

Representation Form

Consultation on additional evidence base documents, September 2023

Closing date for submitting representations: **11:59pm, Friday, 20th October 2023**

Part A

Section 1: Personal Details

Title:	Mr
First Name:	John
Last Name:	Maxey
Job Title (where relevant):	Consultant
Organisation (where relevant):	Maxey Grounds & Co
Address:	██████████ ██████
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Section 2: Agent Details (if applicable)

Please supply the details below of any agent you have working on your behalf.

Agent name:	N/A
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	
Email:	

Part B

Please fill in a separate form for each document

Section 3: Representations

Which Document are you responding on?

Examination Library ref	Document name	Paragraph No(s)
F47	Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy	See below

Summary of Comments:

Please be as precise as possible as to why you support or object to the evidence and/or any suggested main modifications to the Plan contained in the document, providing the relevant paragraph and/or policy number for each point.

The Inspectors' letter of 30th January 2023 number para 1 sets out concerns that the majority of proposed new development, particularly at West Winch, is reliant of road based transport *“with comparatively limited housing development at Downham Market and Watlington, which, with railway stations, appear to be more sustainable locations in transport terms.”*

The note on further evidence required sought further information on the purpose of the Strategic Growth Corridor including the scale of growth at those settlement within the corridor and their relative roles and *“their sustainability in terms of transport, facilities and infrastructure, and their population size and settlement needs.”*

The Council have reacted to these requests by removing the SGC strategy. They seek to justify this in para 2, by saying the Inspectors were concerned that the notion of a SGC is not justified. I do not agree. Having been a participant in the Hearings that led to the adjournment, it was clear that the Inspectors were not concerned that the strategy of an SGC was wrong, but that the policies, as drafted, did not support the aims of the SGC, or seek to allocated additional growth in the settlements with alternative transport facilities (rail stations), which they viewed as the most sustainable locations for such growth. As such the proposed MMs do not address the fundament point upon which participants and the Inspectors were concerned regarding soundness.

On this basis we object to the abandonment of an SGC strategy as unsound, and because this strategy is so fundamental to the ethos of the whole plan, suggest that if such a fundamental change is proposed, the extent of the amendments required make the plan as a whole unsound, and a new start to the plan process should be required.

In para 3 of the consultation document the Council suggest Watlington has a *“lack of facilities”*. This is directly contradicted by Appendix 1 Settlement Hierarchy table and the comments within

Appendix 2 (p20) where it states that Watlington has “a range of services and facilities (which) help meet the day to day needs of the residents.”

In settlement hierarchy terms whether as a Growth KRSC or a KRSC, Watlington has the ability to accommodate significantly greater growth, is the only village in the Borough with alternative to road based transport facilities, has a reasonable range of services to support such growth and should thus be selected for a larger scale of growth than currently envisaged with specific allocations (since the draft Neighbourhood Plan, which has been submitted, makes clear that no additional allocations are suggested or forthcoming locally).

It is very pertinent that within the West Winch sustainable transport document, part of this consultation, the consultation feedback notes that over 40% identify Watlington Station as a destination they would like to be able to access by bus (higher than Kings Lynn Station or Local Schools and collages), presumably on the basis that their proposed journey would be southwards. Surely those people would be better served being able to live in Watlington with direct access to the Station.

We further consider that whilst the additional documentation for West Winch does pull together a lot of additional information that seeks to substantiate the scale of growth to up to 4000 dwellings as sustainable, it also highlights that the whole transport assumptions are Road based (other than limited walking / cycling). It identifies a constraint of 350 dwellings before significant Highway Infrastructure is required to allow further growth to progress. From our study of the Transportation statements it is far from clear that the Highway Infrastructure has the funding secured , and hence there is uncertainty as to the deliverability of the levels of growth the draft Plan assumes. The sole planning application so far has been awaiting determination for 7 years, and 13 years after Core Strategy allocation not a single dwelling at West Winch is consented let alone built as part of the planned expansion. It is suggested this is as a direct result of the absence of Infrastructure funding.

The proposed New Policy and the Housing Requirement Table 2 (Page 83) acknowledges (even on a withdrawn SGC basis) that additional numbers of 27 units are required at Watlington. At present with the only existing allocation in the process of delivery by a Housing Association as a wholly affordable scheme, there is no allocation for market units and no allocation likely to be available by the time the plan is adopted. It is suggested that those numbers are not sufficient for it to fulfil its role as a key village for growth given the sustainable transport options, nor fulfil the needs of the village for the plan period, and that at least an additional 100 dwellings should be allocated, to include land west of Glebe Avenue (ID 166) of around 0.35 Ha suitable for 5 dwellings and the original draft allocation WAT1, which adjoin each other, within the heart of the village and within walking distance of the Rail Station. These sites together provide a range of estate type housing and individual self build type dwellings to satisfy the range of the market needs.

