

Meeting Notes

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Job Name: GNL0336 – Land at North East Aylsham
Author: Alex Munro (Armstrong Rigg Planning)
Date of Meeting: 17th January 2018
Meeting Venue: Broadland Council Officers, Thorpe Lodge, Yarmouth Road, Norwich
Reference: 03715

In attendance: Geoff Armstrong, Armstrong Rigg Planning (GA)
Alex Munro, Armstrong Rigg Planning (AM)
Martin Bailey, Westmere Homes (MB)
Matthew Rooke, Broadland District Council (Development Management) (MR)
John Walchester, Broadland District Council (Spatial Planning) (JW)
Andrew Willeard, Norfolk County Council (Highways) (AW)

1. Introduction

The meeting was arranged following the submission of a pre-application enquiry in relation to the delivery of Westmere Homes' land at North East Aylsham, currently being promoted towards the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

It was confirmed both in the written pre-application submission and in GA's comments at the outset of the meeting that, whilst the pre-application enquiry route had been chosen to secure Officer advice on the delivery of the site, in fact guidance on the most appropriate way to promote the site towards the GNL0 was sought. Comments were therefore invited and provided on this basis.

2. GNL0: Implications for Broadland and Aylsham

- JW: GNL0 will replace majority of BLP save for the development management policies. GNL0 will set out a new spatial strategy for the Greater Norwich area including Broadland. Optimistic adoption date of GNL0 is the end of 2020 – realistically this will likely slip into 2021. Next stage of consultation is proposed to be Regulation 19 Pre-Submission draft in mid-2019;
- JW: Confirmed that current HLS Position is deficient in Norwich Policy Area but at around 28 years in rural Broadland;
- GA: In relation to the potential submission of a planning application on site would the earliest opportunity likely be publication of the Reg 19 draft in the event that it includes the land as a draft allocation? JW agreed Reg 19 would be earliest realistic opportunity, similar to timing of last two major applications in the town, although would expect objections to housing growth in Aylsham per se due to change in local attitudes to residential development;
- AM: What is the position of the Neighbourhood Plan? JW - was on hold for around 3 years but has undertaken recent consultation to get the process moving again. It is unlikely that the Plan will seek to deal with site allocations;
- JW: Suggests that Aylsham will continue to be classified as a main town in the GNL0 and would be expected to take an appropriate share of the 7k residual homes required across the Greater Norwich Area. Would be highly surprised if Aylsham did not have an allocated housing target in

- the plan. Aylsham is clearly an important town in the rural area;
- JW: Anticipates that a large part of the 7k across the plan area will have to be delivered in the rural areas with the balance likely focused towards South Norfolk. GA suggested that feedback from within South Norfolk would suggest otherwise. JW suggested that regardless all current commitments in the Norwich Policy Area will deliver in line with current trajectory to ensure the majority of supply. MR added that the current Reepham allocations are not delivering although ongoing negotiations are taking place with the respective landowners and developers;
- JW: In terms of delivery he expects the focus to be on allocated sites of approximately 200-300 homes in relevant locations across the rural area. This would supplement the strategic growth around Norwich. This may supplement a number of smaller sites of approximately 50 dwellings across the proposed settlement hierarchy. This is all to be confirmed following Reg 18 consultation;
- AW: Suggested that the highways' preference would be a range of larger sites, c200-300 dwellings, as they can deliver more significant infrastructure benefits.

3. Highways

- AW: Confirmed that Officers would be happy with the continued provision of the southern access from Bure Meadows alongside a relocated roundabout on the A140 positioned as far north as practical. Confirmed that Highways would not be averse to a new roundabout on the A140 and in fact would be preferred solution;
- MB: Stated that the scale of proposed development on site would dictate the nature of the access. Confirmed that the provision of a roundabout for anything fewer than 100-150 dwellings would prove unviable. Confirms that background technical studies show that additional capacity of approximately 140 dwellings exists through Bure Meadows access. AW disagreed although conceded that whilst a roundabout would be a preference for any scheme of 50-100 dwellings and could not be supported it would be difficult to substantiate any objection;
- AW: Restated support for a roundabout on the A140 and added that it would have been Highways' preference when the Bure Meadows scheme was delivered. Confirmed that a strong case could be made in future promotion for the benefit of a roundabout in relation to easing traffic movement on the eastern edge of Aylsham – in terms of impact on adjacent development there would be a marked design and infrastructure benefit that should aid the promotion of the North East Aylsham land;
- MB: Agreed that the roundabout can be moved and will instruct Highways Engineers to review this. Asked if, based on discussions, it was considered that highways remained a constraint. AW agreed that highways would not be considered a constraint subject to the scheme of access discussed and may indeed result in wider benefits to the east of the town;
- AW: Recommended that, once a detailed scheme of access had been designed, that it would be possible to undertake a Highways Pre-App along similar lines to the current discussions. The more detail that could be provided as part of this enquiry the better.

