

North Norfolk District Council Local Plan Examination  
Statement of Common Ground

As Agreed between  
North Norfolk District Council  
and  
Norfolk County Council  
December 2023

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared between North Norfolk District Council (the Council) and Norfolk County Council (NCC). The purpose of the SoCG is to inform the Inspector that production of the submitted North Norfolk Local Plan[A1] has been subject to ongoing and continuous engagement in relation to the submitted Local Plan. Such document references used in this Statement are those used in the North Norfolk Local Plan Examination document library and are indicated in square brackets. These documents can be accessed on the Council's Examination web site [Home | Local Plan Examination Library \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://Home | Local Plan Examination Library (north-norfolk.gov.uk)).
- 1.2 This SoCG reflects the ongoing process of communication throughout Plan preparation.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 There is a strong history of joint working and co-operation amongst the Norfolk authorities<sup>1</sup> through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Officers Group (NSPG), key roles of which are to identify and manage the spatial planning issues that impact on more than one local planning authority area and to support better integration and alignment of strategic spatial and investment priorities. The NSPG is responsible for several jointly funded and prepared evidence base and policy documents as well as the joint preparation and agreement of a Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework<sup>2</sup> (NSPF).
- 2.3 The Council is committed to engaging positively with its neighbours to address strategic planning matters through the Duty to Cooperate requirement and to ensure that there is co-operation on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.
- 2.4 The Norfolk authorities, along with Natural England, Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Marine Management Organisation, Active Norfolk, Water resources East, and the new Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, work collaboratively to address strategic issues across the area. The meetings also include liaison with Suffolk Councils and relevant updates on their planning policy and Local Plan work.
- 2.5 A Member Forum (MF) oversees the work of the NSPG and comprises an elected Member from each of the authorities. The NSPG consists of key planning policy officers from each Planning Authority in Norfolk as well as other key statutory agencies, responsible for overseeing policy development for strategic planning purposes. Both the MF and NSPG are governed by formal terms of reference.
- 2.6 The MF meets on a regular frequency (every 3 months), and its role is advisory. The NSPG meet on a monthly basis and is itself supported by further officer groups – a

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<sup>1</sup> Breckland District Council, Broadland District Council, Broads Authority, Great Yarmouth District Council, Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk District Council, Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council

<sup>2</sup> [Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework - May 2021 \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework - May 2021 (north-norfolk.gov.uk))

Steering Group and Technical Subgroups. Any proposals or recommendations of the MF are not binding on the constituent member authorities. However, where there are matters pertaining to key strategic planning, for example, the preparation of a joint Plan or implications at a County wide level of future development, then any agreement at the MF is subject to ratification at individual authority level.

- 2.7 In addition to the agreements arising from the NSPF, the Council has consulted NCC throughout each stage of the preparation of the North Norfolk Local Plan, both formally and informally (when required). The Council and NCC also work collaboratively in several partnerships and areas of work, including the Norfolk Coast Partnership, not least in producing the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 (Revised 2022) [G14] and related areas of work such as the Network Improvement Strategies and emerging Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- 2.8 In addition, throughout the Plan process NCC and the Council's Local Plan teams have engaged continuously in relation to plan preparation through regular biannual meetings. In attendance were lead officers from the Council, with a core member of the Council's Policy Manager and Team Leader and NCC department leads for infrastructure/spatial planning, Highways, Children's Services (education), Public Health, Minerals and Waste, Natural Environment, Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and Norfolk Property Services (NPS). Further details of this engagement are set out in the Council's Duty to Co-Operate Compliance Statement [A8] and Consultation Statement [A5].
- 2.9 The Councils have engaged constructively in the development of the emerging Norfolk Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2023. (NCC).
- 2.10 The Councils have engaged constructively both through the informal and formal responses in relation to the HELAA and at each stage of Plan Making including the Site Assessment process, and formal consultation stages. There are no outstanding strategic concerns or objections, including highways, regarding the principle of development and suitability of allocations in the Local Plan.
- 2.11 Norfolk County Council and North Norfolk District Council agree that there are no outstanding concerns or objections to the North Norfolk Local Plan.
- 2.12 The Councils have engaged in the commissioning of relevant evidence, including the SFRA study [G5-G6.8], education requirements, highways related matters, Green Infrastructure Mapping Project [G8], Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Study (GIRAMS) [G9] and the North Norfolk Power Study [I9]. As well as engaging on emerging areas such as biodiversity net gain, local nature recovery strategies.

### 3. Statement of Common Ground Agreement

3.1 The following statement has been identified, which the parties agree is common ground.

#### 3.2 Agreement 1 – Duty to co-operate:

The signatories agree that the North Norfolk Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the “duty to co-operate” imposed by section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in that the Council has co-operated with NCC, as a neighbouring authority, through constructive and ongoing engagement on the impacts of sustainable development as set out in the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance [A8] and that there are no outstanding strategic planning issues to be addressed.

### 4. Agreement 2 – North Walsham West Development

4.1 The signatories agree that:

- That the premise for the emerging Local Plan’s growth aspirations for North Walsham is an appropriate strategy to providing necessary growth for the district.
- Both parties also agree strategic infrastructure provision, through the implementation of a link road through site NW62/A, is essential for growth in North Walsham and both parties have worked together and continue to work collaboratively with each other, the site promoters and other third parties to ensure strategic infrastructure is achieved.
- All parties have worked together constructively and on an ongoing basis throughout the stages of the production of the Local Plan, this is demonstrated through the ongoing engagement through the Local Plan bi-annual meetings between NCC and NNDC, and the progression of joint evidence studies, an example of which is the North Walsham Western Link Road Feasibility Study which is available to view on NNDC’s Local Plan Examination Document webpage.

### 5. Signatories:

| <b>North Norfolk District Council</b>         |               |            |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Name and Position                             | Signature     | Date       |
| Mat hew Gut eridge<br>Senior Planning Officer | M Gut eridge  | 20/12/2023 |
| <b>Norfolk County Council</b>                 |               |            |
| Name and Position                             | Signature     | Date       |
| Naomi Chamberlain<br>Senior Planner           | N Chamberlain | 21/12/2023 |