

## GNLP0252 Blofield Local Plan Representation (Regulation 18)

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Land South of Yarmouth Road, Blofield</b>	<b>Job no:</b>	<b>304412</b>
<b>Client:</b>	<b>Newbury New Homes and G &amp; J Pointer</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20/03/2018</b>

### Support for Representation Number GNLP0252

#### *Background*

In May 2016 the Greater Norwich authorities launched a '*Call for Sites*' consultation to identify land for possible inclusion within the emerging plan. A representation was submitted on behalf of the landowners at this stage. This representation reinforces why Blofield is a suitable location for further development and why this proposed site makes a suitable site to allocate for the new plan period to 2036.

Under the current adopted strategy to 2026, Blofield is identified in the residential hierarchy as a '*key service centre*'. The residential hierarchy is based on criteria such as the population size and the number of services offered. Settlements which are higher up the hierarchy have the capacity to accommodate more growth. In the Greater Norwich Area, under current planning policy there are six existing tiers in the residential hierarchy. The settlement hierarchy approach is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which favours prioritising growth in settlements where it is supported by existing services, facilities and infrastructure, has the strongest links between homes and jobs and where opportunities for sustainable transport are maximised.

The six tiers in the residential hierarchy are as follows:

1. Norwich Urban Area
2. Main Towns
3. Key Service Centres
4. Service Villages
5. Other Villages
6. Smaller Rural Communities and the Countryside

Clearly within the existing hierarchy, Blofield sits relatively high overall and certainly very high for settlements that are not identified as main towns or fringe settlements which lie within Broadland District area.

The hierarchy reflects the range and type of services available in and accessible from communities and is a guide to sustainability. While the hierarchy is a starting point it does not, by itself, determine the scale of development that is appropriate in any particular settlement. This will take account of factors such as the scale, range and quality of local services; deliverability; location in relation to strategic services and job opportunities and local constraints and opportunities.

The defining criteria for '*Key Service Centres*' such as Blofield is local access to some services and employment opportunities (a primary school; an accessible secondary school; healthcare facilities; day-to-

day retail and services; local employment; frequent public transport). Growth considerations are determined by a number of factors: housing allocations - the scale of which would be dependent on-site availability, the scale and range of local services (higher levels of growth would tend towards locations with a secondary school); the growth option chosen; access to Norwich; and local environmental constraints. Part of the Regulation 18 consultation involves the consideration of making changes to the settlement hierarchy renaming 'key service centres' as 'service centres'.

Broadland as a district area is characterised by settlements adjoining and contiguous to the built-up area of Norwich City, a few larger settlements and a greater number of smaller villages and hamlets which predominantly lie within the rural part of Broadland. This means that outside of the fringe parishes there are limited opportunities for additional expansion in suitably sustainable settlements. This is in part because of the proximity of the Broads Authority area and the associated statutory duty to protect the setting of the Broads, high levels of flood risk in areas near the Broads and the size, scale and facilities in smaller settlements.

This planning confidence in Blofield as an area capable of accommodating larger scale development is underlined by the existing allocations that lie in the adopted Site Allocations DPD (2016) which include: BLO1 north of the Yarmouth Road for mixed use with 175 homes; BLO2 south of Yarmouth Road for 22 homes; BLO3 at Wyngates for 64 homes; and BLO4 north of Lingwood Road for 75 homes. There is a commitment in Blofield for 450 dwellings as at 2017.

#### *The Housing Requirement within Greater Norwich to 2036*

There is a shortage of housing across all tenures in Greater Norwich. Overall delivery of housing from 2008-14 was at approximately 70% of the target, compared to a national delivery rate of 60%. Although this compares well with the national picture, housing delivery rates are not keeping up with housing needs in Greater Norwich. This is despite completion rates, rising year on year since 2010.

The objectively assessed need for Greater Norwich is for 39,000 homes between 2017-2036. Outside of existing commitments, it is estimated that there is a need to identify sites for an additional 7,200 homes for the Greater Norwich area.

#### ***The Case for Blofield as an area for future residential allocation***

Blofield is considered a suitable settlement to absorb some of this growth to 2036.