The adjournment of the previous hearings in January 2023, and the likely timescale for their recommencement being Spring 2024, means a year has been lost to the Local Plan Process. It appears inevitable now that it will be 2025 before the emerging Local Plan is adopted. With a proposed Plan period to 2039 this will fail to give a 15 year period for the new plan, which is unsound. I would suggest that the Plan end date needs rolling forward by at least a year (to at

least 2040) for the Plan to be sound. This requires an amendment to LP01, and the addition of a further year of Housing need numbers (571 additional dwellings) to address this.

Windfall proposals represent approximately 33% of overall supply. Whilst the Council in the updated Housing Supply document identify 2647 homes from consents on unallocated land (windfall) a significant proportion of these gained consent when the Council did not have a 5 year land supply around 2017. Many of these 5 year land supply sites, which boosted historic windfall levels, would not have met the scale of the now proposed LP02 Policy. As such even though a discount on the rate of windfall provision within the Trajectory of 25% has been adopted, We doubt whether the assumed rate of windfall of around 299 per annum can be maintained. Windfall as proposed within the new LP02 will limit scale of such sites in rural settlements and many of the existing and recent windfall consents in villages were significantly greater scale. Windfalls within the Towns are gradually being exhausted. We are therefore very sceptical that the Windfall proportion of dwellings can be achieved as assumed.

There is no logic for West Winch Growth Area to be classified as part of Kings Lynn and thus be within Tier 1. It is proposed as a significant expansion of a rural village to provide an expanded settlement, but is not an integral part of the town of Kings Lynn and will not be when constructed. There are connectivity issues between West Winch and Kings Lynn, not least the barrier of having to negotiate the Hardwick Roundabout. There is a significant gap between the Town and this proposed new settlement. I consider it was correctly classified as Tier 3 – Settlements adjacent to Kings Lynn and the Main Towns.

I therefore object to the proposed MM for Policy LP01 in its abandonment of the SGC, the Plan Period it covers as a consequence of the delay in the process requires rolling forward by one year, with an increase in the overall Housing numbers by a further 571 required as a consequence, the Windfall level assumptions are excessive, the proposed classification of West Winch Growth Area as a Tier 1 settlement in unsound and illogical, the abandonment of allocation of Watlington as a growth KRSC when the only village with non road based transport is unsound, and the proposed level of allocation for that village having regard to the position as the only village with alternative sustainable transport opportunities is insufficient to ensure that the identified housing requirement is provided or that there is a supply of market housing land beyond the time when the plan is adopted.

The absence of new allocation at Downham Market, noted in comments in the Inspectors' letter of 30th January 2023 which says with regard to the introductory Vision for the Borough *"This implies an increased rate of growth at Downham Market"* which clearly is not evident from the reduced rate of growth compared with the previous plan, the Council seek to justify on the basis of the previous rate of growth. However the figures they now produce in Table 1 (page 3 and 4) indicate an average of 55 per annum whereas the Housing requirement figures on Page 83 suggest 1289 are required over the plan period. This means at least 72 per annum – an increased rate. The figures on p83 also suggest they propose that over half of the required numbers should be left to come forward as windfall. It is suggested this will mean they are likely to be in small pockets without the necessary infrastructure being planned. It is considered this is unsound, and

that allocations should represent at least 1000 units (77% of anticipated minimum numbers), meaning additional allocation of at least 400 more is required.

I also object to LP01 on the basis that the proposed level of growth for Downham Market is insufficient to reflect its position as the second largest Town in the district, with a good range of facilities and sustainable transport links via rail, and the extent of growth now identified as necessary can not be provided on the basis of anticipated windfall provision – it needs the planning and associated infrastructure that can and will only follow from allocation of a significant proportion of the additional 642 dwellings identified as the minimum Net Housing requirement on Page 83, and would suggest that allocations at Downham Market should be for at least 1000 dwellings.

With regard to proposed alterations to Settlement Hierarchy, criticism from the Inspectors letter 30th January 2023 included a complete absence of justification for the proposed changes. Whilst the Table forming document F47a now provides the scoring matrix, there remains a lack of transparency and reasoned explanation and justification for the changes. There is no information supplied as the responses of the Parish Councils when questioned during initial consultation on their views. There is no information as to the area that is the focus of the study for each settlement for the scoring table – it is thus not possible to verify the scores. For example at Walton Highway on the edge of the village there is Worzels – notionally a farm shop, garden centre and restaurant, and on the A47 roundabout a Petrol Service Station with associated shop,; both of which sell such a range of goods that they operate as Convenience stores for the village. These have clearly not been taken account of. There is no explanation as to the rational of when villages are considered linked settlements and when they are not. Brancaster and Burnham Deepdale, The Walpoles, Marshland St James and St Johns Fen End, Terrington St John with St Johns Highway and Tilney St Lawrence are linked examples. There is no rational offered why West Walton and Walton Highway which have previously been linked settlements, are a single Parish, share the same schools built centrally to the two settlement areas, are now delinked. It is submitted that if West Walton/Walton Highway were linked settlements and the facilities serving the settlements were correctly appraised they would meet the criteria for a joint KRSC, with 2 Convenience Stores and a score even allowing for duplication of Bus assessments of 19. In my view the presence of one of only 3 village based High Schools in the District, which is very much serving the surrounding smaller villages as well, acts as a magnet for housing demand in the village, and is sufficient to warrant allocation as a KRSC, but correctly assessed and viewed jointly as has always previously been the case, the scoring warrants this anyway.

