of the plan, making annual monitoring and management even more crucial.
- 7.4. It must be recognised that the housing market is controlled by the large house builders and developers answerable only to shareholders and the stock market.
- 7.5. Historically, speed of overall housing delivery is dictated by the market, with the exception of periods, in the distant past, when there was large numbers of subsidised council housing built.
- 7.6. The Reg. 18A consultation confirmed that overprovision would increase uncertainty for housing developers and infrastructure providers, potentially risking delivery but the plan does not explain how the overprovision of sites through an excessive buffer will stabilise these historic market forces or reduce the risk.

- 7.7. It simply **hopes** that the past average percentage of realisations from planning permissions will increase by making available a larger pool of available sites.
- 7.8. Conversely, it is generally accepted that an oversupply against the demand (Need) will deflate prices which will in turn slow down the rate of new builds released by developers until prices and profitability stabilise.
- 7.9. This was acknowledged in the Reg. 18A documents which noted a higher buffer provision **would increase uncertainty** for both housing developers and infrastructure providers, potentially **risking delivery**.
- 7.10. If later evidence is available to reverse the definitive statement in Reg. 18A concerning the risk associated with overprovision of land, this should be made available to support the increase now proposed in land supply.
- 7.11. To simply drop the statement regarding increased uncertainty from the Reg. 19 documents without explanation does not alter it as a fact nor justify it as no longer pertinent.
- 7.12. By proposing land to provide 22% to 30% overprovision in the Plan, purely as a contingency, would certainly lead to a rush of planning applications to reserve the residential development land status and increase values but not necessarily leading to the houses being quickly built out.
- 7.13. The Delivery Statement at page 39 of the Reg. 19 draft plan that *“Where delivery cannot be demonstrated to be in accordance with agreed delivery plans for individual sites, the authorities will, as appropriate, make use of their legal powers to bring about strategically significant development, **including compulsory purchase**”* is intriguing but unworkable. [Emphasis added]
- 7.14. It would be beneficial to have an explanation of how taking over a development by one of the various Authority owned development companies across the three LPAs and the County Council will break these market forces. The only way this would have any impact would be if the Councils had control of a majority of the land which is clearly not feasible or desired.
- 7.15. Whilst laudable to ensure that housing needs are met, as a solution this is totally impractical, noting the financial losses by Norwich Regeneration Limited (wholly owned by Norwich City Council) on the first large scale development it undertook.
- 7.16. Paragraph 171 of NPPF notes that *“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; **allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework**; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”*[Emphasis added].

- 7.17. There is no evidence in the Reg. 19 Sustainability Appraisal that land allocation has been selected on the comparative basis of the least environmental degradation or that there is a hierarchy of sustainability compliance.
- 7.18. The Interim SA noted *“Due to the range of alternatives (sic sites) under consideration, and therefore possible permutations for the final plan, it is not reasonably practical at this stage to undertake an overall assessment of the impact of the Plan at this stage. This assessment will be undertaken for the purposes of the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the pre-submission version of the GNLP.”*
- 7.19. However most of the assessments in the Final SA are reproductions of the tables in the Interim SA and the hierarchy sustainable impact is still absent.
- 7.20. What would have been advantageous in the most recent Sustainability Appraisal to enable proper fair public scrutiny is a comparison of the 49,492 with the 44,343 houses including a clear statement of additional benefits and/or adverse sustainability and environmental implications.
8. Sustainable Development
- 8.1. The Glossary definition given in the Reg. 19 documents on page 131 is
- “A term mostly derived from the 1987 Brundtland Report. Interpretation varies but typically the term means meeting economic and social goals **without undermining the environment**, as well as meeting needs of the present without compromising the environment for future generations. In 2015 the United Nations agreed 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be reached by 2030. The UK is amongst the countries leading the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.”* [Emphasis added]
- 8.2. This definition is out of date in that the 2019 NPPF at Section 15 requires that policies and decisions should contribute to and **enhance** the natural and local environment.
- 8.3. Changes to the NPPF in the current Government public consultation goes further in proposing changes to paragraph 11a) that *“all plans should **promote a sustainable pattern of development** that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; **improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas)** and adapt to its effects”* replacing the emphasis in the current NPPF that plans should **positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area**, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change. [Emphasis added]
- 8.4. Reg. 19 Policy 3 pushes environmental protection and enhancement onto individual development proposals but adds an overriding dominant factor of

benefits and minimising harm without explanation of what is considered will be a benefit, presumably growth!

- 8.5. When determining a single planning application it is impossible to make comparisons with other potential sites which may be considered as more sustainable, which I understand should be the purpose of the plan.
- 8.6. This overriding growth benefit factor is against the Government's 'direction of travel' on protecting the environment.
- 8.7. There are two specific policies in the GNLP relating to enhancement of the environment namely:
- 8.7.1. At least 10% net biodiversity gain (on or off site).
- 8.7.2. Addressing the potential detrimental impact of visitor pressure caused by residents on sites protected under the Habitats Regulations
- by 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.
- 8.8. It is regrettable that the above reference to Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard does not mention the remainder of the quoted section namely;
- no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace;
 - there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
 - there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km;
 - there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.
- 8.9. The purpose of this model is to guide local authorities in identifying the **current level of provision** of accessible natural greenspace and to assist with the setting of local standards and targets.
- 8.10. The GNLP fails in its assessment of how the current environment equates to these standards and plans for any rebalance necessary.

