

Response to Inspector's question RF75

Inspectors question RF75 23 November 2010:

Following discussion at matter 4 on 23rd November about Flexibility of JCS Flexibility

PPS 12 at Paragraph 4-46 states that a strategy is unlikely to be effective if it cannot deal with changing circumstances. Core Strategies should look over a long time frame – 15 years usually but more if necessary. In the arena of the built and natural environment many issues may change over this time. Plans should be able to show how they will handle contingencies: it may not always be possible to have maximum certainty about the deliverability of the strategy. In these cases the core strategy should show what alternative strategies have been prepared to handle this uncertainty and what would trigger their use. Authorities should not necessarily rely on a review of the plan as a means of handling uncertainty.

With regard to the NDR, the GNDP view continues to be that there is a reasonable prospect of its delivery within the time span necessary, to begin construction at the growth triangle from 2014/15 as per page 111 of the JCS.

That may or may not be so. However, the point remains that one could not be certain of NDR delivery at the programmed adoption date of the JCS.

Consequently in order to secure soundness in relation to the “flexibility” element of the “effectiveness” determinant, we invite you to consider to what extent there could be potential for a Plan B partial alternative to the NDR.

We realise that the GNDP position is that the NDR is necessary to deliver the full growth triangle but this may be an unnecessarily high-risk approach. Development of a contingency option which enabled programmed development to commence, even if completion of the NDR was not assured, could provide a sound alternative Plan B.

It would be necessary for GNDP to consider carefully what changes would need to be made to the JCS, having discussed the matter with the Highways Agency and any other relevant parties, including local landowners. Ideally any Plan B would provide a justified explanation of the amount of development which it could release and when. The JCS would also need to explain that once Plan B had been completed, if there were still no prospect of the NDR being constructed, then the whole of the JCS would need to be reviewed.

It is possible that much of the detail of Plan B could be devolved to the AAP, but it would be essential to have given Plan B sufficient consideration at this stage, to know that the AAP was not being faced with an impossible brief.

GNDP response: 2 December 2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper demonstrates how the JCS and its supporting evidence provide the contingency to enable programmed development to commence in the period before completion of the NDR is assured. Minor changes to clarify this matter and demonstrate soundness are proposed to Policy 10, paragraph 6.18 and the supporting text to Policy 20.

2. Background

- 2.1 The growth needs and potential of an area covering 3 districts and one of the largest cities in the region are significant. It is unsurprising that there is a corresponding need for a wide range of supporting infrastructure.
- 2.2 The JCS delivers a carefully crafted and flexible strategy supported by extensive evidence. The flexibility inherent in the JCS has been debated at the examination and is recognised by many development interests.
- 2.3 The JCS is a spatial strategy within which housing growth is only one element. The strategy also aims to deliver jobs, environmental improvements, and enhanced services; underpinned by an emphasis on sustainable travel; and all these elements are intrinsically and closely linked.
- 2.4 The JCS places a particular emphasis on the economy to ensure the area contributes to national economic recovery and future success. Economic potential must be supported by housing growth (TP2, HS0 - Response to Matter 9, EC7).

3. Priority 1 Infrastructure thresholds

- 3.1 Document RF26 indicates dwelling provision thresholds relating to Priority 1 infrastructure. These thresholds are not absolute barriers to further growth. They mark the point at which we currently have some certainty about the level of growth that can be supported. If we do not have an implementable solution to the infrastructure constraint (i.e. there are no regulatory or funding obstacles to delivery), when we approach this point we will need to take account of the impact of development that has come forward or is proposed. Depending on site characteristics, the nature of development and other infrastructure constraints, it is possible that more growth can come forward.
- 3.2 Priority 1 infrastructure needed to support new housing growth is also critical to specific employment locations. This particularly applies to transport:
- Thickthorn junction serves NRP
 - Longwater junction serves Longwater employment area
 - Postwick junction enhancement is essential to implement the remainder of the existing allocation for the expansion of a very successful complex of business parks. In addition, the planning permission for Postwick Hub includes 25ha of new employment space (known as Broadland Gate) adjacent to the existing Broadland Business Park.

- The NDR is required to support planned employment growth associated with the Airport and the Rackheath employment area. In addition the NDR will provide enhanced access to business throughout the northern part of the BUA and surrounding rural area. It is strongly supported by business.

