

LOCAL PLAN SITE ALLOCATIONS : Wells next the Sea and Fakenham

Summary: To identify the final suite of allocations for Wells and Fakenham ahead of Regulation 19 Consultation and subsequent submission.

- Recommendations:
- 1. It is recommended that Members endorse the identified sites for inclusion in the Local Plan.**
 - 2. The final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
All Members	All Wards
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Mark Ashwell, Planning Policy Manager, 01263 516325, mark.ashwell@north-norfolk.gov.uk Iain Withington Planning Policy Team Leader 01263 516034, Iain.Withington@north-norfolk.gov.uk	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The emerging North Norfolk Local Plan has been subject to public consultation at Regulation 18 stage during May and June 2019. This report is one of a number of reports that seeks to finalise the draft Local Plan policy approach in relation to consideration of potential development sites in Wells and Fakenham. At the end of the process a revised Draft Local Plan incorporating justified modifications will be produced for the authority in order to consult at Regulation 19 Draft Plan publication stage ahead of subsequent submission for examination. At such a stage the Plan will be subject to consideration by an independent inspector against a number of legal tests and soundness tests to determine if it is legally compliant, justified, effective, and has been positively prepared. A binding report will be produced which will determine if the Draft Plan is sound, with or without further modifications, following which the Plan can be formally adopted by the Council.
- 1.2 At the previous Regulation 18 stage the Council identified a large number of candidate development sites which had been suggested for different types of development. From those available a number of Preferred Options were identified and all sites put forward were then subject to consultation. In the current stage of plan preparation, the task is to consider the comments made and decide which sites should progress to the next stage. Where preferred sites are discounted it will be necessary to identify alternatives (from those available) to ensure that identified needs and the objectives of the Plan are addressed. The remaining sites will then need to be subject to Habitat Regulation Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment as appropriate, and in some cases specific further evidence in relation to deliverability will be required.
- 1.3 This report focusses on the identification of suitable, available and deliverable sites in order to meet the identified housing requirement in each identified settlement and recommends preferred sites for inclusion in the Draft Plan. It provides the updated

assessment of each of the sites considered and presents Officers conclusions on the availability and suitability of each site drawing together the Sustainability Appraisal, the Site Assessment and the Regulation 18 consultation responses. It also details the proposed policies which will be included in the next draft of the Plan.

- 1.4 **The purpose** of this report is to ratify a final suite of sites in the settlements ahead of consultation, (Regulation 19) and then the submission of the Plan. Where recommended sites are discounted by Members it is necessary to consider which alternative options should be identified as preferred options to ensure strategic objectives around housing provision and other land uses are addressed. Failure to do so runs the risk that the Plan will be found unsound at examination as it will fail the test of being positively prepared to address identified needs.

2. Background and Update

- 2.1 The settlement hierarchy included in the Draft Plan sets out where new development in North Norfolk will take place. The majority of which is in identified towns and a small number of larger villages, dependent on their local housing and other development needs, their role as employment, retail and service centers, and identified environmental and infrastructure constraints. Such locations are also inextricably linked to climate change and how, through the Plan, the Council can incorporate measures that mitigate and adapt to its effects, principally by managing the location of new development to reduce the need to travel.
- 2.2 The allocations seek to address the objectively assessed need across the District and aim to boost the supply of identified deliverable sites that will support growth in the Plan period. By allocating specific sites the Plan can demonstrate that it has been positively prepared and there is a high degree of certainty that it will deliver the required growth. Plans must include and demonstrate how future need for homes (and other uses) will be provided and clearly set out how the Plan will deliver the Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN). The distribution of growth and overall housing numbers are set out in policies **SD3** and **HOU1** of the Draft Plan.
- 2.3 Specific housing targets and allocations are provided for in the Large Growth Towns, Small Growth Towns and the four identified Growth Villages in Policy HOU1, which reflects their role and function. Sites have been identified that are well related to these settlements in order to meet the proposed targets. The process though is iterative and as the Plan moves towards Regulation 19 there is a process of continuous evaluation.