4. Education

- GA: Confirmed that initial discussions had taken place with Aylsham High School about provision of enhanced access and linked facilities with a potential future primary school;
- MR: Confirmed that Jane Blackwell (JB) at Norfolk County Council had been consulted, who suggests that the provision of a new primary school site in Aylsham would meet and need and be considered as attractive by County. It is anticipated that a school comprising two Forms of Entry would be ideal to complement existing and emerging provision and that there will be a need;
- GA: Suggested that this require a minimum 2ha site and that the proposed layout plan should be reconfigured accordingly. MB suggested that the retention of the primary school site in its current location would allow promotion of shared facilities between the High School and future primary – this benefit was agreed by both MR and AW, the latter in respect to school time movements;
- AM: Requested details of JB communication including figures and capacity / future need. MR to contact JB and forward.

5. Other infrastructure

Sewage Treatment:

- JW: Suggests that understands that theoretical capacity exists around Aylsham. However, key issue with Anglian Water will likely be impact on water quality. Recommended that Anglian Water are contacted directly to identify capacity and constraints;
- MR: Confirmed that it is the responsibility of Anglian Water to maintain sewerage and water treatment network to accommodate development. Capacity can usually always be created. GA agreed that sewerage capacity will generally be an issue in all locations and can usually always be resolved;

Green Infrastructure:

- MR: Stated that the most notable area for enhanced GI In Aylsham would likely be the Bure River Valley. JW identified that the scheme could provide enhanced access to the river and open countryside, the provision of which is always appreciated from a strategic perspective;
- JW: Confirmed that current DM policy requires the provision of 4ha per 1,000 population in open space as contribution towards GI to alleviate pressures on international wildlife sites including ones in The Broads. Agreed that this could possibly be provided as a scheme of enhanced access to the River Bure and that the draft proposal could significantly contribute towards GI;

Allotments:

- MB: Identified that, from experience, there is a high local take up in allotments. MR agreed that the Town Council continue to demonstrate a waiting list for allotments – the current position can be secured from the TC direct;

Other linkages:

- AW: Suggested that any way that pedestrian linkages can be provided to the Dunkirk Estate employment land to the north would be very beneficial. MB is not aware whether a footbridge across the River Bure currently exists – the possibility of its provision and potential location will be investigated further, however;
- MR: Highlighted that a footpath link from Bure Meadows to the river is to be provided as part of the Bure Meadows scheme. Confirms, however, that the S106 places management and legal responsibility of footpath link on residents – a position that has to date proven unpopular. There may be a benefit in providing alternative footpath links through the enquiry site that absolves this responsibility and secures potential support from disgruntled residents.

6. Future promotion towards the GNL

- AM: Asked how the Site Proposals consultation document sits alongside the HELAA. JA confirmed that it provides a summary of all sites that have passed the HELAA first sift. GA asked if the sifting process would be sensitive enough to assess a range of options on a single site. JW confirmed that whilst ideally it should it was suggested that representations include two or more options for assessment, if the promoter wishes more than one option to be considered, so the position of the promoter is clear;
- GA: Suggested that further representations would comprise a scheme of 75 dwellings to include primary school site but not roundabout and an amended version of the current scheme;
- JW: Recommended promoting on the basis of the strong range of benefits that site can offer – highways improvements, pedestrian linkages, Green Infrastructure, primary school site linking to existing High School. Representations should be supported by commentary on why Aylsham should be the rural focus for further growth – a review of the spatial options and housing requirement would be useful;
- JW: Also recommend early approach to Town Council (Clerk as point of contact) to discuss the benefits of the site. This may not necessarily gain TC support but will potentially temper any objection (note: this is in the context of the more recent opposition to any development adopted by TC);
- AW: From a Highways perspective, a scheme of scale would be favoured that would be able to

secure welcome improvements to the local highways network. If Aylsham is only to receive an allocation of 50-75 dwellings he believes that it would be Highways preference that it was delivered somewhere else instead of being an extension to an existing large scale estate served from a single point of access (without a new roundabout).