4. Funding infrastructure

4.1 In many cases the funding required for infrastructure cannot be secured in the absence of an adopted strategy. The JCS provides certainty to attract investment and is a regulatory requirement for implementing CIL. There are numerous funding streams available or under development with the potential to support infrastructure provision, principally:

- Mainstream funding, LTP block allocation, New Home Bonus, Homes and Communities Agency, Tax Increment Financing
- Bidding pots such as Regional Growth Fund, ERDF, LSTF
- Income streams to support prudential borrowing
- Utility providers' asset management plans

4.2 **CIL progress** The JCS includes a commitment to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Policy 20. A Viability Study is being carried out by GVA Grimley and the final report is expected in December. Minor changes have been proposed to Policy 20 to continue to secure S106 contributions, pooled where necessary, in the interim.

4.3 **Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)** HCA support for GNDP projects is expected. The draft Local Investment Plan and Programme (EIP 85) has been subject to two supportive peer reviews by the HCA and will be submitted for funding consideration in December. LIPP projects have been prioritised under 3 streams and Postwick is the GNDP's number one priority under the infrastructure stream.

4.4 **Regional Growth Fund** A bid for support for Postwick Hub is being prepared for inclusion in the Local Enterprise Partnership submission in January.

5. The Northern Distributor Road

5.1 The need to demonstrate contingency relates to the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and Postwick junction improvements. The permitted scheme for the latter is known as Postwick Hub.

5.2 The case for the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) has been made to the Department for Transport, demonstrated by the County Council's Major Scheme Business Case (document ref T12) submitted in December 2008 and the subsequent sensitivity work (ref T14). This and the evidence supplied in documents EIP88 and T17 show the integral part the NDR plays in delivering overall NATS objectives set out in document TP6 page 9, para 4.5. The evidence is further clarified in the GNDP's written response to Matter 3b Issue 5 (RF88)

- 5.3 The NDR is a key infrastructure dependency for the overall scale and distribution of growth set out in the Joint Core Strategy (as referenced in Policy 10 and paragraph 6.18) and is an integral part of the overall Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS). The Postwick Hub resolves an existing constraint to employment growth in the area and provides for the required connection to the NDR.
- 5.4 Together the Postwick Hub and the NDR provide for the delivery of large scale sustainable employment and housing growth within the Old Catton, Sprowston, Rackheath, Thorpe St Andrew Growth Triangle. The Growth Triangle is a highly sustainable location for large scale growth as described in policy 10 of the JCS and discussed under Matter 3b.
- 5.5 The NDR is also required for strategic employment growth near the airport, and without it there are likely to be constraints to delivery of elements of the Broadland NPA smaller sites allowance. The latter can only be quantified on a site by site basis, although some of the larger known possibilities are most likely to be constrained.
- 5.6 The NDR enables full implementation of the overall package of significant walking, cycling and public transport enhancements across the wider Norwich area, as set out in the NATS Implementation Plan (EIP9 & 10). Although the road has been the particular focus of certain objections, it should not be considered in isolation from the complementary measures proposed in NATS and underpinning the approach to growth in the JCS. The evidence demonstrates that the JCS requirement for high quality public transport to serve the Growth Triangle is dependent on the NDR. The same limitation will apply to “smaller” scale sites in the Broadland fringe.
- 5.7 The NDR is within the DfT ‘Development Pool’ of 22 projects. All projects in the Pool offer high value for money. The development pool funding is at least £600m. Of the projects in the pool (for which DfT funding totals £913m) the NDR already has a lower proportion of government funding contribution when compared to the average provided to other projects in the pool (68% compared with an 82% average).
- 5.8 The NDR cost is £127.2m made up of £19m for Postwick junction improvement and £108.2m for the NDR. Set against that total cost, Norfolk County Council has committed to underwrite £39.7m, reaffirmed at the Cabinet meeting of 6 April 2010. (EIP9 & EIP10).
- 5.9 The County Council is responding to the DfT call for expressions of interest (RF33 & RF34) and a decision on funding is expected in December 2011. Given the benefits the NDR (including the Postwick Hub junction) can demonstrate, the GNDP believes that funding will be agreed.

6. Postwick junction

- 6.1 The junction improvement has planning consent. The DfT has confirmed that the Public Inquiry (PI) into the Side Road Orders (SRO) can be progressed (RF32). There are no statutory objections to the SROs. Postwick can be delivered as a separate scheme before the rest of the NDR.

