



**GREATER NORWICH  
LOCAL PLAN  
REGULATION 18  
CONSULTATION  
REPRESENTATIONS  
SUPPORTING LAND AT  
SPOONER ROW,  
NORWICH**

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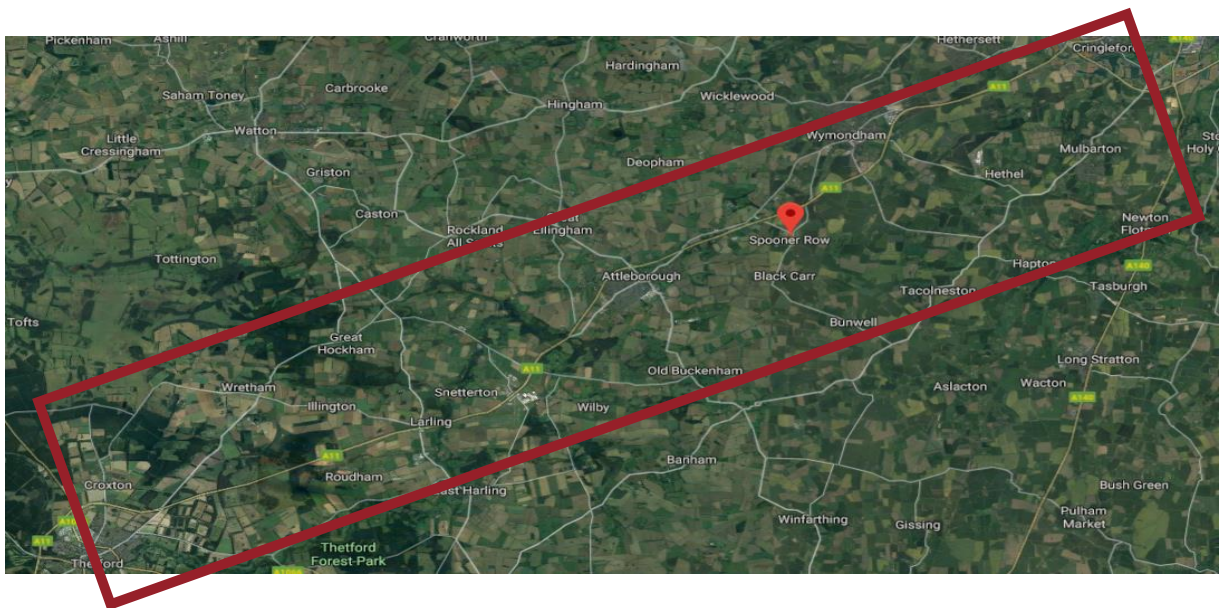


## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Linden Homes in support of Land at Spooner Row, Norwich (hereafter referred to as “the site”)
- 1.2 Linden Homes is promoting the site for allocation in the emerging local plan as it offers the opportunity to provide a significant amount of new family housing in a sustainable location close to local services and amenities, within the Norwich Housing Market Area; along a main transport corridor and within the Norwich to Cambridge Tech Corridor; an area of key growth potential.
- 1.3 The land at Spooner Row presents a key opportunity to deliver a “new settlement” scale of development, whilst improving services and facilities in a location that meets a number of the GNLP strategic objectives as well as fitting with the large majority of the GNLP strategic options. As identified in the authorities’ HELAA, the site is considered to be suitable, viable and achievable and there are no significant planning constraints that prevent the development coming forward.
- 1.4 Some parts of the site have been considered by the local plan process previously in isolation, however, together a much more sensible and comprehensive development is possible in this location.
- 1.5 A number of alternative “new settlements” have been submitted to the GNLP process, however, the large majority are either poorly located in terms of infrastructure and access, or are starting from scratch, which means that significant investment upfront is required to be able to facilitate development. The recent examination of the North Essex Authorities Stage 1 Local Plan has identified the importance attached to the delivery of infrastructure for new garden settlements, hence a location with existing infrastructure and the ability for its expansion, such as Spooner Row presents a key opportunity to accommodate this level of development, with little upfront investment needed.

## 2.0 Spooner Row Strategic Location

- 2.1 The site is well located for a number of reasons including strategic policy, physical characteristics and current and potential future growth initiatives.
- 2.2 When looking at the settlements that adjoin the A11 from Thetford to Norwich (Figure 1 below), Attleborough, Wymondham and Hethersett have all grown significantly in the relative recent past, however, Spooner Row has largely remained as a collection of development parcels around what is deemed to be significant road and rail connections. Recent planning decisions, based on a lack of a five year land supply, rather than the settlement hierarchy, have illustrated its sustainability and a number of additional blocks of housing have been added to the settlement as a result.