Blofield lies adjacent to the strategic road network. The A47 to the east of the area connects to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft; they are coastal resorts and industrial towns with significant regeneration needs. The development of Eastport at Great Yarmouth provides improved access to continental Europe and for offshore industries.

The A47 to the west provides access to the Midlands, the North and growth areas at Dereham and King's Lynn. There is a Government commitment to making improvements to the A47, starting in 2020, including dualling, junction improvements at Thickthorn and safety measures towards Great Yarmouth. The A47 directly links to the A11. The A11 corridor is identified as a major focus of growth with a route providing key strategic access to London, Cambridge and the A14 which is identified as a key strategic corridor route to the Midlands.

It is a strategic objective of both the NPPF and the Greater Norwich area to maximise opportunities for sustainable transport. Blofield has several bus services which allow access to Norwich city centre, the railway station and the Broadland business park. It is also within reasonable proximity to park and ride facilities therefore reducing the need to travel by car.

- **Konectbus5A (Mon – Friday)** there is a regular bus service linking Blofield Medical Centre to Broadland Business Park, the Thorpe Road main railway station and Norwich City Centre starting at 0712 until 1714 and returning from the City Centre from 0725 to 1825 in the evening making this suitable for normal working hours. There is also an hourly service between 8.14am and 17:14 on **Saturdays** into Norwich, with an hourly return service between 0825 and 1825.
- **First Buses Norfolk & Suffolk 15 Green Line** – linking Blofield Heath and Blofield to the Broadland Business Park, the City centre and Wymondham between 0649 and 16.45 and returning from the town centre at 1740.
- There are also more limited services linking Blofield to Great Yarmouth (**Our Hire 74- Great Yarmouth to Little Plumstead**) as well as with Wroxham and Cantley (**Our Hire 292 – Cantley to Wroxham**).
- Blofield is also served by the Postwick Park and Ride site on the Yarmouth Road located on the junction between the A47 and the A1042 which lies only 3 miles away.

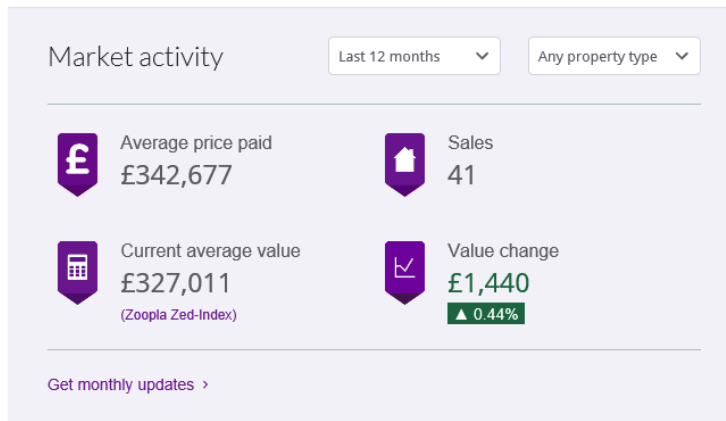
Blofield is a sustainable village with several of its own services and facilities and access to the City Centre, Broadland Business Park and the railway station for work without recourse to the private car. It lies only 3.5 miles from the Broadland Business Park, 8 miles from Norwich Railway station and 8.6 miles from Norwich city centre. It should therefore still be considered as a suitable location for additional residential development in Broadland for the new Plan period 2017-2036.

It is considered necessary to have a positive policy on non-car transport improvements and improved broadband connectivity which allows for a higher level of home working and more connectivity for businesses and residents which can help to improve effective service provision. The Better Broadband for Norfolk programme aims to make high-speed broadband available to more than 95% of Norfolk's premises by spring 2020. The next generation of mobile phone networks will be 5G, and the rollout is expected to commence in 2020. It is a key objective to improve the speed and reach of high-speed broadband connectivity across Greater Norwich.

The delivery of housing is a key aim of Government policy and is a significant issue in Greater Norwich. However, it is important that the GNLP ensures that a plan-led approach can be taken so that much needed housing is delivered in locations where it minimises the need for additional infrastructure and enables new residents to have sustainable access to services and jobs. It is understood that with the new development taking place in Blofield capacity issues at the Cucumber Lane Roundabout can be addressed through design and other mitigation measures.

