



North Norfolk Local Plan Examination Hearing Statement – Matter 1

Boyer

Report Control

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Boyer on behalf of Richborough in response to the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions in relation to Matter 1 (Duty to co-operate, other legal requirements, habitats regulation assessment and plan period) of the North Norfolk Local Plan Examination.
- 1.2 Boyer have been appointed by Richborough to act on their behalf in respect of promoting land interests at Land End of Mundesley / Land at Paston Gateway (HELAA ref: NW16/1) for residential development.
- 1.3 Boyer have previously made representations to the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation (March 2022) and our Hearing Statement should be read in conjunction with those representations.

2. QUESTION 1.1 - DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

1.1 (iii) Specifically, prior to the submission of the plan, did the Council engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with Norfolk County Council and Broadland District Council regarding the transport effects of the proposed growth of North Walsham, and in particular the potential effect on the radial routes into Norwich? What is the evidence for this engagement and what were its results (as at the time of submission, because the duty to co-operate must have been met prior to submission and cannot be rectified afterwards).

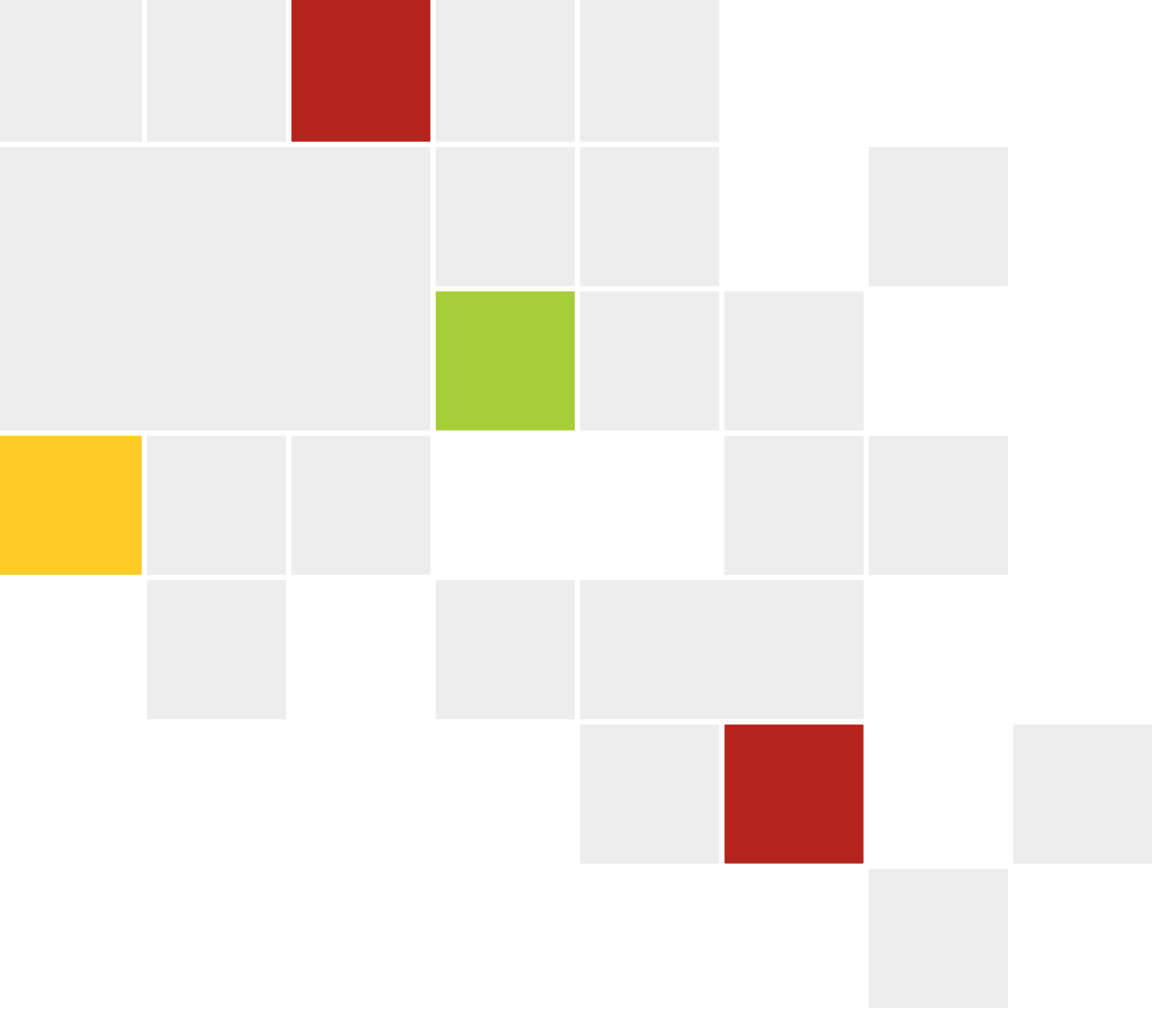
- 2.1 It is not evident from the Examination Documents that there has been specific engagement between North Norfolk District Council with Norfolk County Council (as local highway authority) over the transport effects of the proposed SUE at Land West of North Walsham (NW62/A), both within the town itself and on wider highway routes towards Norwich.
- 2.2 It is clear from Norfolk County Council, as local highway authority, response to the Regulation 19 consultation that they consider that the plan is sound and are supportive of the principle of the allocation of the SUE at Land West of North Walsham. However, the comments appear to suggest that further work is required to provide more detail on the transport impacts of the development. The response also acknowledges that much of the evidence produced to-date is high-level, therefore support is conditional on further detailed evidence being produced to support development of a masterplan and detailed planning proposals.
- 2.3 There is no specific evidence within the local highway authority's response of these effects or what mitigation may be required to be provided (if technically feasible to do so), at key pinch points that other representators have highlighted where there are known existing issues between North Walsham and Norwich, such as at Colitshall and Wroxham for example. It would be expected that to comply with the Duty to Cooperate there would have been engagement between NNDC and NCC over these matters with the inclusion of BDC to understand the effects and what mitigation should take place (so for example it could be included within the policy wording as a requirement, or if unable to be mitigated against, the SUE site removed as an allocation).
- 2.4 As we raised within our Reg 19 reps at para 7.38, the North Walsham Link Road Feasibility Reports (2020 and 2021) conclude that there would be a significant amount of new traffic linked to the proposed allocations in North Walsham and that the proposed link road would alleviate the majority of those impacts locally. Besides the feasibility report for the link road, there appears to be no other technical evidence provided within the public domain that explores the impact of these significant new traffic flows on the wider network. Or how the proposed link road would support a wider transport plan or infrastructure plan for the district and what implications this has on other neighbouring authorities.