- 8.11. If we have learned anything from Covid pandemic is that there is a shortage of natural spaces locally which can be accessed by residents without first having to drive.
- 8.12. Those few local natural spaces which are available have become overused during the past 12 months leading to significant damage.
- 8.13. There is no reference in the plan to the general environment or the different values of the degrees of urban/rural settings.
- 8.14. The environment is equally important to urban areas particularly as the decline in the size of private gardens in the urban fringe developments means these natural spaces are should be protected as essential for wellbeing.
- 8.15. Because urban environments are more densely populated and therefore constrained in opportunities for enhancement, there is much greater temptation to redress this in rural areas but at the same time there is a greater danger of degradation of the existing rural environment and increasing travel to access them.
- 8.16. Sustainability for rural areas has a wider meaning to also include protection the resources, maintain the economy and not let the standard of life suffer for the present residents or those that follow.
- 8.17. The government study in 2011 of areas noted the classification of the three districts comprising Greater Norwich as:
Norwich – Urban
Broadland – Urban with significantly rural
South Norfolk – Mainly rural
- 8.18. The GNLP morphs the different geographical classifications into a single entity with a single sustainability policy which will risk losing much of the rural classification.
- 8.19. The sustainability of the environment is inadequate in the plan in consideration of the diverse nature across the 3 districts and the equal standing given to the environment in the NPPF to those of economic and social objectives.
- 8.20. Concerning biodiversity the study states “BNG will still require the application of the mitigation **hierarchy to avoid, mitigate or compensate** for biodiversity losses on any sites within the GNLP. BNG will operate in addition to these approaches, with the aim of ensuring that definite improvements to biodiversity are delivered.”¹³

¹³ Page 5 of Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Study

- 8.21. Avoidance of biodiversity harm should be the principle consideration before deciding whether mitigation is acceptable.
- 8.22. Concern must be expressed regarding a note in the minutes of a HRA meeting of 28 March 2018 that *“SANGS, net gain or biodiversity, flood management, health and wellbeing benefits, could be supplied by one piece of land.”*¹⁴ This solution would not be acceptable.
- 8.23. Clarity is required in the GNLP that biodiversity net gain will be implemented in the locality of and appropriate to each development. It is unacceptable to denigrate the environment of any area on the assumption that another will be improved as compensation.
9. Climate Change and Carbon Reduction
- 9.1. Returning to the 22% - 30% buffer overprovision, it must be obvious that any excess house building above need will slow the path to zero carbon.
- 9.2. Climate change reduction locally, nationally and globally should be of primary overriding consideration but the implications of overprovision of land for this internationally agreed necessity is not addressed in the draft Reg. 19.
- 9.3. Section 19 (1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires 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”*.
- 9.4. The vision of the GNLP includes the statement at paragraph 131 that *“our plan will have helped to achieve reductions in our greenhouse gas emissions to contribute to the national zero emission target by 2050.”*
- 9.5. Where is the evidence of this?
- 9.6. Whilst the GNLP Climate Change Statement states that it will *“have an effective monitoring regime to ensure evidence on reducing carbon dioxide emissions, recorded against the Climate Change Act and other key national statutory and policy frameworks”*, it does not include clear evidence-based carbon reduction targets, which are needed for the GNLP to demonstrate how it will meet its legal obligations.
- 9.7. There is no mention of the December 2020 target announced by the Government for a carbon emissions reduction of at least 68% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

¹⁴ HRA Interim report December 2019 – Appendix 2

- 9.8. Carbon emission details are available from 2005 but the plan should establish the 1990 levels for the GNLP area together to enable monitoring against this target.
- 9.9. Carbon emission reductions for the three Authorities from 2005 to 2018¹⁵ were:
- Broadland - 23% reduction (1.77% average annually)
 - Norwich - 42% reduction (3.23% average annually)
 - South Norfolk – 20% reduction (1.54% average annually)
- 9.10. It is essential for the GNLP to establish the carbon emissions between 1990 and 2005 setting the baseline emissions position for the plan to adequately monitor reductions to 2030 ensuring the minimum 68% reduction is achieved.
- 9.11. The data from 2005 would suggest that Broadland and South Norfolk will need to accelerate the speed of reduction to 2030 if they are to meet this Government target.
- 9.12. It is acknowledged that rural areas have higher levels of emissions than the national average which may require stricter measures and which should be addressed in the plan.
- 9.13. Both Broadland and South Norfolk have recorded slight increases in carbon emissions between 2005 and 2018 for transport.
- 9.14. Transport emissions are a critical area which needs to be addressed particularly noting that transport is 36% and 53% of the total emissions for Broadland and South Norfolk respectively against the national average of 36%.
- 9.15. There are no specific proposals in the GNLP outlining how this carbon emissions imbalance from transport will be resolved or evidenced that it will not be exaggerated by the location proposals for housing and employment in the plan coupled with any attendant additional transport infrastructure and increased commuting journeys.
- 9.16. Although the are numbers quoted in the GNLP for both jobs and housing there is no indication of correlation between them to determine whether transport emissions from work commuting will further increase over the period of the plan or more importantly by 2030.
- 9.17. It is probable that the site allocations will increase transport use rather than encourage a modal shift to other forms of transport as the ambition of the GNLP.
- 9.18. Reliance on the switch to electric vehicles for transport emission reductions will assist over the longer term but this will still be marginal up to 2030 unless the GNLP has information to the contrary outside the Reg. 19 draft.

