

## **CASE STUDY - GREATER NORWICH JOINT VIABILITY DELIVERY**

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### **JOINT WORKING BY THREE COUNCILS**

The authorities of Greater Norwich have a long history of joint working on strategic planning matters. This is needed as Norwich is underbounded, effectively suburbs of the City extend into both South Norfolk District Council Area (ie Costessy) and Broadland District Council (ie Hellesdon and Sprowston). Historically the County Structure Plan had identified a Norwich Policy Area which included all of the urban area plus neighbouring towns and villages.

### **JOINT CORE STRATEGY**

The joint working was originally done through the Greater Norwich Development Partnership that was formed in 2007 partly in response to the policy framework with the then emerging Regional Spatial Strategy which recognised the need for joint or co-ordinated local development. This led to agreement to prepare the Joint Core Strategy covering the three district area. This plan was adopted in March 2011. It contained ambitious growth proposals for the Norwich Policy Area (33,000 homes over the period 2008-2026) of which 7,000 were to be delivered in the Norwich North East Growth Triangle (NEGT, which was due to rise to 10,000 beyond the plan period).

Following adoption, the plan was legally challenged which was partly upheld on the grounds that the Councils had failed to adequately explain how they chosen the NEGТ in the light of other alternatives. This led to the adopted plan being partially remitted to allow these possible alternatives to be looked at. This process got a bit messy as the NPPF was published in the meantime and some information on viability needed to be updated but this ultimately led to an amended JCS being adopted in Jan 2014.

## VIABILITY

The viability evidence underpinning the JCS dates from a mixture of 2010 and 2013 reports. It tends to be quite high level and based on the assessment of certain typologies of development in the light of prevailing costs and values. The policy on affordable housing JCS4 specifically allowed for affordable housing to be reduced where site characteristics or infrastructure costs would render sites unviable. Our own evidence base suggested that a significant number of sites would be unviable with 33% policy level included.

GREATER NORWICH CIL – SEE ALSO 2011 GVA CIL EVIDENCE REPORT [www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/dmsdocument/1089](http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/dmsdocument/1089) and PINS report [www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/dmsdocument/687](http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/dmsdocument/687)

Within the JCS there was a policy (JCS20) which proposed a co-ordinated approach to the provision of infrastructure. This mentioned the intention to introduce a GNDP wide CIL. The process of introducing this began around the time of adoption of the JCS as it involved a number of the same staff who had also worked on the joint plan. Consultation took place in late 2011, examination in 2012 and it was adopted in July 2013.

The GVA work was used to justify the introduction of a residential rate of CIL of £115 per sq m in and around Norwich. However, the Inspector was never convinced by this and reduced the CIL to £75 per sq m on examination. It was a very simple approach to CIL with only 2 charging zones across 3 Districts. This in my view undoubtedly leads to problems in some instances of certain developments which struggle to pay CIL and others where we are arguably missing out on funding that could have otherwise been obtained. The City Council has just introduced an exceptional circumstances relief policy to enable certain key brownfield sites and overall the CIL has raised far lower levels of funds that we had anticipated when it was introduced.

## SUCSESSES

There are two areas of what we have done in Greater Norwich I think represent best practice in relation to CIL and infrastructure planning generally. These are:

1) The pooling of CIL in an Infrastructure Investment Fund, with basically 80% of all CIL is pooled and an annual growth programme is prepared to identify which schemes get funded, this needs to be agreed by all three authorities so if we don't agree none of us get anything;

<http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/growth-board/>

2) The way Greater Norwich City Deal works to allows us access to govt borrowing which can then be repaid from future CIL revenues. This enables the forward funding of infrastructure.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/city-deal-greater-norwich>

## LATEST UPDATE

The work on the new GNLP is still at a fairly early stage.

Updating 2017 work by Hamson Barron Smith

[https://gnlp.jdi-consult.net/documents/pdfs\\_14/20170829\\_gndp\\_viability\\_appraisal\\_report\\_v7.0.pdf](https://gnlp.jdi-consult.net/documents/pdfs_14/20170829_gndp_viability_appraisal_report_v7.0.pdf)

The Norwich area councils now need to commission further and more detailed information on viability in the light of the new NPPF.

I will add this and the Tower Hamlets case study to the Planning Skills website ...