

Breckland District Council

Local Plan Examination – Closing Statement

On behalf of the Council I would like to thank the Inspector for the way he has conducted the hearing sessions and the guidance he has provided both to the Council and all other interested parties. The opportunity to submit additional work and hold further hearing sessions to ensure all issues are fully addressed is appreciated in the interest of resolving issues through the examination process.

I would also like to thank the Programme Officer Charlotte Brennan, for the way in which she has co-ordinated the hearings and managed correspondence between all parties. The significance of the role in ensuring a smooth examination process should not to be underestimated and her efforts are recognised and appreciated.

The development of the Breckland Local Plan over the past 5 years would not have been possible without all those that responded to consultations, attended events, submitted representations and attended the hearing sessions. Whilst there are always areas of contention, public engagement is vital to ensure that the final Local Plan reflects a positive and inclusive strategy for the District overall. It is hoped that through the examination process everyone feels they have had the opportunity to have their say on the issues identified.

Production of the plan has been dependant on support from key consultants producing evidence, policies have developed through working with key stakeholders and decisions have been overseen by a members working group.

In addition to thanking those involved in the process of developing the plan, it is also important to confirm through this closing statement that the Council considers it has submitted a sound and legally compliant Plan.

To reiterate the statement made at the opening of the hearing sessions, Breckland is a special place to live with a strong sense of place. The Plan reflects Breckland's rural location in the heart of Norfolk; its rich natural and historic environment; and its thriving communities. The Council have sought to demonstrate that the strategy set out in the Local Plan will plan positively for the growth needed over the plan period, is deliverable, effective and justified against alternative options.

The Spatial Strategy capitalises on the opportunities presented by the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor concentrating housing growth at Attleborough, Thetford and employment growth at Snetterton. Residential, employment and retail needs are addressed through a series of site allocations which direct the greatest growth to the most sustainable locations: Breckland's five Market Towns. The plan policies support our 18 Local Service Centre's and ensure even the smaller villages' benefit from a proportion of the growth to help support

service provision and to prevent people having to leave to access housing they need or can afford. The detailed development management policies in the plan will help guide planning applications and decision making going forward. The Council considers the Local Plan presents the most sustainable growth strategy and this has been supported by a robust assessment of sustainability appraisal.

The Local Plan's success will depend on effective implementation of its policies. In addition to the Council's statutory planning function, implementation will require working with a range of delivery partners including the development partnerships for the two SUE's, the Snetterton landowners group, developers, registered providers, Norfolk County Council and other key partners from the private, public and voluntary sector.

The next stage of the process is for the Council to consult on all proposed modifications to the plan, considered necessary to make the plan sound. This provides the opportunity for further comments to be made. The Council have published an indicative timescale in the Local Development Scheme which anticipates adoption of the plan in March 2019, subject to successful conclusion of the examination. It is in the Council's interest to have a sound, up to date Local Plan to guide planning decisions and growth in the district and it is hoped that the remaining elements of the examination continue to run efficiently to achieve this goal.