¹⁵ UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2018

- 9.19. The GNLP vision is endorsed but concern must be expressed that it is woefully lacking on specific measures and targets.

10. Affordable Housing

- 10.1. Policy 5¹⁶ appears to restrict the use of Viability Assessments (VA)s in planning applications with the intention of reducing the percentage of Affordable Housing, to Brownfield sites.
- 10.2. Whilst this is welcome to counter the misuse VAs which has almost become almost standard practice, Section 57 of NPPF states that it is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a VA and therefore the legality of this Policy needs to be considered.
- 10.3. Does this Policy restricting the use of VAs to brownfield sites create a conflict with the NPPF?
- 10.4. Policy 5 also differentiates sites allocated within Neighbourhood Plans proposing that a different percentage of affordable housing can be stated therein, overriding the minimum of 33% across the plan area.
- 10.5. The Affordable Housing Need is stated at paragraph 271 of Reg. 19 v 1.7 as 11,030 between 2015 and 2036 being 28% of the overall housing need as established in the 2017 SHMA Report.
- 10.6. The Housing Need has since been recalculated as 40,541 but the number of affordable housing has not been reassessed over the revised timescales.
- 10.7. Assuming the affordable housing percentages will apply to the 22% buffer of allocations above the defined overall housing need, basic mathematics determines that the number of affordable housing units will exceed the need by 2,427 if all the sites are developed over the period.
- 10.8. Affordable Housing provision on a site is a contributor to establishing profitability for the developer and therefore may inhibit development if there is an overprovision, continuing to the circularity of controlling the supply of all housing.
- 10.9. The Plan does not indicate the reduced number of affordable homes are already in the system through the reductions in Neighbourhood plans and committed sites with approved lower percentages of affordable housing.
- 10.10. All this data should be readily available to the GNLP and the plan should show the numbers of affordable houses which will be provided against this policy for meeting the overall housing need target and how this will be managed in

¹⁶ GNLP page 82

scenarios where the overall need is not being met and if annual completions are nearer to the target including the 22% buffer.

- 10.11. Without this study comparing potential extra affordable homes if the buffer is built out and reductions from Neighbourhood plans and lower approved numbers in existing commitments the policy on affordable homes is meaningless.

11. Infrastructure Roads

- 11.1. The plan is short of information as to the effect on transport anticipated from the correlation for housing and employment sites and the implications for climate change.
- 11.2. Paragraph 294 of Reg.19 reports the conclusion of the Employment Town Centre and Retail study (GVA 2017) and the Avison Young 2020 addendum in that *“although Greater Norwich has enough employment land overall, most of this is out-of-centre and is **neither the preferred location for some growth sectors nor the most sustainable place for high intensity employment / office growth**”*. [Emphasis added]
- 11.3. The paragraph adds that *“there is a risk that this may lead to new such development going to **less sustainable** locations with serious impacts on the vitality of the city centre and undermining policies to encourage modal shift. Therefore, it is essential that this plan ensures that high density employment uses are concentrated in highly accessible locations in particular the city centre, and that loss of existing floorspace in the city centre is resisted”*. [Emphasis added]
- 11.4. I do not consider that this concern is adequately addressed in the plan with the majority of employment locations at the cardinal points on the edges of the urban fringe and 13% only in the city centre which will not resolve this risk or reduce reliance on the car for commuting.
- 11.5. Commuting patterns will change in that journeys will in future be both from the city centre outwards and from the towns and villages inwards, both then being distributed around this perimeter, reversing historic trends of 50% of the workforce in Norwich travelling from outside the city.
- 11.6. Policy 4 in the draft Reg. 19 v 1.7 notes that *“Transport improvements will support and embrace new technologies and develop the role of Norwich as the regional capital, support strategic growth in the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor, improve access to market towns and rural areas and promote sustainable and active transport”*.
- 11.7. There is little to show how this will be implemented apart from the statement that it will be achieved by Implementation of the Transport for Norwich Strategy including:

- significant improvements to the bus, cycling and walking networks to promote modal shift;
- developing the role of the park and ride system;
- changing attitudes to travel;
- delivery of the Norwich Western Link road

11.8. Whilst supporting the first three of the above strategies there is little substance in how these will be guaranteed and will require significant financial support from the Government.

11.9. I object strongly to the specific inclusion of the Norwich Western Link as part of the GNLP as this new road would inevitably lead to more vehicular use which directly opposes the other aims, and the £120m Government grant which has been applied for would be better used for these other ambitions.

12. Norwich Western Link

12.1. There are conflicting statements in the GNLP concerning the NWL and it is unclear in the plan of its purpose, whether it is essential to growth or merely a local improvement to reduce congestion in the area.

12.2. Reg. 19 paragraph 138 simply notes the NWL as one of the road schemes which **will** enhance transport in Greater Norwich.

