

REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PROPOSED MAIN MODIFICATIONS TO THE GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN

[Representation Form](#)

NB Throughout these representations, reference to the 'Plan' are a reference to the submitted Regulation 19 version of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, February 2021.

Main Modification 2 – Table 6

The Proposed Modification

The consultation document states:

MM2 - Table 6

Page 48

Modification

Amend Table 6 to read ...

Representations on MM2

The proposed modification to Row A of Table 6 of the Plan to clarify that the figure of 40,541 homes forms the 'housing requirement' is noted. The proposed modification to Row B of Table 6 to clarify that 8,728 homes were built during the years 2018/19 to 2021/22 (4 years) is also noted, as is the proposed modification to Row C to clarify that this leaves (a minimum of) 34,668 homes to be delivered over the remainder of the plan period (2022/23 to 2033/34 – 16 years).

Main Modification 7 – Policy 1

The Proposed Modification

The consultation document states:

MM7 - Policy 1

Page 55

Modification

Amend Policy 1 to read:

“... Plan review and five-year housing land supply

This plan will be reviewed in line with the requirements on the new plan-making system. Five-year housing land supply will be calculated across the whole of the three districts. Appendix 4 shows that the plan provides enough allocations to provide a five-year housing land supply”

‘Annex 2’ as published with the Main Modification consultation is, on opening, titled ‘Appendix 4 Housing Delivery Trajectory and 5-year Land Supply’. It is assumed that ‘Annex 2’ will thus become

Appendix 4 to the Plan, and be the Appendix 4 referenced in MM1, MM7 and MM20 as a replacement for the submitted Appendix 6.

There does not appear to be a MM that deletes Appendix 4 as contained in the submitted Plan.

However, it is assumed that any comments on 'Annex 2' should be made in relation to MM7 or MM20.

Representations on MM7

The first part of the proposed replacement Appendix 4 states:

"The Purpose of the Trajectory

As required by NPPF paragraph 73, the housing delivery trajectory below sets out the forecast rate of housing delivery in Greater Norwich during the plan period from 2018 to 2038. ..."

It should be noted that the reference to para. 73 is a reference to para. 73 in the July 2021 NPPF; this paragraph is now para. 74 in the September 2023 NPPF.

The first part of Appendix 4 continues:

"... As stated in table 6 of this plan, the need is 40,541 homes over the period from 2018 to 2038. This is based upon the Government's standard methodology for calculating Local Housing Need (LHN). This gives a whole plan average target of 2,027 homes per annum, but due to higher housing completions from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2022, the residual annual requirement has reduced to 1,990 homes per year from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2038. The residual annual requirement of 1,990 homes per year is used for calculating the 5-year land supply for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028."

NPPF para. 74 states:

"... Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies ..."

The 'adopted strategic policy' that sets out the housing requirement in the Plan is Policy 1 – The Sustainable Growth Strategy. Policy 1 clearly sets out that the housing requirement is 40,550 homes – an average of 2,027.5 dwellings per annum (dpa).

Pursuant to NPPF para. 47, the LPAs should identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their (average annual) housing requirement, in this case of 2,027.5 dpa.

The statement included in the replacement Appendix 4 that the 'residual annual requirement' shall be used for calculating the 5-year land supply is neither supported by national policy or guidance, or the approach taken in other calculations such as the Housing Delivery Test (HDT). **It is thus considered that the replacement Appendix 4 as drafted is unsound in that it is neither justified, will not be effective, and is not consistent with national policy.**

Moreover, by the time it is adopted (the GNDP's latest estimation as set out in the FAQs published alongside the Main Modifications consultation is that this will be mid 2024) the text of the replacement Appendix 4 will be out-of-date and no longer applicable. Further, were the GNDP's

approach to be adopted, the residual housing requirement will presumably have changed by 1st April 2024, and thus the housing requirement against which the 5-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) is to be measured will have changed.

The last part of the proposed replacement Appendix 4 states:

“5-Year Land Supply

The 5-year housing requirement is 10,945 homes from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028. This is calculated by multiplying the residual housing requirement of 1,990 homes at 1st April 2023 over 5 years and adding a 10% buffer to account for unforeseen delay or non-delivery. The 5-year housing supply is 12,632 homes, which is the total completions forecast in the years 2023/24 (2,282), 2024/25 (2,484), 2025/26 (2,755), 2026/27 (2,699), and 2027/28 (2,412).”