The Table on page 21 is incorrect in saying West Walton has a score of 8. F47a shows a score of 10. Walton Highway has a score of 10, which ignores the education provision. The proposed Table 5 forming part of the proposed LP02 on page 56 is incorrect in its assessment of commitments and allocations. It identifies 82 in West Walton and 0 in Walton Highway. Of the 95 dwellings with consent listed in the Housing Trajectory (F50a) as being West Walton, all except 5 dwellings are actually within the Walton Highway part of the linked settlement. This may be because the trajectory looks at Parishes, but it reinforces the point that there is no logic to delink these settlements or to downgrade from a KRSC. It also highlights the extent of errors within the documents now submitted for re-consultation.

I therefore object to the proposed classification in LP01 of West Walton and Walton Highway as Rural Villages and consider that on the criteria adopted if objectively and accurately applied they should be linked settlements classified as KRSC as in previous Local Plans.

With regard to the proposed rewritten LP02 Policy relating to how a Windfall Policy for Rural settlements would operate and effectively replacing draft LP31, we are generally supportive of this amendment. However this policy requires the strategic level to be set for each settlement, not just Neighbourhood Plan settlements. I would then proposed the following additional amendments are necessary to make LP02 sound.

1. Include Growth KRSC in the up to 10 dwelling scale for each windfall site
2. Criteria 1 f) should be qualified by the additional wording "except where those settlements are already classed as linked settlements"
3. 2 a) should not be a barrier where the existing available sites will not provide such cumulative capacity as to satisfy the Net Minimum Housing Needs of the settlement when they come forward. Windfall in a settlement should not be held up if sites within the development area are slow to come forward when to reach required numbers sites adjoining the Development area will be required
4. 2 b) or Growth KRSC.
5. In the context of this policy sites now viewed in the trajectory as commitments (eg sites with consent that are started) should be included within the Development area boundaries so that the assessment of LP02 is relative the actual built environment of the settlement including ongoing development. Given the delay in progressing the plan there are significant numbers of developments in this position now

At this stage in relation to Policy LP02 we do not consider it sound in relation to the above points which could be resolved by adjustment to the draft wording without changing the intention of this Policy. we therefore register an objection the LP02 on the basis of the wording and criteria. This is acknowledged in changes to the Trajectory, and the Development Area Plans require update on the same basis.

With regard to the draft New Policy on page proposed as an MM on page 78, apart from the inaccuracies in numbers within the Tables and the removal of the Growth KRSC tier allocation for Watlington, with appropriate scale allocation/ Housing requirement, we don't understand why this policy has incorporated strategic scales for only Neighbourhood Plan areas. . It does address the request for a strategic minimum scale of growth for each settlement to be identified. We would suggest it would be preferable to have phrased the Policy with a strategic minimum scale for each settlement, and then a Policy requirement that Neighbourhood Plan areas would need to provide for the Minimum Net Housing requirement from the Strategic figure. What we don't agree with is that Minimum Net Housing Requirements numbers are not produced for all settlements at this Strategic Level, only those where Neighbourhood Plan are understood to be in preparation.

We would also take issue with the intention to set the scale of growth of each settlement by effectively allocation a proportion of overall growth pro rata to the settlement existing size. This takes no account of housing need for each settlement and appears to have been devised as a

“quick fix” to respond to objections. We agree all settlements should have some scope for growth under LP02, but the scale should be properly assessed based on facilities, capacity, need and demand

I object to the omission within this new policy of strategic Minimum Net Housing Figures for each settlement calculated alongside those for Neighbourhood Plan Areas in this policy and to the proposed methodology of assessing those minimum levels.

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.)

Please note you should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify your comments.

Section 4: Examination Hearings

This consultation may be followed by further Examination Hearing sessions, at the discretion of the Planning Inspectors. Do you consider it necessary to participate in Examination Hearing sessions? (Please select one answer)

No, I do not wish to participate at the Examination Hearing

Yes, I wish to participate at the examination hearing

Section 5: Data Protection

Do you wish to be notified further about the Local Plan Examination process, at any of the following stages?

Schedule of Main Modifications stage (following hearings)

Yes

No

Publication of Inspector’s Report

Yes

No

Adoption of Local Plan

Yes

No

In complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council confirms that it will process personal data gathered from this form only for the purposes relating to the consultation. It is intended to publish responses to this consultation on the Borough Council’s website. However, it should be noted that all personal information (except for names and organisation name, where appropriate) will not be published.

When you give consent for us to process data, you have the right to withdraw that consent at any time. If you wish to withdraw your consent, you must notify us at lpr@west-norfolk.gov.uk or 01553 616200.

Section 6: Signature and Date of Representation

Please sign and date below:	
Signature: (electronic signatures are acceptable)	<i>J R Maxey</i>
Date:	18/10/2023

Please note that, to be considered, your representation will need to be received by **11:59pm on Friday, 20th October 2023**.