NORFOLK HOMES LTD : LAND AT WYNGATES, YARMOUTH ROAD, BLOFIELD, NORFOLK

PINS ref:  APP/K2610/A/13/2198950

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF SIMON WHEATMAN BSc (HONS) MRTP
1. The proposed development comprises a site of some 4.44ha. of arable land, located adjacent to the northern settlement boundary of Blofield.

2. The site is well contained within the built-up area of Blofield, with the part of the site for the proposed houses being surrounded on three sides by existing properties. To the north there is a small field before the A47 dual carriageway which immediately to the east of the site goes into a cutting (east to west).

3. The key issues in this appeal are:
   (i) Is there a shortfall in the NPPF requirement for a 5 year housing land supply?
   (ii) Is Blofield a sustainable settlement suitable for further housing development?
   (iii) Does the appeal site represent an appropriate site for development?
   (iv) What are the impacts of additional growth in Blofield, above the JCS allocation of 'approximately 50' dwellings plus additional development from the 'smaller sites in the NPA' allowance?
   (v) Would the development of the appeal site be premature to the emerging Development Plan?

4. In my view the proposal to construct 64 dwellings on the appeal site with extremely limited impact on the visual or landscape setting of the village, good connectivity to services within the village, sustainable transport options for travel beyond to the relatively close business park and Norwich accords with the relevant policies of the NPPF.

5. The Planning Officers have recognised in their report to the Planning Committee the suitability of the site for development based on the site specific considerations.

6. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires that Local Planning Authorities maintain annually a supply of deliverable housing sites sufficient to provide 5 years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market and 20% where there has been a history of under-delivery.
7. The GNDP have failed to maintain a deliverable 5 year housing land supply evidenced by the recent appeal decisions referred to in this evidence. It is clear that the GNDP is not complying with Government policy on this matter.

8. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF requires that applications for housing development be considered favourably. The paragraph further states that 'Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites'. The GNDP cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and as such the proposal falls to be determined having regard to paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

9. The addition of 64 dwellings to Blofield is in my view an acceptable proportion of the Smaller Sites allowance of 2,000 dwellings.

10. This increase in dwellings will not compromise the settlement hierarchy. There is a clear division between the higher order Main Town of Wymondham in the NPA, the scale of the growth proposed in the 'Growth Triangle' in the Broadland part of the NPA, the KSC villages and the Service Villages. At Wymondham the JCS designates the settlement as an expanded community and consequently allocates at least 2,200 dwellings, the Growth Triangle in Broadland currently has an allocation of 7,000 dwellings to 2026 (this part of the policy is currently remitted). The growth at Blofield from the current permitted number of 197 dwellings to 261 dwellings with the appeal proposal would not in my opinion prejudice the strategy or erode the hierarchy of settlements.

11. Blofield possesses a range of service and facilities, such as shops, post office, meeting halls, doctors, primary school and an acceptable distance and bus services to the local high school. All of which contribute to the sustainability of the settlement and the suitability of Blofield to accommodate additional housing. The Inspector for the Manor Park appeal when considering the impact on services within the village, resulting from the proposed development stated (paragraph 24) that 'I do not consider that infrastructure in Blofield would be ill-suited to meeting the needs arising from the
The proposed development would provide 21 units of affordable housing, to assist in the delivery of such units when the Council have not been meeting the targets in previous years. Additionally, the scheme would also provide public open space to address the shortage of informal recreation space within the village.

The appeal proposal seeks detailed planning permission with the appellant owning part of the site and the remainder under an Option Agreement. It is therefore possible for development on the site to commence at an early date with completion by early 2017. Given the current circumstances with the Manor Park site, previously approved on appeal, it is extremely likely that the Wyngates site will be completed before Manor Park starts to deliver dwellings.

Granting permission for the appeal site will not be premature to the Local Plan process. The housing distribution policy for the Broadland part of the NPA is currently remitted with the Inspector's report not expected until mid November. The Site Allocations DPD was recently in a period for consultation which ended on 2 September 2013. Obviously the SA DPD is relying on the distribution of housing contained in JCS Policy 9 to remain unchanged by the Examination Inspector. However, the SA DPD has not been submitted for examination and currently has a number of significant objections, particularly to the largest allocation at Hellesdon which is intended to deliver 50% of the 2,000 dwellings Smaller Sites allowance. The Council's current estimate for adoption is winter 2014/2015, so this document cannot be given any weight in the determination of this appeal.

It would be wholly irrational to seek land elsewhere to address the acknowledged shortfall in housing land supply, before the appeal site is developed. I find it difficult to contemplate that a more sustainable site could be identified within the confines of the settlement. I therefore contend that planning permission should be forthcoming and the appeal allowed.