As discussed above, it is considered that the baseline 5-year requirement is not 5 x 1,990 homes (9,950 homes), but 5 x 2027.5 homes (10,138 homes, rounded up).

The reference to the adding of a 10% buffer to account for unforeseen delay or non-delivery is an approach that is not consistent with national policy and guidance.

NPPF para. 74 sets out:

“The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:

- a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or*
- b) 10% where the local planning authority wishes to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites through an annual position statement or recently adopted plan, to account for any fluctuations in the market during that year; or*
- c) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.”*

The GNPD has not indicated that it wishes to confirm its 5YHLS through the adoption of the Plan, as required by PPG, and as such it is assumed that it is not seeking to do so (the reason given in the proposed replacement Appendix 4 does not provide this as a reason for including a 10% buffer).

As such, it is considered that, in accordance with the latest HDT results, a 5% buffer should be included in the calculation of the 5YHLS requirement.

Added to the baseline 5-year requirement of 10,138 homes, this would result in a 5YHLS requirement of 10,645 homes (rounded up).

The 5-Year Housing Land Supply

With regard to the identified 5YHLS supply, the proposed replacement Appendix 4 states that there is a deliverable 5YHLS supply of 12,632 homes. As is explicitly set out, this is the total completions forecast in the years 2023/24 through to 2027/28.

No revised detailed housing trajectory has been published alongside the proposed Main Modifications. The Examination website instead [references back](#) to Examination Documents D3.2D and D3.2E as published in October 2022, over two years ago.

Comparing the projected overall delivery for the 5-year period as set out in Appendix C to Examination Document D3.2D to that now projected in the proposed replacement Appendix 4, it can be seen that there have been changes to what is projected:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
D3.2D, Appendix C	2,202	2,465	2,795	3,125	2,735	13,322
Replacement Appendix 4	2,282	2,484	2,755	2,699	2,412	12,632

Unfortunately, with no updated detailed trajectory published alongside the Main Modifications it is impossible to tell which sites make up the ‘deliverable’ 5YHLS supply (i.e. impossible to tell where the figures included derive from) – notably the figures for some years have decreased and others have increased, so it is not simply that some sites have been removed from the supply.

However, it is expressly noted in replacement Appendix 4 that the identified ‘deliverable’ supply comprise the total completions forecast in the years 2023/24 through to 2027/28. This is considered extremely unlikely.

It is impossible to know that the projected delivery meets the tests of deliverability as set out in the NPPF glossary (as then expanded upon in PPG):

“Deliverable:

To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:

a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).

b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.”

Only those sites that meet part (a) of this test of deliverability are to be automatically included in the 5YHLS; those that meet part (b) are to be included only if the ‘clear evidence of deliverability’ exists. Without knowing which sites comprise the supply – seemingly (based on the detailed trajectory that is Examination Document D3.2D) some that meet part (a) but also some that meet part (b), it is impossible to know whether all of the sites projected to deliver during the 5-year period should be included.

Ensuring that the housing land supply identified in the Plan is robust is considered particularly important given the Government’s mooted suggestion¹ that once the Plan is adopted, there would not be any requirement to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing. If the supply identified in the Plan is

¹ Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy, DLUHC, December 2022

not robust there will be a risk that there will be an insufficient supply and housing delivery will fall behind what is required.

It is apparent that the GNPD are not identifying any housing delivery within the 5-year period from sites that don't currently meet the tests of deliverability. Again, this is considered extremely unlikely.

Ensuring that the Plan is based on a robust assessment of the 5YHLS is necessary to accord with the requirements of NPPF para. 74:

"... Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies. ..."

A failure to ensure that the supply of sites is sufficiently evidenced and robust will only result in the claimed supply being challenged earlier than might otherwise be the case. The evidence published in relation to the 5YHLS at Local Plan stage should *exceed* that which would be required to demonstrate a 5YHLS if challenged in connection with an application or appeal.

In summary, it is considered that the housing delivery trajectory and calculation of the 5YHLS as set out in the proposed replacement Appendix 4 are potentially unsound due to being unjustified, unlikely to be effective, and/or inconsistent with national policy.

Main Modification 20 – Appendix 6

The Proposed Modification

The consultation document states:

MM20 – Appendix 6

Page 143

Modification

Delete current Appendix 6 – Housing delivery trajectory

See separate document for updated appendix – Housing Delivery Trajectory and 5-year Land Supply (will become appendix 4).

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² Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy, DLUHC, December 2022

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