12.3. The support of this project by GNLP Board is confirmed by the statement in its 2020 Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan which confirms “*The Greater Norwich authorities are **promoting** the construction of a new highway link (‘Norwich Western Link’), which will link the Broadland Northway with the A47 to the west of Norwich*”¹⁷. [Emphasis added]

12.4. The NWL is included in the Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan (NIDP) 2017 – 2027 (latest update 2019) which is promoted by Norfolk County Council and all the local authorities of the county as partners.

12.5. The NIDP includes the statement that all projects included therein are judged on three criteria

- **Delivering significant housing and jobs growth**[Emphasis added]
- Identified in existing plans/programmes
- Have a committed route to delivery

12.6. The GNLP does not contain any reference to the NWL delivering any of the housing or jobs, unlike the existing JCS which made the Broadland Growth Triangle dependent on the NDR.

¹⁷ Paragraph 3.9

- 12.7. At the Planning Inquiry for the NDR which specifically and deliberately excluded a link across the Wensum Valley to the A47, Norfolk County Council was adamant that the $\frac{3}{4}$ scheme as it was dubbed was essential for housing and employment growth to North Norwich.
- 12.8. The NDR is now completed at the cost of £250m to the Exchequer, allowing both housing and employment as set out in the 2014 JCS Strategy to be progressed.
- 12.9. The employment sites at Policy 3 in the 2014 adopted JCS (*within the Norwich Policy Area, Thorpe St Andrew, Longwater, Norwich Research Park, Norwich Airport, Rackheath, Hethel and Wymondham will be the focus of further jobs growth*) are basically as those now being promoted by the GNLP.
- 12.10. The only apparent change is the addition of the Food Hub at Easton, for which a Local Development Order (LDO) was granted in 2016.
- 12.11. To date there is a single occupant, Condimentum which is a mustard milling facility being the remnants of the former Colmans factory the majority of whose workforce has migrated to Burton.
- 12.12. The Condimentum site processes the mustard only and the bulk dry mustard powder is transported to Burton for final processing, creating more food miles and carbon emissions for the finished product.
- 12.13. It is difficult to see how the NWL at an estimated cost of £160m is necessitated by this single change from the existing JCS growth agenda for the creation of a Food Hub LDO of 18 hectares can be justified, particularly noting the essential external financial support to date of
- A £1,000,000 grant by NALEP for infrastructure
 - Proposal for 12 speculative starter units for rental (thought to be in the region of circa £9m although confidentiality has kept this from the public domain) to be undertaken by Broadland District Council using various forms of public finance.
 - Possible grant funding for a vertical farm on the site by a Dutch company as included on the Norfolk County Council Cabinet forward plan.
- 12.14. The LDO planning decision for the Food Hub does not reference the need for the NWL but for clarity currently only 40% of the floorspace is permitted, the remainder being dependant upon the provision of a direct access to the A47.
- 12.15. The Highways England proposals for dualling the section of the A47 between Easton and North Tuddenham includes a major junction which will provide this access but as far as I can see will serve little other purpose, adding further to the total subsidy from the public purse.

- 12.16. For the sake of openness, I declare an interest in previously vehemently campaigning against the Food Hub as it is an inappropriate location and question at what point does a stimulus of public money change from promoting growth to being poured down the drain without any hope of paying back the economy.
- 12.17. If I was cynical I would think that the Food Hub was deliberately sited to justify housing growth through a possible new settlement at Honingham (which is not included in the current GNLP but is under consideration in a future iteration) and as a reason for a complete outer outer ring road to Norwich.
- 12.18. Norfolk County Council has published its draft Norfolk Transport Plan 4 Strategy 2021 - 2036 on its website in which a further desperate attempt is made to justify the NWL as one of the priorities *“to tackle infrastructure deficit”*. The priorities include the Norwich Western Link, A140 Long Stratton Bypass, A10 West Winch Housing Access Road, full dualling of the A47 and improvements to the major rail links to London and Cambridge.
- 12.19. Policy 14 of the Strategy outlining plans for access to and around Norwich include the introductory paragraph *“NCC want to encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking, while also improving the capacity of the road network, in particular through the completion of the Norwich Western Link.”* [Emphasis added]
- 12.20. There is no explanation as how the NWL will encourage more sustainable forms of transport, in fact creation of new roads have the opposite effect.
- 12.21. Policy 8 is *“Our priority will be to improve major road and rail connections between larger places in the county, and to major ports, **airports** and cities in the rest of the UK.”* [Emphasis added]
- 12.22. Amplification of ‘transport gateway connections’ is stated as *“Norwich Airport and the ports at King’s Lynn and Great Yarmouth, including a future Third River Crossing for the River Yare and the Norwich Western Link”*.
- 12.23. I fail to see how the NWL is critical to any of these gateway connections. Access to the Airport has direct links to all arterial roads in to the Norwich Urban area shown on map 7 of Reg. 19¹⁸ with the exception of A47 from the west.
- 12.24. It should be noted that the distance from the A11 to the airport in an anticlockwise direction with the NWL in place is the same as the existing route clockwise using the Southern Bypass and the NDR.
- 12.25. It is useful to refresh memories of what was stated in the NDR Economic report¹⁹ regarding the Airport *“Norwich International Airport’s catchment area is Norfolk*

¹⁸ Page 53

extending into Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Passengers driving to the Airport from the south will mostly come via the A11 and A140 and presently use the outer or inner ring roads to access the Airport. The NDR would provide an alternative route from the south, accessed via the A47 and Postwick. Passengers travelling from the north and east would also benefit from reduced journey times.”

