Land at Dawson’s Lane
Blofield, Norfolk
NR13 4SB

Outline Planning for Residential Development of 8 No. Dwellinghouses
Design & Access Statement

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1 Introduction

Fusion 13 have been instructed by the applicant to submit an outline planning application in relation to the area outlined in red/blue on the attached location plan at land at Dawson’s Lane, Blofield, NR13 4SB.

The client has instructed the site to be laid out for residential use shown as Plots 1 – 8. The layout is an indicative plan which identifies Plots 1 – 4 as bungalows with garages and Plots 5 – 8 as two storey dwellinghouses with garages. The indicative layout also specifies the access, parking, turning and manoeuvring areas.

This Statement is prepared by Cheryl Ward for Fusion 13 who holds an MSc in Town Planning and is a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

Purpose of the Statement

The statement is to be read and fully considered as a supporting document in conjunction with the accompanying planning application. Its aim is to assist those assessing the application to understand the design and access rationale. In summary, it provides a structured way of describing the development proposal which in this case seeks to reserve all other matters until a later stage (outline).

Relevant Planning History

A search of Broadland District Council’s online search facility has revealed that the application site has no previous planning history.

A site to the east of the application site is of notable interest - 20162199 – Erection of 36 no. dwellings and associated external works (reserved matters following outline planning permission 20140968) at Land off Blofield Corner Road, Blofield Heath – Decision Pending.

2 Proposal

Site Context and Location

The Parish of Blofield is located in Broadland district of Norfolk. The Parish includes the villages of Blofield and Blofield Heath, bisected by the A47 dual carriageway. The Parish is five miles east of Norwich and 14 miles west of Great Yarmouth.

The area is characterised by arable farmland and the established built up parts of the two village settlements. Since the construction of the southern bypass in 1982, the A47 no longer passes through the village.
The application site falls within Blofield Heath, within the Norwich Policy Area and is identified as a ‘Service Village’ in the Joint Core Strategy (Policy 15). The Joint Core Strategy states that Services Villages should accommodate small-scale housing development subject to form and character considerations. Settlements identified in this policy that are within the Norwich Policy Area may also be considered for additional development, if necessary, to help deliver the smaller sites in the Norwich Policy Area Allowance (Policy 9).

More specifically the application site is located to the north of Blofield Corner Road and to the west of Dawson’s Lane. To put the site into context, the main built-up part of the settlement is situated to the east.

The site is accessed off Dawson’s Lane between two existing bungalows. The existing access road would be upgraded to Norfolk County Council Standards as part of the proposal to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The site is currently in agricultural use with residential property situated to the north and south. Skedge Way, a residential development borders the east side of the site and to the west is open field. The proposal seeks to infill the area in between the residential properties to the north and south.

Properties in the area are generally low level bungalows and dormer bungalows (include Skedge Way) with larger and more substantial two storey properties sporadically located to the north beyond the application site on Dawson’s Lane.
The site has generally flat topography with hedging to the north, south and east which will assist in screening the development. Trees are not vacant on the site. The site is largely square in area and does not fall within a designated Conservation Area or otherwise.

Dawson’s Lane is not a publicly maintained highway, public right of way, bridleway or byway open to all traffic.

A thorough check of Magic Map has revealed there is no presence on the site edged in red or within close proximity to any known ecological (habitat and species), archaeological, landscape classification or marine constraints that would have a bearing on the submission of the application.

Magic provides authoritative geographic information about the natural environment from across government. The information covers rural, urban, coastal and marine environments across Great Britain including the application site and is a reliable source of information.

Further to our research, it is not considered that additional surveys or appraisals are necessary in this instance and validation of the scheme as presented is requested.

Planning Application Submission

The application is accompanied by the following plans:

- Location plan
- Indicative development layout plan
- Indicative floor plans

The Proposal

The outline planning application proposes an indicative layout for eight dwellinghouses on good size plots. The application proposes access, turning, parking and manoeuvring within the site and provides each property with a garage.

Plots 1 – 4 comprise 4 no. bungalows.

Plots 5 – 8 comprise 4 no. two storey dwellinghouses.

The indicative layout illustrates Plots 1 - 4 being able to accommodate a bungalow each with a drive, garage, front and rear garden ground. Properties on Plots 1 – 4 are likely to take on a north/south orientation. Bungalows would be low level due to their position directly behind those situated on Blofield Corner Road. Given the distance involved between existing and proposed properties however this layout is unlikely to give rise to substantiated issues of overlooking/overshadowing.

