

Statement of Common Ground on GIRAMS

Statement between: Breckland District Council, Broadland District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, South Norfolk Council, The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk District Council, Norwich City Council, Broads Authority (together "The Norfolk LPAs"), and Natural England

On the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy ("the GIRAM Strategy"). The GIRAM Strategy is a strategic approach to ensure that there are no adverse effects caused to European sites across Norfolk by the proposed level of residential development, as detailed in the relevant local plans. It supports Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Norfolk in their statutory requirement to produce legally compliant Local Plans.

GIRAM Strategy Report dated March 2021 ("the Report") is an evidence base which informs The GIRAM Strategy.

(March 2022)

The Statement

Background

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ("the Habitats Regulations") the Norfolk LPAs have a duty to test if new plans or project proposals could significantly harm the designated features of a European site, and to mitigate any likely significant effects.

Pursuant to this duty, Norfolk LPAs are working collaboratively to adopt and deliver a GIRAM Strategy to ensure that the cumulative (in-combination) impacts of additional visitors arising from additional qualifying developments¹ ("Qualifying Developments") to European sites will not result in any likely significant effects which cannot be mitigated.

The GIRAM Strategy is owned by the Norfolk LPAs.

Natural England in its role as statutory conservation adviser will support the Norfolk LPAs in their duty to produce Local Plans compliant with the Habitats Regulations, by providing advice about recreational pressure on, disturbance of, and appropriate mitigation for European Sites in relation to the GIRAM Strategy generally and the action plans and tariff (below) specifically.

The Interim Action Plan and Tariff

Pursuant to the GIRAM Strategy, the Norfolk LPAs have identified the nature of visitor pressures and put together an interim action plan of mitigation measures ("the

¹ See Section 3.4.1.1 of the GIRAMS report

Interim Action Plan”) intended to be finalised in due course (into “the Revised Action Plan”).

The cost of these mitigation measures has been calculated in accordance with a mitigation scenario outlined in Table 10 of the GIRAM Strategy Report dated October 2020 (“the Report”). The Report, one of a number of documents intended to inform the GIRAM Strategy as it evolves, currently forms the best available estimate of the cost of likely mitigation actions.

On the basis of the Report, each LPA has agreed to bring forward procedures for the collection of the county-wide tariff of £185.93 per new dwelling in each Qualifying Development (“the Tariff”).

Should mitigation measures be revised as a result of the Review (below), this will be reflected in an updated tariff. However, notwithstanding the potential for later revision, all Norfolk LPAs will adopt and start to apply this Tariff to all Qualifying Developments not later than 31 March 2022. All moneys collected before the completion of the Review and Revised Action Plan must be spent in accordance with Interim Action Plan and the Report.

The Review and Revised Action Plan

Having established the Tariff on the basis of the Report and having implemented the Interim Action Plan, the LPAs are mindful that areas within the Interim Action Plan (governance, success factors and other process points including distribution, joint decision-making and prioritisation) still need to be finalised (into a “Revised Action Plan”). During this process, the LPAs, will individually collect the Tariff for qualifying developments. Tariff money spent should be recorded and evidenced.

In order to achieve the Revised Action Plan, all Norfolk LPAs commit to an early review of both the Interim Action Plan and the Tariff (“the Review”). The Review will be completed within 18 months from adoption of this Statement by the Norfolk LPAs.

The Review will consider all aspects of the GIRAM Strategy including recreational impact avoidance and mitigation measures as specified in Section 3 and Table 10 of the Report, and the associated revenue/capital funding of any revised GIRAM Strategy actions if deemed to be necessary.

Any revisions to the Tariff or Interim Action Plan should:

- a) be recommended in the Review and,
- b) must meet the following criteria: be evidence-led, legal, deliverable, and effective in that they materially mitigate the recreational pressures and disturbance impacts of the Qualifying Development in question in such a way that there will be no likely significant effect on the integrity of European sites across the Norfolk.

More generally, the Norfolk LPAs accept that any revisions to the Interim Action Plan must be implemented in a manner which meets all legal requirements and delivers the objectives of the Habitats Regulations. To this end, the parties agree that the

Revised Action Plan must be evidence-led, incorporate robust governance, a prioritisation of mitigation actions and clear success factors/measures.

The Revised Action Plan should also be accompanied by:

- A workable process model so it is clear to those Qualifying Developments subject to the charge precisely where their contributions have been applied, and how; and
- Policies and procedures to ensure resources are apportioned to maximise the effectiveness of the overall mitigation package over the life of the Action Plan.

Subject to resource provision, Natural England will support the LPAs by providing advice on any proposed amendments to the Revised Action Plan and accompanying documents, models and policies, as applicable.

Providing the above criteria are met and that the implementation of the Revised Action Plan does not conflict with any of the Partners' statutory responsibilities, either under the Habitats Regulations or any other legislation, all Norfolk LPAs commit to implementing any agreed revisions identified in the Review into a Revised Action Plan (subject to consultation with Natural England) as soon as is reasonably possible and no later than 6 months from the date of the Review.

Ongoing Monitoring and Adaptation

The mitigation delivered as a part of both the Interim and Revised Action Plans will be monitored by Norfolk LPAs and the outcomes fed into any subsequent review(s) of the Revised Action Plan and Tariff, to assess the effectiveness of the mitigation with any changes to the Revised Action Plan and Tariff. Natural England will provide a consultation response to any changes, subject to their resource provision, prior to finalisation.