- 2.5 As Broadland District Council are also objecting to the plan on this basis of there being insufficient co-operation between NNDC, BDC and NCC or there being evidence of how strategic scale development at North Walsham would not impact on settlements in neighbouring authorities, we consider that NNDC have not met the Duty to Co-Operate.
- 2.6 We consider that the scale of development proposed at North Walsham would constitute a strategic cross boundary matter and that there needs to be further evidence presented to demonstrate that NNDC has made every effort to cooperate with other authorities that have a responsibility for the duty such as NCC as local highway authority and BDC. Whilst we recognise that the authorities do not need to be in agreement over the transport impacts of development at North Walsham to comply with the duty, they have to evidence their engagement and efforts to cooperate.

3. QUESTION 1.12 - PLAN PERIOD

1.12 With adoption hopefully sometimes during 2024, does the plan look ahead for a minimum 15-year period from adoption? (NPPF paragraph 22). If not, should the plan period be extended to 2039 or 2040? The implications of this would be discussed under other matters as appropriate. If so, should the base date of the plan be moved forward to 2019 or 2020 to give a 20 year plan period?

- 3.1 As the plan contains strategic polices, we consider that in order to make the plan sound, the plan period should be extended to 2040 which will allow the plan to look ahead at least a minimum of 15 full years from adoption. This approach would accord with Paragraph 22 of the NPPF. This would take into account the more realistic assumption that the plan would be adopted in 2025 rather than 2024.
- 3.2 The approach to considering a longer plan period is sensible in the context of the plan that looks to deliver significant volumes of growth from later on in the plan period from large strategic sites, with a significant number of units forecast to be delivered off the back end of the plan period after 2036. Although our concerns with this approach, as evidenced in our Regulation 19 representations, will be picked up in subsequent matters.
- 3.3 In addition, we consider that the base date of the plan be moved forward as the Council suggests under this scenario to 2020, or even 2021 / 2022. This is because the standard method has been devised to take into account past under delivery and it is not necessary to include any delivery from previous years within the plan.



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