LOCAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT OF CASE

1. THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

1.1 The appeal site is to the northeast of the centre of Blofield and has an area of 4.44 hectares. It is currently in use as arable farmland. It is bounded to the north by arable farmland with the A47 trunk road beyond further to the north. To the south on Yarmouth Road is residential development comprising mainly mature detached houses and bungalows in varying styles. To the west is Manor Ridge – a cul-de-sac of detached and semi-detached chalets and bungalows, a tree belt at the rear of Library Close (an ongoing development of large detached houses) and the back garden of number 65 Yarmouth Road. To the east is arable farmland and a development of mainly detached houses known as Wyngates.

1.2 The site is currently accessed from Wyngates in its southeast corner. Levels vary within the site but generally decline from the centre of the site towards the boundaries.

2. PLANS TO BE PRODUCED

2.1 The Local Planning Authority will produce plans based on the Ordnance Survey to a scale of 1:2500 and at other scales considered to be appropriate, showing the appeal site in relation to the surrounding areas and highway network and the location of other relevant sites. The Broadland District Local Plan Proposals Map will also be referred to.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY
3.1 881059: (1) 55 houses (2) hard tennis courts. Refused on 14 June 1988 as the site was outside of the development stop line and it was considered to represent an unacceptable extension of development into open countryside to the detriment of the visual amenities of the area. Also, the existing water supply to the site and the foul drainage treatment works serving the site were considered to be inadequate to cope with the development of any additional land not currently allocated for residential purposes.

3.2 20121746: An Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion was issued by the Local Planning Authority on 11 January 2013 concluding that the development that is the subject of this appeal did not require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

4.1 The Local Planning Authority will refer to the National Planning Policy Framework, policies from the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and the Broadland District Local Plan (Replacement) in its evidence. Reference will also be made to the appeal decision reference APP/K2610/A/12/2177219 which granted outline planning permission for up to 175 residential units, 4000 sq m of B1 employment space and open space on land to the north of Yarmouth Road in Blofield.

4.2 The Joint Core Strategy was adopted in March 2011 and the following are considered to be particularly relevant to this appeal:

   Policy 1: Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
   Policy 2: Promoting good design
   Policy 3: Energy and water
   Policy 4: Housing delivery
   Policy 6: Access and transportation
   Policy 7: Supporting communities
   Policy 8: Culture, leisure and entertainment
   Policy 9: Strategy for growth in the Norwich Policy Area
   Policy 12: The remainder of the Norwich urban area, including the fringe parishes
   Policy 13: Main Towns
   Policy 14: Key Service Centres

4.4 The Broadland District Local Plan (Replacement) was adopted in 2006. The sections from this plan which are of particular relevance are:

   Chapter 2: General Strategy - Policies GS1, GS3, GS4;
   Chapter 3: Environment - Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5, ENV20 and ENV23;
   Chapter 4: Housing - Policies HOU1, HOU6 and HOU7;
   Chapter 7: Transport - Policies TRA2, TRA4, TRA8 and TRA14;
   Chapter 8: Recreation and Leisure – Policies RL5 and RL7.
   Chapter 10: Community Services – Policy CS14.
5. **THE COUNCIL’S CASE IN RESPECT OF THE APPEAL**

5.1 The appeal site is in a countryside location and outside of the settlement limit that has been defined for Blofield by the Broadland District Local Plan (Replacement) 2006 where there is a presumption against development proposals unless they comply with a specific allocation and/or policy of the Local Plan. However, the Council accepts that there is not a five year supply of land for housing in the Norwich Policy Area and therefore Policy HOU1 of the Local Plan is out of date.

5.2 Nevertheless, the approval of up to 64 further houses in Blofield would, taking account of existing approved estate scale housing development in the village, represent an increase in population of about 33% and would represent a significant increase in the size of the settlement, being approximately 5.2 times the level of 50 dwellings referred to in Policy 14 of the Joint Core Strategy. While Blofield is considered to be a sustainable location for some new development, it is considered that development at this overall scale would undermine the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy of the Joint Core Strategy and would fundamentally alter the existing character of Blofield as the consequential scale and form of development would not be commensurate with the size of settlement. It is considered that further estate scale housing development in the village, in addition to the approvals of up to 197 dwellings, would result in a housing commitment commensurate with a higher order settlement such as a Main Town (defined in Policy 13 of the Joint Core Strategy) and would not be suitable for this lower order settlement. Therefore, the scale of development, when taking account of existing estate scale housing commitment in Blofield, is excessive and not commensurate with this Key Service Centre and is contrary to Policies 9 and 14 of the Joint Core Strategy.

5.3 The cumulative impact of development of this scale is exacerbated by the speed of delivery. Such a significant influx of growth over a relatively short period of time will be difficult to assimilate into the community and is likely to lead to a disparity between the local population and local facilities and services. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 7 of the Joint Core Strategy.

5.4 This is turn means the proposed development is not commensurate with the social and economic needs of the settlement of Blofield which therefore renders it an unsustainable location being at odds with these two dimensions referred to in paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Adverse impacts on these dimensions should be avoided (paragraph 152 of the NPPF) and the alternative option to reduce or eliminate such impacts should be allowed to take place by allowing the location of further housing growth to be plan-led and to be determined through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) which is scheduled for adoption towards the end of 2014.

5.5 The proposal is premature in respect of the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD and the overall scale of housing development that would result in this
Key Service Centre if the proposal were to be approved. The effect of granting permission would be to predetermine decisions about the scale and location of new development in other third order or higher order settlements which ought to be addressed in the emerging Site Allocations DPD.

5.6 Approval of the proposal would see a disproportionate amount of the development for the district being undertaken in one area, contrary to the spatial vision of the Joint Core Strategy which seeks to distribute housing growth following a settlement hierarchy. Approval of the proposal, in light of the existing quantum of estate scale housing approvals in Blofield, would undermine the core planning principles of both plan-making and decision taking at odds with paragraph 17 of the NPPF.

5.7 It is considered that approval of this appeal would prejudice the plan-led system and in doing so the impacts associated with the proposal would be significant and demonstrable and these would not be outweighed by any benefits in the current proposal.
List of Documents

1. National Planning Policy Framework

2. Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011)

3. Broadland District Local Plan (Replacement) 2006

4. Appeal ref. APP/K2610/A/12/2177219 which granted outline planning permission for up to 175 residential units, 4000 sq m of B1 employment space and open space on land to the north of Yarmouth Road in Blofield.

5. Relevant documents, including Planning Committee report and Supplementary Schedule dated 22 May 2013, relevant representations and consultee responses.

6. Any further documents which become material to the issues prior to the determination of the Appeal.