- 6.2 The Highways Agency (HA) has been working with the County Council to develop the Postwick Hub proposal. At the examination the HA indicated that any alternative junction proposal would need to be of a similar scale and cost. The advantages of the County Council's proposals for the Postwick Hub are that it resolves key constraints, offers the future proofing potential to accommodate the NDR, has planning consent and is ready to go (subject to the SRO PI).
- 6.3 The Postwick Hub trunk road junction improvement has been through a rigorous design process, has planning permission, and is approved by the Highways Agency. It is considered unlikely that a suitable alternative will be forthcoming. An initial assessment of the layout submitted to the examination by Create Consulting for Barton Wilmore suggests it does not resolve key constraints (RF88). No modelling data has been provided. It is not possible to demonstrate that these alternative proposals are deliverable and could be brought forward more cheaply and more quickly than the existing permission.
- 6.4 However, this position does not prevent interested parties devising an acceptable alternative. The GNDP intends to set up a Postwick junction forum to work together in the same way as the successful Thickthorn forum to help progress development.
- 6.5 The GNDP are confident that there will be sufficient funding support to complete the Postwick Hub junction. Contributions from all of the following sources may be used to secure delivery:
- DfT development pool (decision due by Dec 2011)
 - Existing Growth Point funding
 - Pooled Section 106 (until replaced by CIL)
 - CIL (expected to be introduced late 2011)
 - Local Authorities' capital funding programmes
 - New Homes Bonus
 - Tax Increment Financing
 - Other funding streams
- 6.6 If DfT funding is not agreed in time, the Postwick junction can still be delivered with support from the other identified sources. The GNDP currently hold £3.5m of Growth Point funding allocated to the Postwick Hub scheme and will be bidding for funding from the Regional Growth Fund. Discussions have begun with the HCA about support for the Postwick scheme. Subject to funding and legal processes the junction improvements can begin in 2012.
- 6.7 For development to occur in the growth triangle local road access will need to be provided to Postwick junction. It is envisaged that this will come through a developer funded link road in 3 sections.
1. Broadland Business Park to Plumstead Road is a commitment in the adopted Local Plan, required for Phase 2 of the Business Park allocation. In addition, this section could release 600 houses as proposed in a current application.

2. A further section of the link road from Plumstead Road to Salhouse Road is likely to be required to release further development in the triangle, but the exact scale and location of the link and development it releases will be determined through the Area Action Plan.
 3. The section from Salhouse Road to Wroxham Road is a Local Plan requirement for the development of White House Farm (Broadland Local Plan Policy SPR7). A scheme has permission subject to completion of S106.
- 6.8 The scale, nature and function of the link road is unlikely to allow major public transport interventions. The strategic benefits of the NDR are required to do this.

7. The NDR, Postwick junction and Growth

- 7.1 Significant growth opportunities are not directly affected by the delivery of the Postwick Hub and the NDR. These opportunities provide sufficient flexibility in the Joint Core Strategy to meet housing need in the early years. They include all existing commitments. Two significant commitments are within the Growth Triangle and provide for continuing growth in this part of the JCS area (NB these areas were not included within the land budget for Matter 3b which demonstrated the capacity of the Growth Triangle EIP94):
- Home farm, Blue Boar Lane, Sprowston – approximately 200 dwellings.
 - White House Farm, Blue Boar Lane, Sprowston – Approximately 1200 dwellings. Resolution to grant permission subject to completion of S106.
- 7.2 Unaffected new growth to deliver the JCS includes:
- Rackheath Low Carbon Community exemplar – 200 houses.
 - Development of other major growth locations at Hethersett, Wymondham, Easton/Costessey, Long Stratton, Cringleford, Norwich City – at least 10,200 dwellings
 - Smaller site allowance in South Norfolk – at least 1,800 dwellings.
 - Development outside the NPA - 1,730-2,660 dwellings
- 7.3 In relation to the housing trajectory, the trigger points for development in the Growth Triangle are the delivery of the Postwick Hub, required around 2012/13 and the delivery of the Northern Distributor Road, required around 2016/17.
- 7.4 With improvement to Postwick junction the combined trajectory (attached) demonstrates that the JCS provides the opportunity to deliver over 12,000 houses up to 2017 in the NPA. This consists of over 7,200 dwelling commitment and over 5,000 further dwellings projected through the JCS in all growth locations. In these early years the LIPP process will continue to secure the longer term certainty of the plan.
- 7.5 This demonstrates that significant amounts of development can take place in advance of the NDR.