- 12.26. The planning Inspectors were made aware of the connectivity to the airport from the A47 west at the time of the Planning Inquiry for the NDR and Requirement 26 was introduced within the DCO which states

“The NDR classified road must not open to traffic until details indicating the preferred routing for vehicles travelling to and from the A47 (to the west of Norwich) to Norwich International Airport and Cromer have been submitted to and, following consultation with the Highways Agency, Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and Breckland District Council, approved by the relevant planning authority.

- 12.27. This preferred route with sign posting was agreed by all parties and implemented using the arterial A47 from the Longwater junction (which has recently been upgraded as one of the Bus Rapid transport routes) and two sections of the outer ring road onto the A140 arterial road to the Airport.

- 12.28. In addition vehicles can use the existing B1535 between the A47 and A1067 across the Wensum Valley, but this now appears not to be a favoured option as by the authorities despite its upgrade and ‘B’ road status in 2015. (This route may gain popularity with the proposed grade separated junction to the A47 proposed in the A47 upgrade.)

- 12.29. A further upgrade to the B1535, still as a single carriageway, was one of the discounted options (Option A) in the NWL consultations while the other three selections were dualled.

- 12.30. What is the economic benefit of an alternative route to save a few minutes for the relative minority of business and people travelling to the Airport from the narrow corridor to the west of Norwich?

- 12.31. At Reg. 19 paragraph 240 the GNDP attempts to distance itself from the HRA obligations in connection with the NWL by stating that the scheme is identified as one of Norfolk County Council priorities and in paragraph 245 that the **GNDP authorities** will only give it support *“provided that their promoters and the relevant competent authority are able to demonstrate that they would not conflict with other policies of the plan and where there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of sites protected under the Habitats Regulations Directive.”*

¹⁹ <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/roads-and-transport/ndr/dco-application-documents/development-economics-report-previously-wider-economic-impact-report-pdf--2480kb.pdf> - page 59

- 12.32. This is slightly perverse in that Norfolk County Council is a GNLP partner and presumably has accepted that GNDP has authority to act on its behalf and visa versa.
- 12.33. The inclusion of paragraph 245 was added to the Reg. 19 document in response to the HRA Report that the NWL and other projects are outside the control of the GNDP.
- 12.34. Whilst this may be true under HRA concerning individual projects it is a false assumption for a strategic plan where GNDP are acting on behalf of all partners.
- 12.35. The text in GNDP Response to draft HRA (Dec 2020) recommendations for Reg. 19 GNLP is *“Although the principle of the recommendation is agreed with, the suggested text is not all necessary to provide adequate clarification as the issue of the Norwich Western Link is already explained in the Plan (see para. 240). Therefore, a change has been made to the supporting text, based on the latter part of the suggested text, adding a new paragraph (245).”*
- 12.36. Para. 240 is referred to as providing clarity for the NWL but the final sentence *“As it develops the GNLP will reflect progress towards delivery of the NWL”* is far from clear and needs further explanation.
- 12.37. This raises fundamental questions of responsibility under the Habitats Regulations in preparation of strategic plans.
- 12.38. GNDP appear to accept that the GNLP falls under the Habitats Regulations in that it has commissioned an overarching HRA.
- 12.39. The critical question is whether the author of the GNLP takes responsibility for all aspects of the **plan** including proposed projects which are under the control of one of the partnering members of the GNDP.
- 12.40. To a greater or lesser extent all the projects, i.e. development of the individual sites, are in the control of one or other of the partnering members and it is assumed that each LPA will ensure that the developers provide sufficient information to enable the authority to make an appropriate assessment for HRA if required.
- 12.41. The situation concerning the NWL differs in that the County Council are both the Planning Authority and developer for the road. As a relevant competent authority it should be making appropriate assessments both for any plans it prepares as well as specific planning applications for projects it has to determine.
- 12.42. In fact NCC already carried out an appropriate assessment on the NWL in 2005 and restated this again in 2016 as justification to the Planning Inspectorate as to why the NDR could not cross the Wensum Valley.

12.43. That assessment by the then Head of Law had a four staged conclusion that²⁰

- *The available evidence suggests strongly that a new or widened carriageway crossing (the SAC) will have that (significant) effect.*
- Although a full and detailed assessment to the level required for an Appropriate Assessment had not been undertaken, *the evidence currently available to the County Council suggests that a new or widened carriageway would adversely affect the integrity of the SAC.*
- Three potential other solutions were noted, two of which were offered to the Committee for consideration namely, *(a) a scheme 9in effect the purple/brown route which utilises the existing single carriageway crossing and (b) a partial route without the brown or purple route.*
- *Leading Counsel has advised that although there is clearly an economic and social justification for the scheme, only relatively little weight would be attached to the need to relieve congestion in the Norwich area.*

12.44. This conclusion would suggest that there was an absence of reasons to justify overriding the negative impacts at that time and the GNLP does not offer any new evidence to counter this position.

