



MATTER 7 HEARING STATEMENT

North Norfolk Local Plan Examination

On behalf of:
D L Ritchie Will Trust

Date:
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, D L Ritchie Will Trust, in response to the Matters, Issues and Questions for the North Norfolk Local Plan Examination. It is intended to assist the Inspector's consideration of the soundness of the Plan and will form the basis of our points for discussion at the examination hearing session. We have responded to questions 7.1 and 7.2.

2.0 MATTER 7. HOUSING TRAJECTORY AND 5 YEAR SUPPLY

Housing Trajectory

Question 7.1

In the light of the site-by-site discussion, is the overall housing trajectory in the plan justified by the evidence? How has the trajectory for both large and small sites been affected by the need to secure nutrient neutrality and is this realistic?

- 2.1 Several large sites are identified in the housing trajectory as being affected by Nutrient Neutrality (NN), but the need to secure mitigation does not appear to have been taken into account in forecasting delivery from these sites. For the small sites with planning permission there is no indication of whether any sites are affected by NN and this can't be checked because no list of the specific sites has been provided. For the emerging allocations there is no indication of whether they are affected by NN. And for the forecast delivery from Windfall Sites and sites to come forwards in Small Growth Villages under Policy SS1, there is no consideration of how forecasts may be affected by NN.
- 2.2 For the avoidance of doubt, it is necessary to clarify that whilst the Statement of Common Ground on Nutrient Neutrality between the Council and Natural England (Ref: EX009, September 2023) refers to NN mitigation that is proposed to be brought forwards by Natural England and Norfolk Environmental Credits (NEC), there are currently no mitigation schemes available in the River Wensum SAC and The Broads SAC/Broadland Ramsar catchments that affect North Norfolk. NEC has mitigation coming forwards in the Yare catchment, but this does not help developments in North Norfolk. It is unclear if/when such mitigation will be available. In this context, we consider that there is clear evidence that sites within the NN affected catchments cannot be considered deliverable within the 5 year period. This will need to be kept under review, but at this stage, unless proposals have on-site mitigation signed off by Natural, we consider that they do not meet the definition of deliverable and cannot therefore be included within the 5 year supply.

Five Year Supply

Question 7.2

Does the plan provide for a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites on adoption (say April 2025 for this purpose) against the housing requirement if it is a) 480 dpa, b) 531 dpa or c) some other figure? Is an appropriate allowance made for windfall sites and the non-implementation of commitments, and if not, what should these be? Has the need to secure nutrient neutrality been sufficiently taken into account?

Housing Requirement

- 2.3 As set out in our Hearing Statement for Matter 3, we consider that the correct housing requirement calculated using the standard methodology is **560 dpa**. This results in a **5 year requirement of 2,800 dwellings**. For the purposes of calculating the 5 year supply position a 5% buffer is required to be added in accordance with NPPF paragraph 74). This gives a requirement of **588 dpa or 2,940 over five years**.
- 2.4 The Council's position is set out at emerging Policy HOU1 which sets a housing requirement of 9,600 dwellings over 20 years or 480 dpa and 2,400 over 5 years. Confusingly the Council state¹ that this requirement includes a 5% supply side buffer. This is not the correct way to apply a buffer, it should be added at the point of calculating the 5 year supply and not included in the housing requirement. This is taken into account in the below assessment.

Housing Supply

- 2.5 The Council's Five-Year Supply of Housing Land 2023-2028 (Ref: EX007) provides a housing trajectory up to 2039/40. The housing trajectory is broken down into sites that are currently considered to be deliverable (composed of specific large sites, a combined figure from small sites with planning permission and an allowance from windfall sites) and sites that are considered to be deliverable once the Local Plan is adopted (composed of specific large site allocations and an allowance for sites to come forward in Small Growth Villages under Policy SS1).
- 2.6 For the five year period 2025-2030, the housing trajectory forecasts the following delivery:

¹ See Paper 1 - Approach to Setting the Housing Requirement (updated) (Ref: C1) and Five-Year Supply of Housing Land 2023-2028 (Ref: EX007)

Table 1. Summary of Housing Trajectory Contained in Five-Year Supply of Housing Land 2023-2028 (Ref: EX007)

Source	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
Large Sites – Currently Deliverable	163	228	185	84	81	741
Small Sites with Planning Permission	187	61	3	1	0	252
Windfall Allowance	135	135	135	135	135	675
Large Sites – New Allocations	186	388	373	398	453	1,798
Small Growth Village Allowance	38	40	44	42	43	207
Total	709	852	740	660	712	3,673

2.7 Against the Council’s preferred housing requirement of 480 dpa (which includes a 5% buffer), the Council’s forecast supply between 2025-2030 of 3,673 dwellings represents a 7.65 year supply and against the standard method derived requirement of 588 dpa (including a 5% buffer) it represents a 6.25 year supply.

