

**NORTH NORFOLK  
LOCAL PLAN  
EXAMINATION  
HEARING STATEMENT  
– MATTER 11**

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# Quality Assurance

**Site name:** North Norfolk Local Plan Examination  
**Client name:** Hopkins Homes Ltd  
**Type of report:** Hearing Statement – Matter 11

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**Signed** 

**Date** 5 January 2024

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**Signed** 

**Date** 5 January 2024



# 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Bidwells LLP on behalf of Hopkins Homes Ltd in support of representations made to the North Norfolk Local Plan. By way of background, Hopkins Homes Ltd are promoting land at Norwich Road and Nursery Drive (NW01/B) for residential-led development of 343 dwellings, and associated infrastructure.
- 1.2 At the time of writing this Statement, hybrid planning applications are at an advanced stage of determination covering both the allocated land under the existing Local Plan, and the proposed allocation of the submitted North Norfolk Local Plan.
- 1.3 The applications are registered under planning references: PF/22/1596 and PF/22/1784 and form a hybrid planning application comprising of the following elements:
1. Full Planning Application for the construction of 343 dwellings (including affordable homes), garages, parking, vehicular access onto Ewing Road and Hornbeam Road, public open spaces, play areas, landscaping, drainage and other associated infrastructure;
  2. Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved for a phased development comprising 7 serviced self-build plots and associated infrastructure; and
  3. Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved for the construction of an elderly care facility and associated infrastructure, landscaping and open space.
- 1.4 This Statement provides Hopkins Homes Ltd's response to Matter 11 (Environment – ENV Policies) Questions 11.1, 11.3 and 11.5 of the Inspectors' Matters Issues and Questions, November 2023 [Document EH0003].

## 2.0 Matter 11

**Question 11.1: Are the ENV policies positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy? Are any main modifications necessary, and if so what should these be?**

- 2.1 While Hopkins Homes supports the direction of the proposed ENV policies, some main modifications are considered necessary to make the policies sound. Firstly, Part 2b of Policy ENV4 should be amended to reflect that some ecological and geological features require removal to facilitate development proposals, such as breaks in hedgerow to deliver a suitable access into a site. Without this caveat, the policy risks restricting the necessary enabling works required to serve the development site, thereby rendering the policy ineffective and in conflict with Paragraph 35(c) of the NPPF. Hopkins Homes Ltd wishes to suggest the following minor amendment to part b of the policy as follows:

*Retain and buffer ecological and geological features **wherever practical and feasible** and provide for the appropriate management of those features.*

- 2.2 Secondly, Part 3b of Policy ENV8 should be amended as follows to recognise instances when removal, or partial remove, of natural features is necessary to facilitate development proposals. Without this caveat, the policy risks restricting the necessary facilitatory works required to serve the development site, thereby rendering the policy ineffective and in conflict with Paragraph 35(c) of the NPPF.

*Retains existing important landscaping and natural features **wherever practical and feasible**, and includes landscape enhancement schemes that are compatible with the Landscape Character Assessment and the creation, restoration or enhancement of ecological networks.*

- 2.3 **Question 11.3: In Policy ENV2(1,3 & 4), would it be justified to amend 'should' to 'must' as now suggested by the Council?**

- 2.4 Hopkins Homes Ltd contends that it is not justified to amend 'should' to 'must' within Part 2 of Policy ENV2 as suggested by the Council. As per Hopkins Homes Ltd's representations at Regulation 19 stage, Policy ENV2, as written, does not define how cumulative impacts may be considered in decision-making. Moreover, given the case-by-case nature of landscape impacts, the policy requirement to cumulatively assess every development proposal in terms of landscape impacts is unlikely to apply in every case. This questions the effectiveness of this element of the draft policy, risking non-compliance with Paragraph 35(b) and (c) of the NPPF. With this in mind, this element should be amended from the draft policy as follows:

*Outside of designated landscapes the Council will support development which is in scale and keeping with the defined landscape character and which is appropriate to its surroundings in terms of siting, design, materials, external appearance and landscaping. ~~Consideration will be given to both the individual and cumulative impacts of a proposal~~*

**Question 11.5: Is it justified for Policies ENV6 and ENV8 to require compliance with the North Norfolk Design Guide when this does not form part of the Plan?**

- 2.5 These policies should not require compliance with the Design Guide, as it does not form a statutory part of the Development Plan.