The indicative layout illustrates Plots 5 – 8 being able to accommodate a two storey dwellinghouse each with a drive, garage, front and rear garden ground. Properties on Plots 5 - 8 are likely to take on an east/west orientation and due to the greater distance from neighbouring property there is scope to raise the height to full height properties.

The application proposes to widen the existing access and upgrade Dawson’s Lane. Ultimately the access will allow for two cars to pass each other in a safe manner.

The splays and access construction are proposed to be carried out to Norfolk County Council Highway Authority standards.
In addition, the scheme proposes a new footpath link commencing at the entrance of Dawson’s Lane and joining up with an existing footpath which currently terminates at the entrance to Skedge Way. The indicative route will provide a fully accessible link to the existing path network through to Woodbastwick Road and Blofield Heath service village.

The proposal wouldn’t involve the removal of existing landscape features i.e. hedgerow or trees.

Matters of appearance, landscaping, scale, materials and final layout will be addressed through a reserved matters application.

To conclude, it is envisaged that residential use of the site will be defined in a square format with supplementary hedge planting along the newly formed site boundaries.

3 Planning Policy Context


National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published in March 2012. This provides a framework within which regional and local policy is set. The publication of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in March 2014 gives further guidance.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF advises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development, economic, social and environmental. The key to providing sustainable development is to ensure that all three are considered within planning decisions and plan making.

Paragraph 9 of the NPPF advises that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people’s quality of life, including (but not limited to);

- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, town and village;
- moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;
- replacing poor design with better design;
- improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and
- widening the choice of high quality homes.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF advises that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

NPPF paragraph 50 promotes that a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. If further dictates that Local Planning Authorities (LPA’s) should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes).
Paragraph 031 of the NPPG (Ref ID: 23b-031-200161116) is clear in that developments of 10 units or less and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1000 square metres are not required to provide for affordable housing.

**Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011) amends (2014)**

The Development Plan for the area includes the Adopted Joint Core Strategy (JCS) prepared by the three councils of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk working together with Norfolk County Council as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP).

The Joint Core Strategy was adopted in March 2011, with amendments adopted January 2014. It sets out the overall planning strategy and a long-term vision and objectives for the area. It includes strategic policies for steering and shaping development including identifying ‘broad’ locations for new housing. The JCS is considered to be part of the adopted development plan for Broadland District Council.

Within the JCS Blofield is defined as a large village with a reasonable range of facilities, but limited shopping and employment. It is surrounded by high quality agricultural land. Secondary education is provided at Thorpe St Andrew.

Growth locations have been selected within Blofield/Blofield Heath because they provide the opportunity for easy access to strategic employment opportunities and high quality public transport routes, do not compromise high quality habitats or mineral resources and are not at significant risk of fluvial flooding.

The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Blofield Heath, Blofield and will form part of an existing well established residential area. The application site is not in any way divorced from the settlement and can be considered a location which offers a reasonable level of choice for people and for those within the development industry by which to reside.

Policy 4 (Housing) of the JCS requires that proposals for housing will be required to contribute to the mix of housing required to provide balanced communities and meet the needs of the area, as set out in the most up to date study of housing need and/or Housing Market Assessment.

The Strategy recognises that to meet the existing and future needs of the community, developments will provide a mix of sizes, types and tenures appropriate to the location. The mix of house types and tenures will be based on the most up-to-date evidence at the time applications are made and aim to ensure a reasonable balance in any local area.

Figure 1 below is taken from the JCS and identifies Blofield Heath as a ‘Service Village’ within the Norwich Policy Area (NPA) – highlighted yellow.

In ‘Service Villages’ land will be allocated for small-scale housing development subject to form and character considerations. Blofield Heath is identified in this policy and is within the Norwich Policy Area and therefore may also be considered for additional development, if necessary, to help deliver the ‘smaller sites in the NPA’ allowance.

Policy 9 (Strategy for Growth in the Norwich Policy Area) of the JCS although not directly relevant it is worth mentioning that The Norwich Policy Area (NPA) is the focus for major growth and development. The Regional Economic Strategy identifies the Norwich area as one of seven engines of growth.
The smaller sites allowance is intended to provide a balance between site sizes and locations to encourage flexibility and the short-term delivery of new housing. Allocations to deliver the smaller sites in Broadland and South Norfolk will be decided in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

Fig. 2. Norwich Policy Area (Source: Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Joint Core Strategy, Page 108)

The Central Norfolk Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

A latest Strategy Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published in January 2016. It was presented jointly with the 3 Districts in the greater Norwich area (Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk), as well as Breckland, North Norfolk and the Broads Authority. The SHMA is part of the evidence base for this review and includes working together with other local authorities in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate. This will lead to the preparation of a new Local Plan to 2036,
The SHMA advises that in Broadland there is a need for 13,088 dwellings to be provided between 2012 – 2036, ten years beyond the current JCS plan period of 2026.