12.45. From discussions with the Head of Planning at Norfolk County Council, I am informed that HRA for NWL will be considered for the project rather than as part of any plan and not until a formal planning application is received.

12.46. The County Council as the developer has failed to carry out any further appropriate assessments to overturn their earlier HRA position and it is not understood how the project can be incorporated in to a strategic plan without a new conclusion to overturn the extant negative legal opinion.

12.47. If, as suggested in the NIDP the NWL will deliver housing and jobs growth in the GNLP, there is then a dependency on the NWL and an updated HRA appropriate assessment must be carried out to reverse that currently remaining on the public record.

12.48. If there is no development dependant on the NWL, the reasons for inclusion in the plan are diminished.

12.49. The consequential question is that although the County Council may be negligent in its duty of undertaking an HRA appropriate assessment before incorporation into the NIDP, has the GNDP a responsibility to carry out its own appropriate assessment if it proposes to include the NWL across a protected habitat OR can it rely on conditionality for one of the GNDP partners to demonstrate at some time

²⁰ See NCC/EX/65 on the Norfolk County Council website for Broadland Northway

in the future that “*there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of sites protected under the Habitats Regulations Directive*”?

- 12.50. Regulation 7c of the Habitats Regulations notes that a competent authority includes “any person exercising any function mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) or (b)”, which includes public bodies of any description.
- 12.51. In the case of the GNLP, the GNDP is acting on behalf of all five partners and assumes the responsibility for the Habitats Regulations in the whole plan.
- 12.52. For this reason it is unacceptable to knowingly include a project contra to a current HRA negative finding and relying on conditionality of one of the partners proving at some date in the future that this will be overturned and there will be no negative impact on the SAC or there are overriding benefits.
- 12.53. Minutes of the GNDP Board meeting of 30 September 2020 record that “*Conflicting legal advice had been received regarding the inclusion or not of the Western Link in the Plan*”.
- 12.54. The issues on this conflicting legal advice have not been made public but it is assumed it relates to discussions over some or all of the above concerns.
13. Conclusion and Postscript
- 13.1. My concerns regarding the inadequacy of the GNLP are tempered by the potential consequences of a free-for-all land grab if the plan is rejected and the JCS is considered out of date.
- 13.2. The residents of Greater Norwich have been badly let down in getting to this position for a plan which commenced in 2017 but will be concerned that the consequences of rejection of the plan on submission for inspection may be worse than those of accepting a substandard version.
- 13.3. The only solution I can see is to revise the Reg. 19 draft to align with the Reg. 18 proposals for target housing numbers; justify the job numbers target as realistic; remove the NWL from the plan and tighten up the policies and targets for the environment and climate change before submission to the Inspector for approval.
- 13.4. It is acknowledged that this may delay the submission but this would be less disruptive than rejection or a lengthy process of amendments later.
- 13.5. I am concerned that the 2021 Budget statement has changed the dynamics of East Anglia to which the plan as it stands cannot respond.
- 13.6. The growth ambitions for Greater Norwich have been severely weakened by the Budget announcement of the selection of Felixstowe as a Freeport which will cover a radius of 25 miles and encompass several major employment areas which

will have the advantage of several business incentives and will be competing commercially with Greater Norwich and its associated export/import outlets of Great Yarmouth and Norwich Airport.

- 13.7. Literature for Freeport East is keen to stress the advantages to other areas highlighting Lowestoft/Great Yarmouth via the A12 and The Midlands via the A14.
- 13.8. Sadly the omission of upgrading the sub-standard northern section of A140 between Norwich and Ipswich and concentrating employment to the A11 Norwich to Cambridge corridor is likely to mean that Norwich will not be part of this growth generated by Freeport East.

Bryan Robinson

19 March 2021

APPENDIX A

Comments on New Evidence Documents submitted with Reg. 19

Because Reg. 19 covers soundness of the Plan only, the public are being denied the chance to comment on the new evidence provided for the first time.

Following a very cursory look at these documents, I raise the following concerns which may have implications on the GNLP and which show that the wider public, many of whom have expertise in the various subjects, should be given a chance to comment.

1. *Employment*

- 1.1. The commuting patterns presented in Avison Young Employment Land Addendum are of particular interest and may have implications to the Employment to Housing numbers ratio for Greater Norwich in Reg. 19, leading me to further investigation of other data.
- 1.2. Figure 14 on page 15 of the Addendum notes that in 2011 48,471 people commute to Norwich for work while 21,504 journeyed out of the area.
- 1.3. Further investigation of the Nomis website for the 2011 census show that 33,659 people commute from outside the Greater Norwich districts to work in one or other of the three authorities.
- 1.4. The number commuting out of the three authorities to districts outside Greater Norwich is 27,119.
- 1.5. Assuming that that personal choice will be similar to the 2011 analysis, this would suggest that 15% of the jobs will be filled by people living in the surrounding districts of Norfolk and therefore will not require housing in Greater Norwich.
- 1.6. On the same basis Greater Norwich will require housing for the outward commuting people if these trends are repeated. Although there is no direct relationship between the number of jobs in an area and those commuting outside the area, for comparison with the inward commuters only, this is 12½%, giving a net reduction of 2½% for homes not required with the new job targets.
- 1.7. It is disappointing that authorities still do not realise that growth based on an increase in the number of jobs in an area not only might come from outside the area by choice, but if the number of jobs exceed the shrinking employment workforce pool over a period because increasing numbers **must** come from inward migration and this will be to the detriment of other competing authorities, both locally and nationally.