2.8 We have the following comments on the deliverability of the forecast supply:

- **Large Sites – Currently Deliverable:** We have reviewed the Council’s housing trajectory and have concerns regarding the deliverability of the following sites:
 - **Sites Affected by Nutrient Neutrality (NN):** Several sites are listed as being located within the areas affected by NN. As set out under question 7.1, unless proposals have on-site mitigation signed off by Natural England, we consider that these sites do not meet the definition of deliverable and cannot therefore be included within the 5 year supply.
Delivery from the following sites should be removed:
 - COR01 – Corpusty: **38 dwellings.**
 - F01 – Fakenham: **200 dwellings.**
 - ROU03/10 – Roughton: **30 dwellings.**
 - PF/17/0729 – West Raynham: **94 dwellings.**
 - **Total: 362 dwellings.**
 - **HOR06 Horning:** Housing trajectory states that the site is unlikely to be developed in the next 5 years, but also includes 26 dwellings in the supply for 2025/26. **Remove 26 dwellings.**
 - **Total:** In total **388 dwellings** need removing from the forecast supply from large sites.

- **Small Sites / Windfall:** As set out in our Hearing Statement for Matter 3, there is no justification to include an allowance for windfall development in the first 3 years of the plan period as there will be considerable overlap with the delivery of existing permissions on small sites that will lead to double counting. We therefore advocate using existing permissions to forecast delivery from small sites for the first 3 years of the five year period and including a windfall allowance for years 4 and 5. However, as we do not yet know how many existing permissions there will be on small sites in April 2025, for the purposes of this assessment only we advocate using the windfall allowance for all 5 years and removing the forecast delivery from small sites with planning permission. In the 5 year period from April 2025 the Council currently forecast 675 from windfall and 252 from small sites with planning permission. For the purposes of this assessment only, these **252 dwellings should be removed from the supply**. Once actual small site planning permissions are known, the first 3 years of windfall can be removed in favour of the more accurate forecast based on actual permissions. The impact of NN on windfall delivery should also be assessed and factored into the forecast.

- **New Allocations:** The definition of deliverable at Annex 2 of the NPPF states that where a site has been allocated in a development plan it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years. The Council has presented no such evidence for any of the sites included in the trajectory. This evidence will need to be provided to the examination and we reserve the right to comment further. We have undertaken a review of each allocation based on the information available and against industry standard average lead-in times contained in Lichfields analysis in Start to Finish (Second Edition). We have the following comments:
 - **Sites Affected by Nutrient Neutrality (NN):** Several new allocations are located within the areas affected by NN. As set out under question 7.1, unless proposals have on-site mitigation signed off by Natural, we consider that these sites do not meet the definition of deliverable and cannot therefore be included within the 5 year supply. **Delivery from the following sites should be removed:**
 - BRI01 – Briston: **25 dwellings**
 - BRI02 – Briston: **40 dwellings**
 - F10 – Fakenham: **55 dwellings**
 - F03 – Fakenham: **65 dwellings**
 - F02 – Fakenham: **70 dwellings**
 - HVI01/B – Hoveton: **150 dwellings**
 - ST19/A – Stalham: **70 dwellings**
 - ST23/2 – Stalham: **70 dwellings**
 - **Total: 545 dwellings.**