4 Year Land Supply

In considering the overall spatial objectives and vision for the area as set out in the JCS it is worth noting the impact of the Councils new SHMA evidence and the persistent inability of the Greater Norwich Council’s to meet with their five-year land supply delivery target for the NPA.

The Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Policies 4 and 9 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (JCS) (2011, with amendments published in 2014) (mentioned above) deal with housing supply and are therefore considered to be out-of-date.

Going beyond the allocated growth strategy in all three of the districts up to 2036 implies that significant growth is needed in the Broadland area alone, this includes Blofield (i.e. the area highlighted above and including the land in question submitted under this outline application). It is clear the demand for housing in the Norwich Policy Area is far exceeding the supply of deliverable housing sites coming forward.

Broadland Development Management Planning Policies DPD

The Development Management Plan Document (DPD) is a Local Plan in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (section 6). It forms part of the Broadland Development Plan.

The DMD works in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), both referenced above.

Blofield Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is about the use and development of land over the next twenty years. It sets out several policies, developed by the local community, to shape development for the period 2016 to 2036.

The policies considered relevant to the case are summarised in the table below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>National Planning Policy</td>
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<td>(2012) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Development Plan in force</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOCUMENT</td>
<td>POLICIES AND DENOTATION</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (March 2001, amended January 2014) | Policy 1 - Addressing Climate Change and Protecting Environmental Assets  
Policy 2 - Promoting Good Design  
Policy 3 - Energy and Water  
Policy 4 - Housing Delivery  
Policy 15 - Services Villages |
| Development Management DPD (2015) | Policy GC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy GC2 - Location of New Development  
Policy GC4 - Design  
Policy EN1 - Biodiversity and Habitats  
Policy EN2 - Landscape  
Policy EN3 - Green Infrastructure  
Policy E1 - Existing Strategic Employment Sites  
Policy EN4 - Pollution  
Policy RL1 - Provision of Forma Recreational Space  
TS2 - Travel Plans and Transport Assessments  
Policy TS3 - Highway Safety  
Policy TS4 - Parking Guidelines  
Policy CSU5 - Surface Water Drainage |
| Supplementary Planning documents | Parking Standards (2007)  
Landscape Character Assessment (2013)  
Affordable Housing SPD (2008)  
Recreational Provision in Residential Development (2016)  
| Blofield Neighbourhood Plan (2016) | Policy HU01 - Local Housing Needs  
Policy HU04 - Rural Image, Heights and Massing  
Policy HU05 - Parking for New Developments  
Policy ENV1 - Allotment, Orchard and Green Space  
Policy ENV2 - Soft Site Boundaries and Trees  
Policy ENV3 - Drainage  
Policy ENV4 - Agricultural Lane  
Policy ENV5 - Dark skies  
Policy ENV7 - Approaches to Blofield and Blofield Heath  
Policy ECO1 - New Business and Employment  
Policy TRA1 - Local Traffic Generation  
Policy TRA3 - Walking and Cycling  
Policy ENV2 - Soft Boundaries and Trees |

Table 1. Blofield Neighbourhood Plan policies
5 Planning Assessment

The application site is located outside of any identified development limit associated with the LPA’s Local Plan. However, the site lies within the Norwich Policy Area where this Statement has already identified there is a housing supply shortfall and consequently an application must therefore be considered in the context of paragraph 49 of the NPPA specifically that ‘relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date’.

Also, the relevant implications in relation to paragraph 14 of the NPPF must be considered i.e. that:

Where a development plan is silent or out-of-date, granting permission unless:

\[
\textit{any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. When assessed against the policies in this framework as a whole, or Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be resisted.}
\]

The overriding benefits in this case are the economic, social and environment dimensions as addressed in Paragraph 7 and 8 of the NPPF.

In respect of the economic and social criteria, a single new dwelling would make a positive contribution to the housing supply and in our opinion, provides long term economic benefits to the Norwich Policy Area and fringe areas.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the intent of the above policies is to direct the majority of housing to larger settlements, the scale of development proposed through this application will not undermine that intent. It is not considered that the up to date elements of the above policies on balance provide sufficient weight to resist this small scale development particularly where that development is good quality and is not detrimental to existing property or neighbouring amenity.

Furthermore, the most up to date evidence produced by the 2016 SHMA, clearly identifies that the Council are needing to deliver a higher number of housing units to meet the demand and the projected housing forecast cannot be met without such sites coming forward.