3. Site Selection Methodology

- 3.1 It is important to note that the site selection process follows a clear, transparent and justified assessment process which itself was subject to consultation and follows government advice, and this allows for a consistent approach across the District. Policies and proposals that are justified and evidenced in a positive and realistic way, will provide more certainty at examination and stand the test of time. Building a strong evidence base to support and inform not just site selection but policies throughout the Local Plan is vital to its immediate and long-term success.
- 3.2 Evidence can be both quantitative (facts and figures such as census data) as well as qualitative, (e.g. opinions given in consultation responses, as long as they are backed up by facts). Evidence, **not opinion**, should be used to inform decisions on policies and proposals. Such evidence should also be made publically available in a full and transparent way throughout the production of a Plan where it will be scrutinised at future consultations, submission and examination. It is worth

remembering that **planning policies and site proposals need to be based on a clear planning rational and aligned to the legislative requirements.**

- 3.3 The site assessment methodology follows the process advocated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance. The detailed methodology was explained in Background paper no 6, [Development Site Selection Methodology](#) which accompanied the previous Regulation 18 consultation and can be found in the published document library under consultation documents. **The process is summarised in the report appended to this report as Appendix 1 and along with the Background Paper should be read in conjunction with this report.** The continued application of a consistent methodology through assessment and decision making is paramount to Plan making and the legal tests of soundness which the Plan is examined against.

4. Site Selection

- 4.1 In order to provide an audit trail and a concise location for the review of information, updated assessments of each of the sites considered have been undertaken and are included in the Site Assessment Booklets appended to this report. These booklets detail background information including contextual settlement level information, include a summary of the feedback from Regulation 18 consultation from statutory consultees, individual members of the public and from parish councils, a review of issues and constraints and go on to detail officers detailed assessment in Part 2 through an updated set of assessment criteria and Red, Amber, Green (RAG) scoring system, updated Regulation 19 Sustainability Appraisal and the detailing of the review of each site option put forward.
- 4.2 In Part 3 the booklets conclude with the reasoned justification for the selection, or discounting of sites. They will be updated and further informed with factual information such as the emerging Employment Study and Open Space Study and the results of Habitat and Heritage Impact Assessments where required. A number of statutory consultees made standardised comments in relation to many of the proposed allocations seeking clarity and consistency in the wording of the applicable policies including Anglian Water, Minerals and Waste Authority, Environment Agency and Natural England. All of these requested changes will be incorporated into the final Plan. Similarly, some site promoters sought amendments to policy wording and where these improve the effectiveness of policies, rather than dilute policy intentions, they will be incorporated.
- 4.3 In some cases site promoters have started to respond to the representations which were made and have either amended their proposals or submitted additional information. Where this is the case it is referenced in the Booklets.

4.4 Detailed site assessment for **Fakenham** is included in **Appendix 2**.

4.5 Detailed site assessment for **Wells** is included in **Appendix 3**.

Each booklet should be read in conjunction with this report.

5. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that members endorse the identified sites for inclusion in the Local Plan.
2. The final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.
3. That all other sites are discounted at this stage.
4. That the green open space designations shown on the site assessment maps are agreed.

• Fakenham

List of proposed residential allocations

Site Ref	Proposal No.	Description	Gross Area (ha)	Indicative Dwellings
F01/B	DS 6	Land North of Rudham Stile Lane	26.54	560
F02	-----	Land adjacent Shell petrol station	2.4	72
F03	DS 7	Land at Junction of A148 & B1146	2.16	65
F10	DS 8	Land South of Barons Close	4.11	35-55

• Wells

Proposed allocations

Site Ref	Description	Gross Area (ha)	Indicative Dwellings	Affordable dwellings
W01/1	Land at Market Lane	0.78	20	7
W07/1	Land Adjacent Holkham Road	2.69	60	21

6. Legal Implications and Risks

- 6.1 The Council must produce a Local Plan which complies with various regulatory and legal requirements and in determining its policy and proposals each must be justified and underpinned by evidence, the application of a consistent methodology and demonstrate how public feedback has informed the Plan.
- 6.2 The statutory process requires records of consultation feedback and demonstration of how this has/will have informed plan making with further commentary demonstrating how the representation at regulation 18 have been taken into account in line with Regulation 22 and also requires that a sustainability appraisal has informed the production of the Plan

7. Financial Implications and Risks

- 7.1 Failure to undertake plan preparation in accordance with the regulations and NPPF is likely to render the plan 'unsound' at examination and result in the need to return to earlier stages. Substantial additional costs would be incurred.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Site Assessment Methodology;

Appendix 2 –Site Assessment Booklet Fakenham

Appendix 3 –Site Assessment Booklet Wells