- 7.6 As part of this pre-NDR growth the evidence indicates that at least 1,800 dwellings (over and above commitment) can be delivered in the Growth Triangle. This is a reasonably cautious assessment of capacity. A more detailed assessment may demonstrate greater potential. This would need to cover capacity of all local infrastructure (not just road capacity), the implications of particular sites, and the nature of development proposed. The Area Action Plan process will provide this opportunity.
- 7.7 These early years provide the opportunity to clarify the timing of delivery of the NDR. If it were to become clear that the NDR could not go ahead a full review of the JCS would be required. Until such a review is completed, the current strategy would continue to guide development but the scale of growth in the Growth Triangle would be constrained in accordance with the AAP.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The evidence supporting the JCS and presented to the examination demonstrates that the strategy is sufficiently flexible to provide for contingency and enable significant growth to commence and continue while issues around the delivery of supporting infrastructure are resolved.
- 8.2 However it is recognised that this has not been explicitly described in the submission version of the JCS and the proposed changes are appended.

Appendix 1:

As per the Inspectors note, a draft was discussed with relevant parties on 30 November 2010, the following attended:

Eric Cooper, Highways Agency
Mike Derbyshire, Savills
Neil Murphy and Bruce McVean, Beyond Green (formerly Blue Living)
Paul Clarke, Ray Houghton and John Long, Bidwells
Graham Tuddenham, United Business and Leisure
Jonathan Cage, Create Consulting (Barton Willmore)
Paul Knowles, Building Partnerships
Peter Wilkinson, Landmark Planning for Lothbury Property Trust

GNDP

Sandra Eastaugh
Phil Morris
Roger Burroughs
Richard Doleman
Mike Burrell
Tim Horsepole
David Alfrey
Amy Baxter
Helen Lambert

Appendix 2:

Amendments to the JCS submission document

Policy 10

Page 62 - para Old Catton, Sprowston, Rackheath, Thorpe St Andrew growth triangle. Amend paragraph as below:

This location will deliver an urban extension extending on both sides of the Northern Distributor Road. Delivery **of the growth triangle in its entirety** is dependent on the implementation of the Northern Distributor Road.

Page 63 - to add in reference to the Area Action Plan (Note – this change was also agreed at the examination with the Inspector)

Amend second paragraph from “A single co-ordinated approach will be required across the whole area. More detailed masterplanning will be required for each quarter to **“A single co-ordinated approach will be required across the whole area. This will be provided through the preparation of an Area Action Plan (or its equivalent process). More detailed masterplanning will be required for each quarter”**”.

Page 66 and 67 – para 6.18

Original para 6.18

To implement the JCS significant highway improvements are required at the Longwater (A1074), Thickthorn (A11) and Harford (A140) junctions on the A47 Norwich Southern Bypass. Completion of the Northern Distributor Road and improvements to Postwick junction are a fundamental requirement for growth and the implementation of the remainder of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy including public transport enhancements. Completion of a bypass is a pre-requisite for the scale of growth identified in Long Stratton.

Para 6.18 revised as below:

To implement the JCS significant highway improvements are required at the Longwater (A1074), Thickthorn (A11) and Harford (A140) junctions on the A47 Norwich Southern Bypass. Completion of the Northern Distributor Road **is fundamental to the full implementation of this Joint Core Strategy. In particular it is necessary to allow significant development in the growth triangle and the full implementation of the remainder of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy. Improvements to Postwick junction will allow for some development in the Old Catton, Sprowston, Thorpe St Andrew growth triangle in advance of the NDR (see supporting text for Policy 20)**. Completion of a bypass is a pre-requisite for the scale of growth identified in Long Stratton.

Contingency

The GNDP will be working to bring forward all growth proposals and associated infrastructure as early as possible to maximise delivery and flexibility. This will be facilitated by engagement with developers to understand opportunities, overcome constraints and maximise development potential without compromising quality.

There is no phasing of growth in the JCS beyond that imposed by the provision of infrastructure. At the time of adoption the provision of most critical elements of infrastructure is not expected to be a significant constraint.

However, there remains some uncertainty around the timing of the delivery of the Northern Distributor Road (NDR).

The NDR is fundamental to overall delivery of housing and employment growth in the Broadland part of the NPA and to significant parts of NATS including high-quality public transport in the northern part of the urban area.

At the base date of the JCS there is a significant housing commitment that is unaffected by infrastructure constraints. Delay in delivering the NDR does not prevent JCS provision of housing or employment development within Norwich City or South Norfolk Council areas, or existing housing commitment in Broadland as demonstrated in Appendix 7. Indeed, market pressures are likely to bring forward development in these locations in this scenario.

The existing commitment and the range and scale of growth proposals across the JCS area provide significant flexibility to bring forward growth in those locations unaffected by infrastructure constraints.