In summary, the outline proposal clearly indicates that the site can accommodate more than one dwelling allowing a form of residential development (in principle). The balance is therefore weighed towards the presumption in favour of sustainable development as it provides a practical solution to meeting the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Design and Landscape

The application is in outline form however to provide certainty to the Council, statutory consultees and others the indicative layout provides a level of detail that illustrates that the proposed dwellings will be set back to ensure they are not overbearing on the immediate streetscene, on neighbouring amenity and the wider locality. The proposal also seeks to ensure that issues of overlooking into the surrounding properties in particular those to the south will not occur.

The indicative layout is designed mindfully of properties to the south and east with Plots 1 - 4 indicated as bungalows for which there is a need and is reflective of the predominant dwelling style typically found on Blofield Corner Road and Skedge Way.
Paragraph 56 of the NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

The reserved matters application will address final appearance, scale, layout and landscaping for each plot however it is important to point out to the decision maker that the indicative plan is positively designed for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design. This is evident in the generous plot sizes on the proposal plan which includes both open recreational space and a large amount of green space.

Careful attention will be paid to the existing and proposed landscaping in relation to the site, particularly in relation to the boundaries where the site adjoins open countryside.

### Highways

Paragraph 32 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

The application seeks to provide for a widened access arrangement along Dawson’s Lane. The widening of the access will ensure that two cars can pass safely.

A new footpath link is also proposed from Dawson’s Lane to link with an existing path at the entrance to Skedge Way which will link the application site to the village, village services and facilities.

The access and footpath will be constructed to Norfolk County Council Highway Authority standards and would be proposed to be completed before occupation of the first dwelling if a condition to that effect is considered necessary.

It is confirmed that the proposal is not considered to provide for a scale of development which would result in residual impacts on the existing highway network which could therefore be described as severe.

The social role of ‘sustainable development’ is therefore met in terms of creating of a high quality built environment with accessible local services.

### 6 Conclusions

The LPA is incapable of demonstrating a deliverable five year housing land supply. The demand for housing, especially in the Norwich Policy Area and fringe areas such as Blofield is under supplied and therefore results in no up-to-date housing delivery plan in force and relevant policies are not considered to carry full weight.

In the intervening period before a new Local Plan is adopted the LPA does not have sufficient allocations from its existing Local Plan to satisfy the supply/demand for housing. The LPA should therefore seek to approve windfall sites in locations such as Blofield. It is concluded that the proposed development is considered to meet with the recent government objectives of providing housing in sustainable locations.

In addition, the LPA’s attention is drawn to planning application 2013/1655 at Land Off Woodbastwick Road, Blofield, HR13 4QH for demolition of existing buildings and erection of 24 no. dwellings and associated works (Outline) (Resubmission) – Approved.
Due to Highway issues only 4 no. of the 24 dwellings permitted are to be built out. A further planning application is now sought for the reduced number and is pending a decision 2016/1588.

Whilst it is appreciated that other schemes cannot be used to justify this proposal, the purpose of referring to the above scheme is that the LPA has deemed 24 no. dwellings acceptable in Blofield.

If the 8 no. dwellings proposed under this planning application are approved they would go some way to meeting the 24 no. dwellings previously approved. This taken together with a lack of 5-year land supply is a material consideration in the determination process.

The application site lies very close to the settlement limit, in fact immediately on the edge rather than divorced from it. It can be demonstrated that the site is within a sustainable location and that local facilities are easily accessible by bicycle or within walking distance and the development is served by appropriate footpath links.

The scale of the development is such that it would not undermine the importance of views into and out of Blofield Heath and the immediate area thereby taking account of the development plan in force, supplementary planning documents and the Blofield Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal has at its core the principles of sustainable development and we would request that in accordance with the guidance of the NPPF that the development proposal is approved without further delay, under the powers of delegation.
Fusion 13 offer a full range of architectural design, planning and environmental services to individuals, construction companies, builders, developers, landowners, housing associations and other architectural practices. Working collaboratively, creatively and professionally with our clients, consultants and contractors, we are committed to realise work that is resource efficient, appropriate and cost effective.

Architectural services range from initial feasibility studies and design concepts through to securing planning and other permissions to building regulation drawings and project co-ordination.

Planning services include site appraisals, pre-application guidance, submission of planning applications all the way through to the completion of the project including the discharge of planning conditions at the various key stages.

Environmental services include those under the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP), Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) calculations, BRE Home Quality Mark (HQM) and Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) assessments, energy reports to support planning applications and sustainability reports.