- **H20 – Heath Farm, Holt:** No planning application submitted. Start to Finish shows that average planning to delivery period for sites of 100-499 dwellings is 4 years. If planning application is submitted in spring 2024 (best case scenario) then delivery will not start until spring 2028. The forecast needs shifting back by 1 year. **Remove 60 dwellings.**
- **NW01/B – Norwich Road, North Walsham:** Planning application pending (Ref: PF/22/1596) that was submitted in June 2022. Start to Finish shows that average planning to delivery period for sites of 100-499 dwellings is 4 years. This puts the first delivery in June 2026. The forecast needs shifting back by 1 year. **Remove 73 dwellings.**
- **NW62 – Land West of North Walsham:** As set out in our Regulation 19 representations, Land West of North Walsham is a complex site to deliver with many different land-owners, a requirement for a Development Brief to be adopted by the Council before a planning application can come forward and a requirement to deliver a new ring road through all the land parcels and across the railway line. The required Development Brief was published for consultation in September 2023 but hasn't yet been adopted. Start to finish clearly sets out that the average time from the submission of the first planning application to the completion of the first dwelling for sites of 1,500-1,999 homes is 7 years. No planning application has been submitted and there is no realistic prospect of delivery before 2031. **Remove 350 dwellings.**
- **Total:** In total **1,066 dwellings** need removing from the forecast supply from new allocations.
- **Small Growth Village Sites:**
 - **Lead-in Times:** To allow time for securing planning permission, housing delivery at Small Growth Villages as a result of Policy SS1 can only be expected to commence 2 years after the adoption of the Local Plan. **78 dwellings need removing** from the 5 year supply to account for this.
 - **Nutrient Neutrality:** We have checked the list of Small Growth Villages at Table 2 of the emerging Local Plan to see if they are located within the NN catchment areas. The following villages are affected by NN which have a combined Policy SS1 housing allowance of 301 dwellings. This represents 67% of the total forecast supply from Small Growth Villages under Policy SS1. As set out above, unless sites have NN mitigation they cannot be considered deliverable. It is therefore necessary to remove 67% of the forecast supply

from Small Growth Village sites in years 3-5 of the supply. **This removes 86 dwellings** from the supply (129 dwellings forecast in years 3-5 minus 67%).

Table 2. Small Growth Villages in NN Catchments

Small Growth Village	Indicative Policy SS1 Housing Allowance
Aldborough	15
Baderfield	37
Bacton	31
Catfield	27
Corpusty & Saxthorpe	19
Happisburgh	24
Horning	29
Roughton	24
Sculthorpe	20
Southrepps	21
Sutton	30
Trunch	24
Total	301

- o **Total:** In total **164 dwellings** need removing from the Small Growth Village forecast.

2.9 In summary, we forecast the following revised delivery for the five year period 2025-2030:

Table 3. Revised Housing Trajectory Summary

Source	Total
Large Sites – Currently Deliverable	353 (741 – 388)
Small Sites with Planning Permission	0 (252 – 252)
Windfall Allowance	675
Large Sites – New Allocations	732 (1,798 – 1,066)
Small Growth Village Allowance	43 (207 – 164)
Total	1,803 (3,673 – 1,870)

Five Year Housing Land Supply Position

2.10 As set out above, against the Council’s preferred housing requirement of 480 dpa, the Council’s forecast supply between 2025-2030 of 3,673 dwellings represents a 7.65 year supply and against the standard method derived requirement of 588 dpa (including 5% buffer) it represents a 6.25 year supply. **We therefore assume that the Council’s position is that they can demonstrate a**

7.65 year supply for the 2025-2030 five year period.

- 2.11 We have demonstrated that the Council's supply forecast is greatly over exaggerated and it fails to make any allowance for sites that are clearly not deliverable due to the need to identify NN mitigation. We consider that the Council can only demonstrate a supply of 1,803 dwellings between 2025-2030. Against the Council's preferred housing requirement of 480 dpa, this represents a 3.75 year supply and against the standard method derived requirement of 588 dpa (including a 5% buffer), which we consider to be the correct requirement, it represents a **3.07 year supply**.
- 2.12 In conclusion, the Council's supply position is critically low and they will not deliver sufficient homes to meet their needs during the first 5 years of the plan period. This is a catastrophic situation for people in most need of housing in the district who won't be able to meet their needs and will likely be forced into sub-standard and overcrowded accommodation. It is therefore critical that the Council be required to identify additional deliverable sites in areas not affected by Nutrient Neutrality to improve the housing land supply position.
- 2.13 As set out in our Matter 3 Hearing Statement, in the context of the new NPPF (December 2023) there is an increased need for local plan Inspectors to ensure the deliverability of housing trajectories set out in local plans. New NPPF paragraph 76 removes the requirement for Local Authorities to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing annually if their local plan is less than 5 years old and if it identified a 5 year supply at examination. In this respect, whilst the Local Plan is to be examined against the requirements of the previous NPPF (September 2023), the new NPPF is now a material consideration in determining planning applications and the Council will not be required to demonstrate a 5 year supply again for 5 years from adoption. To ensure robust delivery to meet housing requirements, it is critical that the housing trajectory is robust and that it identifies sufficient sites to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing on adoption.