**Figure 1: Thetford to Norwich Corridor**

### **Cambridge, Milton Keynes to Oxford (CAMKOX) Corridor**

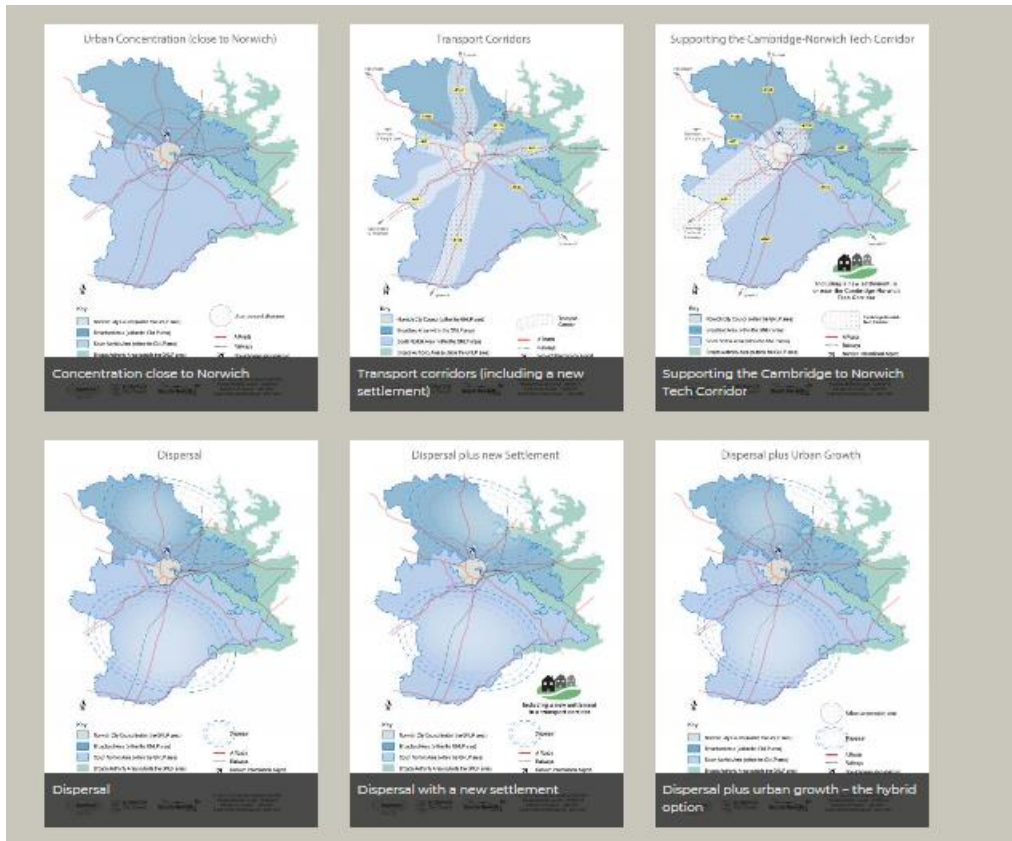
- 2.3 The Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor is identified as a potential location for up to 1 million homes up to 2050 and it is viewed by Government as having the highest potential for continued economic growth outside London as a result.
- 2.4 There have been discussions about the potential expansion of the CAMKOX corridor further east to encompass Norwich and build on the economic growth and linkages that have formulated and developed in recent years, including the Cambridge to Norwich Tech Corridor.
- 2.5 If this was to happen, the site at Spooner Row would represent a significant opportunity for economic development along the A11 corridor between Norwich and Cambridge.

## 3.0 Greater Norwich Local Plan

- 3.1 The previous GNLP Regulation 18 consultation that took place between January and March this year set out broad issues and options for a number of both strategic and development management issues. It also included a large number of sites, including a significant proportion that were allocated in the previous version of the plan and that are proposed to be allocated again.
- 3.2 The proactive nature of the authorities' plan-making process means that only a relatively small proportion of land (comparatively) is needed to accommodate housing towards the end of the plan period. This works well for the site at Spooner Row, as it is identified for development for the middle – end of the plan period based on the overall scale but also the level of work needed to advance it through the planning process.
- 3.3 Therefore, whilst it is clear that a significant amount of land is already allocated in the GNLP area, Spooner Row presents a logical, longer term option for development, that would fit with the timescales that the plan is seeking to identify to accommodate the additional 7,200 homes.