- 1.8. The stark reality that never-ending continuous sustained growth for a region or the country cannot solely rely on the number of jobs which then in turn dictates the housing need for the area.
- 1.9. The GNLP targets 33,000 jobs over 20 years of the plan while the 2019 unemployment figures in the ONS Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics show a total of 6,000 unemployed in the three districts prior to the Covid pandemic.
- 1.10. Norfolk Insight gives indications of the population in 5 year age groups for the three authorities and using a crude measure over the next 20 years of those under 20 taking up employment and those over 45 retiring, there is a net loss of 15,791 employable people by the end of the plan.
- 1.11. It must therefore be assumed that the plan is based on attracting the majority of the people from the employment pool from outside Greater Norwich to fill both the 33,000 extra jobs plus the extra vacancies from the net loss of 9,791 (15,791 – 6,000) existing jobs.
- 1.12. This highlights another failure in the plan to recognise that travelling to work from a 30 or even 40 mile radius is considered normal for Norfolk and the plan should assess the response to job opportunities from other urban areas along the existing radial routes such as East Dereham, Great Yarmouth, Aylsham and Attleborough.
- 1.13. If this is being repeated across the county in all local plans with all trying to attract the same diminishing workforce, clearly this is unsustainable.
- 1.14. It is noted that the employee count since 2008/09 as shown in the GN Annual Monitoring Reports (GNAMRs) grew at an average of 1,900 per annum while housing completions over the same period have averaged 1,655, a ratio of jobs to houses of 1:0.86.
- 1.15. It appears disproportionate that the GNLP is now suggesting 2,475 houses annually for 1,650 new jobs annually at a ratio of 1:1.5.
- 1.16. I suggest that the plan needs to look more closely at the number of jobs being filled between 2008/09 and 2018/19 from the surrounding districts with the attendant implications for travelling and the environment.
- 1.17. Recognising the fact that the domicile of employment labour is likely to change over the life of the GNLP if the proposed modal shift away from private cars is successful plus home working, the stimulus should not simply be on the creation of new jobs but creating an improved environment with jobs of a higher **productivity rate and wages** so that companies want to invest and people want to come to **live and work**.

- 1.18. The emphasis on growth via extra jobs is only valid and sustainable if there is a large surplus of workers which was not the case locally before the pandemic.
- 1.19. One aspect which is not covered in the Plan or evidenced is why there is both inward and outward movement of people for jobs.
- 1.20. A further review of applicable published statistics and data to understand existing patterns results in the following a table compiled from Nomis and Norfolk Insight.

	Broadland	Norwich	S. Norfolk
Population & Employment (Nomis)			
Total Population 2019	130,800	140,500	140,900
In Employment (2019 – 2020)	66,200	80,300	70,700
Unemployed	1,500	3,000	1,500
Employee Full-Time	33,000	54,000	35,000
Employee Part-Time	15,000	35,000	22,000
Commuting Patterns (2011 Census)			
Net change Inward to Outward (total)	-14,387	26,888	-5,961
Inward to totals	18,858	48,392	22,686
Outward from totals	33,245	21,504	28,647
Outside Greater Norwich – Inward to	7,722	15,055	10,882
<i>Percentage of total</i>	41%	31%	48%
Outside Greater Norwich – Outward from	8,490	6,798	11,831
<i>Percentage of total</i>	26%	25%	41%
Employee Jobs by Industry (Nomis)			
Mining & Quarrying	500	50	45
Manufacturing	5,000	4,500	4,000
Electricity & Gas etc Supply	5	100	125
Water, Sewerage & Waste etc	300	225	700
Construction	3,500	2,500	3,500
Wholesale & Retail	8,000	16,000	7,000
Transportation & Storage	900	3,500	1,250
Accommodation & Food Services	3,000	6,000	3,500
Information and Communication	1,000	3,000	1,000
Financial & Insurance Activities	7,000	3,500	700
Real Estate Activities	900	2,000	800
Professional, Scientific & Technical	2,500	6,000	4,000
Administrative & Support Services	3,000	8,000	3,000
Public Administration etc	1,250	7,000	3,000
Education	3,500	12,000	4,000
Human Health & Social Work	7,000	8,000	17,000
Arts, Entertainment & Recreational	900	3,500	1,000
Other	600	2,250	1,000
Housing (Norfolk Insight)			
Number of Dwellings	58,930	67,160	62,980

- 1.21. The highlighted cells show the predominance of a particular sector. It is assumed that the Financial & Insurance in Broadland is at the Broadland Business Park and the Human Health in South Norfolk is the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.
- 1.22. The Financial and Insurance at Broadland Business Park is likely to change during the life of the Plan after Aviva's announcement to condense its office space and relocate to the City Centre.
- 1.23. I did attempt to relate the target jobs and housing locations into the three districts but due to the chaotic format of the various documents admitted to failure.