In late 2010 proposals for Postwick were significantly advanced. The scheme and associated development has planning permission and the design of the layout of the junction has been agreed by the Highways Agency.

The Postwick Hub and the Northern Distributor Road are in the DfT Development Pool and the funding decision will be announced by the end of 2011. The NDR will be subject to a separate statutory planning process.

The Postwick Hub can be delivered as a separate scheme and is not necessarily dependent on DfT funding. Contributions from all of the following sources may be used to secure delivery:-

- DfT development pool (decision due by end of 2011)
- Existing Growth Point funding
- Pooled Section 106 (until replaced by CIL)
- CIL (expected to be introduced late 2011)
- Local Authorities' capital funding programmes
- New Homes Bonus
- Tax Increment Financing
- Other funding streams

Subject to acceptable improvements to Postwick Junction (Postwick Hub or a suitable alternative) there is significant potential for development in the growth triangle before there is confirmation of the timing of delivery of the NDR. The table below summarises the current understanding of this potential.

Table 1: Housing and Employment development in north east sector assuming that Postwick junction is suitably improved in 2012

Location	Level of growth supported by current evidence	Constrained development
Growth Triangle	At least 1600 dwellings (plus 200 exemplar at Rackheath prior to Postwick junction improvements)	New employment allocation at Rackheath
Smaller sites in Broadland NPA	Delivery of the smaller sites allowance will be dealt with on a site by site basis	
Broadland Business Park	Development of existing allocation and new allocation (25ha incl c50,000m2 B1)	
Airport area		New employment allocation

Broadland District Council is committed to preparing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the growth triangle. As part of the preparation of this AAP there will be an investigation of the potential to enable further growth over and above that shown in Table 1 above, in advance of confirmation of timing of the NDR. This analysis would need to cover capacity of all local infrastructure (not just road capacity), the implications of particular sites, and the nature of development proposed. It will be essential that the growth is delivered in accordance with the overall strategy, taking into account its wider impact across the Norwich area, including a full range of infrastructure provision, services and high-quality public transport, walking and cycling.

Development beyond the pre-NDR threshold established through the AAP process will not be possible without a commitment to the NDR. If there is no possibility of the timely construction of the NDR, a complete review of the JCS would be triggered.

Appendix 3: Housing Trajectory Extract with Priority 1 Infrastructure

	Short Term						Medium Term						Long Term										
	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26	Total Units	Ave Build rate						
Rackheath	180		230	230	230			230	230	230			230	230	230			230	230	3400	227		
Remainder of NE Growth Triangle				125	225			350	350	350			350	350	350			350	350	3850	321		
Cumulative total	180		410	640	995			2030	2610	3190			4350	4930	5510	6090			6670	7250	7250		
Norwich City				250	250			250	250	250			250	250	250			250	250	3000	250		
Cumulative total				250	500			750	1000	1250			1500	1750	2000	2250	2250			2500	2750	3000	
Long Stratton								50	140				230	230	230					230	230	1800	250
Cumulative total								50	190				420	650	880	1110	1340			1570	1800	1800	
Wymondham				185	185			185	185	185			185	185	185					185	165	2200	183
Hethersett				50	90			175	175	175			175	100	60							1000	125
Cringleford				0	50			100	125	125			125	125	125					125	50	1200	109
Cumulative total				235	560			1020	1505	1990			2475	2885	3255	3565	3875			4185	4400	4400	
Easton/Cosstessey				50	90			175	175	175			175	100	60							1000	125
Cumulative total				50	140			315	490	665			840	940	1000							1000	
Additional Smaller Sites Around Broadland NPA*				170	170			170	170	170			170	170	170					170	130	2000	
Sites Around South Norfolk NPA				150	150			150	150	150			150	150	150					150	150	1800	
Existing NPA Commitment	1572	1813	1437	943	821			652	449	172												7859	
Cumulative Existing NPA Commitments	1572	3385	4822	5765	6586			7238	7687	7859			7859	7859	7859					7859	7859	15718	
Projected Housing Total	1752	2043	1667	2153	2261			2437	2309	2122			2040	1890	1810	1690	1690			1690	1555	29109	
Cumulative NPA Commitments and Planned	1752	3795	5462	7615	9876			12313	14622	16744			18784	20674	22484	24174	25864			27554	29109		

* Until the NDR is in place the full number of dwellings proposed on smaller sites in Broadland may not be able to be provided. This will depend on individual site circumstances.

Pink/Red – public transport/transport related constraints

Blue – water related constraints

Green – electricity related constraints

See RF 26 for full explanation of colour codes