Benefits can be maximized by ensuring that allocated sites create diversity, completion and choice in the market for housing land and are well related to key employment locations. This is the case in Blofield. In addition, the housing market has identified that Blofield is an easy place to market and sell houses and the market remains relatively buoyant.

## House prices in Blofield



### The Site: Land south of Yarmouth Road

Phase 1 was an allocation in the previous plan and was granted planning consent for development in 2015 - (2014/1710). The building out of Phase 1 is nearing completion and comprised a total of 30 dwellings (20 open market and 10 affordable units.) This has demonstrated that my clients are able to ensure deliverability as their ability has been tried and tested.

Phase 2 and Phase 3 form the basis of this representation. Phase 2 is 1.75ha in size and it is proposed to accommodate approximately 32 dwellings. A Phase 2 layout plan is attached to this representation. This incorporates an appropriate mix that will ensure that local people can be accommodated. Most sales in Norfolk in 2017 were detached properties, selling for an average price of £320,031. Semi-detached properties sold for an average of £216,092, with terraced properties fetching £186,656. (Source: Right Move). As can be seen from the Table from Zoopla above, sale prices in Zoopla are above average for Norfolk. Phase 3 can accommodate between 38-58 dwellings. The existing Type 3 access road from Yarmouth Road is capable of accommodating 100 dwellings across the three phases at present, but any further dwellings would be subject to agreement with the Highways Authority.

Drainage arrangements to serve the wider site forming Representation No. GNLP0252 are already in place. Our clients own all the surrounding undeveloped land in the proximity of the site proposed. The Golf Course lies to the west of the site and this will not be affected by the proposal. In addition, future development to the west is prevented by the Golf Course.

The site is a natural progression southward but does not impinge on the wider ecological status of land which lies much further to the south and careful design can ensure the wider setting of the Mid Yare National Nature Reserve remains unaffected by the proposal.

The development proposal lies in close proximity to local services within Blofield and therefore within reasonable walking distances of local bus services which have already been referred to in some detail in this representation.

Whilst it extends southwards, its visual impact on the locality is reduced in that the site does not extend beyond the existing southern boundary of the built-up area of Blofield and therefore the potential visual impact of the development on the locality is minimised. The site therefore does not contribute adversely to the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the locality. There is also a natural break formed by the field boundary.

There is no direct impact on listed buildings which lie in the locality. These are identified as:

Church of St Andrew and St Peter – Grade 1;

Beech House – Grade II;

Manor Farm Barn – Grade II; and

Blofield Court House – Grade II.

These listed buildings are more likely to have been impacted through the development of Phase 1 of land to the south of Yarmouth Road and yet the site was allocated, and permission granted for this Phase.

Any important vistas arising in relation to the development of Phase 3 can be accommodated easily through careful design consideration.

Whilst the '**Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment**' (HELAA) does not provide an assessment of recommendations for inclusion as an allocation, it does remain an important piece of evidence as to the suitability of a site for development. In addition, the views of a range of technical stakeholders, such as Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Anglian Water, local authority Conservation and Environmental Health services, and Norfolk County Council's Highways, Ecology and Historic Environment services, have been considered in the HELAA assessment. The conclusions therefore are important in the future assessment of the suitability of the site. It found that in relation to the land south of Yarmouth Road (GNLP0252): The highways initial reservations may be possible to mitigate; the site is located within the built-up area and well related to services. It also refers to other possible constraints such as nearby listed buildings but concludes that the site is suitable for the land availability assessment subject to overcoming these constraints or mitigating against them.

### **Conclusion**

At present, Phase 1 is approximately 4 months from completion. This has demonstrated that my clients are able to ensure deliverability as their ability has been tried and tested. My client is confident that the development of Phase 2 and Phase 3 can be accommodated within 5 years. This means that there is certainty about the site being available to come forward early in the Plan period. Blofield is a strategically advantageous location and is identified as a location capable of accommodating further sustainable growth in terms of the existing residential hierarchy. It is a marketable and popular location. Additional residents can also help to grow the level of services and facilities serving the residents of Blofield and the adjacent villages enhancing its role as a key service centre as well as providing additional support the existing well-resourced bus services. This site's logical location within Blofield, adjacent to the adopted Settlement Boundary and with easy access to local amenities, makes it a suitable and sustainable location to accommodate the required growth.