1.24. The questions arising from this data are

1. Why is there a base need for 40,541 houses, let alone 49,492 with a 22% buffer, for 33,000 additional jobs which is a ratio 1:1.23 (or 1:1.50) when the existing ratio for all three Councils is 1:0.83?

[Note: the existing ratio is comparable with the growth in GNAMRs over the past 10 years at 1:0.86 - see paragraph 1.14 above]

2. How do the locations of employment site allocations relate to housing locations?
3. With the considerable commuting as the 2011 census from outside Greater Norwich, what impact will this have on the ratio of housing to jobs for the GNLP?
4. Has any discussions taken place with neighbouring authorities concerning housing for jobs in Greater Norwich?
5. What is the judgement on whether 2011 commuting patterns will apply to the new jobs and if so what will be the implications for both the modal change away from the car and climate change?

2. *Green Infrastructure*

- 2.1. The Green Infrastructure evidence proposes a levy of £185.93 on all new planning permissions to fund the measures outline estimated to be £7.9m
- 2.2. Basic maths confirms that this assumes that there will be 42,500 new planning permissions and assumes that none of the existing commitments of 31,452 in Reg. 19 will already have planning permission.

- 2.3. Further investigation is required to reduce the housing requirement by the number of homes already with planning permission within the existing commitments which will increase the charge on the remainder.
 - 2.4. In any case the charge should be based on the need rather than an artificial number which includes a buffer to ensure delivery of the need. The figure should be $\text{£}7.9\text{m} \div 40,541 = \text{£}194.86$ with adjustment for houses already with planning permission will then be required although an appropriate reduction can be applied for future lapses of extant permissions.
 - 2.5. It is noted that the Viability Appraisal includes £200 per property for this charge, which may have to be adjusted if the revised calculations rise significantly.
3. *Viability Appraisal*
- 3.1. The latest Viability Appraisal is too difficult to follow and requires a complete reconfiguration of the salient aspects.
 - 3.2. The principle of the planning system is that Viability Assessments to reduce the various contributions will be considered where the applicant can establish where the conditions of a site differ from those assumed in the Viability which informs the Plan.
 - 3.3. The format makes it impossible to easily assess what the Plan Base Viability is for any particular site.
 - 3.4. Developers must have confidence in the Plan Base Viability which it appears from the comments on the Interim Viability Appraisal, which was much easier to follow, is not the case.
 - 3.5. If there is confidence in the study, one has to ask why a critical friend is needed.
 - 3.6. Benchmark Land Values are critical in assessing viability and the levels set in the Viability Appraisal are much lower than currently submitted by developers and indeed supported by Assessors appointed by LPAs.
 - 3.7. The key to the multiplier to land Existing Use Values to establish the Benchmark Land Value is given at paragraph 359 of the 2020 Appraisal in answer to comments on the Interim Appraisal which states "*Although a number of consultees were looking for specific reasoning behind the multiplier or percentage increase applied, these are **notional uplifts** in value in arriving at **what a landowner would accept as a reasonable incentive for the payment for the land**". [Emphasis added]*
 - 3.8. Whilst applauding the lower levels to reduce current expectations of unrealistic land values, the Appraisal does not consider the consequences should landowners not accept these levels.

- 3.9. The confidence in a **notional** multiplier which is expected to cover 20 years of the Plan is diminished by paragraph 361 which adds *“There are cases starting to **test these multipliers** however ultimately it is the location and scale of envisaged development which will provide the rationale as to what is a satisfactory uplift or multiplier might be. This debate is also likely to continue as viability in planning becomes fully established **if this current practice remains**”*. [Emphasis added]
- 3.10. One has to consider the effect on existing land banks held by developers for existing commitments in the plan which would be devalued if aligned to the lowered land values, with the likely reaction of slowing development until the shortage of land forces prices to rise.
- 3.11. I accept that the current **expectation** of land prices is unrealistic and must be edged downwards but I am unsure whether the market is ready for the shock being proposed in the Viability Appraisal.
- 3.12. As an example I quote land values at Salhouse Road, Sprowston for a site of 800+ houses which has recently commenced on site
- Viability Assessment submission whole site - £351,000/acre
Assessor proposal whole site - £275,000/acre
Phase 1 land sale price - £260,370/acre
Assessor value for Phases 2/4 - £1,500 - £1,700/acre
GNLP Viability Appraisal BLV proposal - £100,000/acre.
- 3.13. Whether the existing expectation levels are fair or grossly exaggerated, particularly noting associated infrastructure funding by Councils, such as the NDR which was stated as critical to bring sites to the market, is debateable but nevertheless they are what they are.
- 3.14. Land prices must reflect the societal add-ons to developments such as affordable housing if these are to be met in full. The question is how to reverse the pendulum swing for ever increasing expectations by developers, landowners and Councils.
- 3.15. The GNLP Viability proposals may achieve this over time but with a likely negative initial impact unless the policy is adopted nationwide, otherwise developers will simply move away from Greater Norwich to other parts of the county and country.
- 3.16. What is the confidence that the new sites allocations will remain after consideration by the developers of much lower residual land values using the Viability Appraisal model?