### Spooner Row and the Spatial Strategy

- 3.4 In relation to the potential strategy for delivery of the identified housing shortfall, the Issues and Option Plan identified a number possible strategic options, including:
- Urban concentration;
  - Transport corridors;
  - Cambridge to Norwich Tech corridor;
  - Dispersal;
  - Dispersal plus new settlement;
  - Dispersal plus urban growth
- 3.5 Each of these options is illustrated in the image below, taken from the previous Issues and Options Consultation document.



**Figure 2: Strategic Options from the Issues and Options Plan**

- 3.6 Based on the site’s location, it has the potential to contribute towards all of these potential strategic options as it lies within the Norwich HMA and so would fit with idea of urban concentration; but is also located adjacent to the A11, a major transport corridor and within the Cambridge to Norwich Tech Corridor. Although technically within the Norwich HMA, it falls within the area identified for “dispersal” on the maps above, but could also be classified as a “new settlement” because of the scale of development proposed. So technically there are arguments to be made in relation to all of the potential strategic options that the local authorities may be looking to take forward.
- 3.7 Currently there does not appear to be a sustainability appraisal available for comment. Whilst this consultation is purely based on the additional sites submitted to the last round of consultation, a detailed assessment of all reasonable alternatives (i.e. sites which past the tests of the HELAA) will be necessary before the decision is made as to whether they are appropriate for allocation.



## 3.0 Comments on the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

3.1 The site is identified as GNLP2101 in the GNLP HELAA. The site scores positively for the large majority of the criteria, due to the lack of physical constraints and potential opportunities for sustainable development in this location.

3.2 The assessment scores the site “amber” for a small number of the more subjective issues, which to a degree is understood as assumptions have had to be made about how the development could come forward in the future. Each of these matters is discussed in turn below:

### Access

3.3 The assessment doesn’t make specific reference to “access”, other than in relation to services, however, the site has numerous potential access points off Station Road, from which visibility is good and in turn Station Road provides direct access onto the A11 in the form of a dedicated junction located to the north. The A11 provides access to Wymondham and Norwich in an easterly direction and Bury St Edmunds, Attleborough and Cambridge in a westerly direction. Therefore, in term of access, this site should be scored green as it presents a key opportunity to locate development in a very accessible location, where there is capacity in the road network and the ability to provide safe access.

### Access to services

3.4 As correctly identified the site is adjacent to a primary school and Spooner Row has a frequent bus service but also accommodates a large “gastro” pub, village hall and train station on the Norwich to Cambridge line. As also suggested in the assessment a development of this scale presents the opportunity to deliver services including expansion of the existing school and local services and facilities in the form of a local shop / local centre or potential employment. The potential for employment creates a key opportunity just off the A11 and within the Cambridge to Norwich Tech Corridor. The inclusion of land adjacent to the station also provides the opportunity for its potential expansion and associated parking should it be required.

3.5 Proximity to the A11 and larger settlements including Attleborough, Wymondham and Norwich should also be factored into the assessment, reflecting modern-day connectivity and movement of the population. The provision of broadband and the use of home delivery for shopping, should also be a consideration. Spooner Row is well served by Broadband, which is a key opportunity for both residential and employment development.

3.6 More generally the settlement hierarchy and settlement level assessment should reflect modern day practices, rather than being based on a historic view of how people used to

live their life with the need for all services and facilities to be on their door step. This is no longer considered to be a realistic view of modern-day society.

### **Utilities capacity**

- 3.7 The assessment identifies that the site would require significant off site sewerage infrastructure. As detailed above a development of this scale will be able to deliver this level of infrastructure however, Anglian Water have a duty to manage the foul water created by development, and given the timescale associated with the development a suitable solution can be delivered working jointly through the OFFWAT process.

### **Townscapes**

- 3.8 Whilst there is no specific justification for the amber score in relation to this criterion, it is assumed that the scale of development in this location could be the rational for its classification, however, in landscape terms this area of land is well contained within the landscape.
- 3.9 The topography and potential for boundary treatment allows for development that can be contained within it. The site is well bounded by hedgerows, trees and roads including the A11 to the north.
- 3.10 The current settlement pattern is sporadic, with no real planned or historic core. The Church and adjacent war memorial are the only listed buildings and the pockets of development that exist are relatively modern, built at the junctions of the road network at various points in recent history.
- 3.11 Significant development in this location presents the opportunity to develop more of an identity and village core and bring together the sporadic elements of a settlement to create a community, improving linkages and connections between the different areas.

