

## 4.6 Landscape Setting of Norwich

### *Reasoned Justification*

- 4.53 As the “dominant centre of the sub-region” the city of Norwich will continue to act as the focus of significant development pressures; consequently whilst the Norwich Policy Area is the preferred focus for growth, for several decades there have been local planning policies designed to protect the City’s surroundings from “inappropriate development” and to “preserve those attributes of the City’s natural setting which contribute to its environmental quality”. In particular there has been concern that development pressure at the junctions on the Southern Bypass is not allowed to outweigh the environmental protection of important landscape characteristics in these locations.
- 4.54 The Council has recently reassessed the characteristics of the landscape setting of the City, taking account of recently completed and planned development, and the policies of the **National Planning Policy Framework**, the **Joint Core Strategy** and Norwich City Council’s Local Plan. The Southern Bypass is recognised to have been well designed to fit into the landscape through which it passes and it is accepted that it should not be regarded as a boundary up to which development is acceptable. In South Norfolk the Bypass passes through nine different identified Landscape Character areas, and a Landscape Zone has been identified where there is a high level of visual accessibility to and from the road to a predominantly open rural area, that positively enhances the setting of Norwich.
- 4.55 Any development to take place within the landscape setting of Norwich will be assessed using four additional planning policy tools:

#### Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone (NSBLPZ)

- 4.56 A Landscape Zone has been identified where there are high levels of visual accessibility to and from the road to a predominantly open rural area that plays an important part in making the landscape setting of Norwich. This Zone does not have a distinct or special **landscape character** in its own right.
- 4.57 The review undertaken by Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) has concluded that for the most part the boundaries of the originally defined Landscape Zone are robust, subject to the to removal of some areas, most notably around Easton and Costessey, that will in future make only a limited contribution to the landscape setting. This is as a result of past or permitted development or preferred strategic sites allocations determined in the **Joint Core Strategy** and South Norfolk Site Allocations. The amended Landscape Zone is identified on the Policies Map (see Map DM 4.6).

- 4.58 Any development to be permitted within the Landscape Zone (including that within the highway and other transport corridors) should have regard to protecting the openness of the Landscape Zone and, where possible, enhancing the landscape setting of the Southern Bypass, including the practice of wild flower planting and management regimes.

#### Key Views

- 4.59 The opportunities for long distance views into the city of Norwich from the south of the city are limited by the topography and screening effect of vegetation. However, fieldwork has identified important opportunities to view the city from the northern edge of the plateau to the south west and south east of the city. (These locations lie within the Landscape Character Areas of Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland and Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland respectively.) In these areas, broad Key Views 'cones' have been identified (see Map DM 4.6). Within these 'cones' all development proposals should ensure they do not obstruct the long views to and from the city.

#### Undeveloped Approaches

- 4.60 There are several road and rail corridors approaching the city that have a very distinctive rural character and that afford views across the surrounding countryside and to Norwich. These Undeveloped Approaches are defined on the Proposal Map (and Map DM 4.6) as the full breadth of these transport corridors, but the Policy will ensure all development within the wider zone of visual influence visible from the transport corridors is designed to reinforce and avoid undermining the rural character experienced when travelling along the Undeveloped Approaches into Norwich.

#### Gateways

- 4.61 In line with the Joint Core Strategy the submitted Norwich Local Plan has identified important Gateways where the landscape and townscape changes, marking the 'arrival' into Norwich urban area. South Norfolk Council has similarly identified three such points within the district.
- 4.62 All development proposals in the general location of these Gateways should take account of local evidence and address in the **Design and Access Statements** how the development proposals reinforce and do not undermine the significance of these Gateways as the points of transition or 'arrival' at the City. The significance of these Gateways could be reinforced by the scale and design of development at these points or undermined by the **cumulative impact** of many smaller developments just outside of these points. The Gateway points are shown on Map DM 4.6 and any development proposals visible approaching these Gateways should take account of their impact on these.

### ***Policy DM 4.6 Landscape Setting of Norwich***

All development proposals will not harm and where possible should enhance the landscape setting of Norwich with regard to the following considerations:

#### **NSBLPZ**

All development proposals within the Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone (NSBLPZ), as shown on the Policies Map, should have regard to protecting the openness of the Zone and, where possible, enhancing the landscape setting of the southern bypass, including the practice of wild flower planting and management regimes.

#### **Key Views**

All development proposals located within the Key Views 'cones' shown on the Policies Map should ensure they do not obstruct the long distance views to and from the City.

#### **Undeveloped Approaches**

All development proposals within the visual zone of influence viewed from the identified Undeveloped Approaches to Norwich should reinforce and avoid undermining the rural character of the Undeveloped Approaches to Norwich.

#### **Gateways**

All development proposals on the approaches to defined Gateways (shown on the Proposal Map) shall reinforce and avoid undermining the significance of these Gateways as the visual points of the landscape and townscape change marking the 'arrival' at and 'departure' from the city of Norwich.

**Development which would significantly harm the NSBLPZ or the landscape setting of the Norwich urban area will not be permitted.**

### ***Notes***

- The **Joint Core Strategy Policies** 1, 2, 10 & 12 and Objectives 8 & 9 require that **Local Plan** policies have regard to urban/rural transition and landscape setting of settlements. The GNDP Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment were used to consider development options in Norwich Policy Area.
- Core Planning Principles para 17 (point 5) of the **National Planning Policy Framework** requires planning to account for the roles and character of different urban and rural areas, recognising the 'intrinsic beauty of the countryside'. Section 11 addresses the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment including criteria (paragraph 113) for assessing proposals impacting on the landscape. Paragraph

170 calls for landscape character assessments to be prepared in areas where expansion is considered.

- Regard should be given to the planning policies of the City of Norwich and The Broads Authority; these similarly seek to protect and enhance the gateways to Norwich and key views to the Norwich City skyline.
- In relation to development in the Cringleford area, also see the emerging *Cringleford Neighbourhood Development Plan*.  
<http://www.cringlefordparishcouncil.gov.uk/whitedragon/documents/file/NDP%20Final%20Version%20Dec%2012%20R9746%20Cringleford%20Dev%20Plan-3%20a.pdf>
- Detailed assessments are provided in the **South Norfolk Landscape Character Study (2001)** and the **(2012) Local Landscape Designations Review** *work on the Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone, carried out by Chris Blandford Associates.*