### **Transport and roads**

- 3.12 This again is similar to the point above about access. Whilst no specific rational is given for the amber score, this site provides the opportunity for numerous access points off Station Road, on which visibility is good and Station Road provides direct access onto the A11.

### **Availability and Achievability**

- 3.13 The assessment correctly identifies that the site is available and viable. The assessment also identifies that the site has been submitted by a “landowner / promoter”, however in terms of “deliverability”, it should be noted that the land is being promoted by a

housebuilder, therefore, there should be a greater acknowledgement that the site will be delivered.

## **Conclusion**

- 3.14 The HELAA assessment correctly concludes that the site is suitable, available and achievable, which is supported.

## 4.0 The opportunity – Land at Spooner Row, Norwich

- 4.1 Linden Homes contends that the Land at Spooner Row presents an excellent opportunity for GNLP to identify a significant amount of housing in a sustainable location, taking account of:
- The site's sustainable location in the Norwich HMA;
  - The lack of constraints to development of the site;
  - The deliverability of the site given its greenfield status and Linden Homes excellent delivery record; and
  - The opportunity to expand existing infrastructure and create a new community.

### Site description

- 4.2 The site comprises approximately 180 acres (74 hectares) of greenfield, agricultural land adjoining the settlement of Spooner Row and the A11. The site is well contained by the A11, hedgerows, small areas of woodland and the main road network, which surround the site. Its flat landscape form, dipping slightly to the east, means it is well contained and unlikely to be significantly visible from major viewpoints in and around the surrounding area.

### Strategic and sustainable location

- 4.3 The location of the site adjacent to the A11 and within the Norwich HMA presents a key opportunity for a significant scale of development in a location already served by significant infrastructure.
- 4.4 The Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor is being viewed as a focus for development and there are discussions being had about extending it further to link to Norwich. This then creates significant opportunities along the A11 corridor for development opportunities.

### Proposals

- 4.5 The site is capable of delivering up to 750 dwellings to include a suitable mix of dwelling sizes and tenures to respond to local need. The broad masterplan shows an option for the design of the site, responding to the physical features and boundaries. The extract below is taken from the proposed illustrative layout, reproduced in full at Appendix 2.



**Figure 3: Indicative Masterplan**

- 4.6 The main points of access would be off Station Road. The main areas of residential development are located to the north of the railway line, although the land south of the rail crossing does also presents a further opportunity for future expansion.
- 4.7 The area of land north of the railway line adjoins Spooner Row Primary School, which provides the opportunity for expansion (NB no detailed discussions have yet taken place with the education authority / Academy). A development of this scale is likely to require an additional form of entry of education provision, therefore discussions will take place to understand how this is best delivered onsite.
- 4.8 The land adjoining the school is considered to be closest to what could be described as the village core (village hall, school and station in close proximity) it also presents the opportunity for inclusion of other community facilities in the form of retail / leisure / employment...etc.

- 4.9 The site also provides the opportunity for expansion of the railway station. The land adjoins the station to the south, therefore, there is potential for expansion of the station and additional parking in this area as well to facilitate increased use if necessary.

### **Deliverability**

- 4.10 The site is within a number of land ownerships, which are being brought together currently through an option agreement. All landowners are keen to progress.

### **Linden Homes**

- 4.11 Linden Homes is a national and multi-award-winning housebuilder with a proven track record of delivery of high quality residential schemes. Since 2016, Linden Homes has been the winner of the Inside Housing Top Sixty Developments award, The Brick Awards Best Large Housebuilder and What House Awards Sustainable Developer of the Year: Silver Award. Linden Homes is committed to the delivery of a high-quality development on this site as soon as possible.

### **Galliford Try**

- 4.12 Galliford Try is the parent company of Linden Homes, therefore we are able to take forward large-scale development, which requires significant infrastructure to be delivered as we are able to call on expertise from one of the leading construction and regeneration companies in the UK.

## 5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 These representations have been prepared by Linden Homes in respect of Land at Spooner Row, Norwich in response to the Greater Norwich Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation.
- 5.2 Linden Homes is promoting the site for allocation in the emerging plan as it offers the opportunity to provide a significant amount of new family housing in a sustainable location close to local services and amenities.
- 5.3 The timescales associated with the housing requirement in the emerging plan, work well with a development of this scale and location as homes are likely to start being delivered towards the middle of the plan period, which would fit with the housing trajectory.
- 5.4 The development would also help contribute towards economic growth in the Cambridge to Norwich Tech Corridor, promoting development in an extremely accessible location.

# APPENDIX 1

## SITE LOCATION PLAN

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# APPENDIX 2 PROPOSED ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUT

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STRATEGIC  
LAND

