



**Turley**

**Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Local  
Plan Examination**

**Matter Statement 7  
Environmental Policies**

**Response on behalf of Pigeon Investment  
Management Ltd and their Landowners**

June 2021

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Turley, on behalf of Pigeon Investment Management Limited ('Pigeon') and their Landowners, in respect of a number of land interests within both the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts.
- 1.2 Turley has previously submitted representations in response to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' (BMSDC) Joint Local Plan Consultation Document in August 2017, the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options in July 2019 (Regulation 18) and the Joint Local Plan Pre-Submission in November 2020 (Regulation 19) consultations.
- 1.3 A number of Pigeon's sites are now included within the Plan as draft allocations. These are detailed below. Further details regarding the status of the sites and their proposed schemes are included in the representations that Pigeon made to the Regulation 19 Consultation (December 2020):
- LA042 - Land at Tye Farm, Great Cornard;
  - LA047 - Land at Turkey Hall Lane, Bacton;
  - LA012 - Land north of Burstall Lane and west of B113, Sproughton;
  - LA001 - Land East of Norwich Road, Barham; and,
  - LA002 - Land North of Church Lane, Barham.
- 1.4 Whilst Pigeon are very encouraged by the proposed allocation of some of the sites identified above, they have through previous representations strongly urged the Councils' to give further consideration to the allocation of the following sites:
- Land North of Springlands Way, Sudbury;
  - Land North East of Heath Road, Woolpit;
  - Garage Field, Land to west of the A137, Wherstead;
  - Walled Garden and Clock Paddock, Wherstead;
  - Suffolk Leisure Park, Wherstead; and,
  - Stevins' Site, Wherstead.
- 1.5 Pigeon continues to support the thrust of the emerging Joint Local Plan, taken as a whole, but advocates a number of positive changes to strengthen the overall soundness and deliverability of the emerging Plan. In particular, the Councils' housing requirement has increased considerably, therefore in order to significantly boost the supply of housing land and delivery in the two districts and support economic growth, the Plan needs to ensure that it identifies 'deliverable' sites, in sustainable locations.

- 1.6 This must be sufficient to provide a continuous delivery of new housing and employment land over the Plan period where there is an identified need. In respect of Matter 7, Pigeon has advocated a number of changes to the environmental policies which could be achieved through modifications to the Plan in order to ensure that it is sound.
- 1.7 Pigeon has therefore requested the right to participate in the relevant Matter 7 Hearing Session to further articulate the issues raised in this Hearing Statement in relation to the Environment.

## 2. Matter 7 – Environmental Response to Inspectors Questions

### Question 7.3

- a) Is policy LP17 consistent with national policy and other parts of the plan?
- b) Are the requirements of the policy clear?
- c) Would the policy be effective including in relation to the use of brownfield v greenfield land, light pollution and air quality?
- d) is there robust evidence to justify the policy?

- 2.1 In response to question 7.3, and as set out in the representations submitted to the Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation (**Appendix 1**), Pigeon are supportive in principle of the aims of Policy LP17.
- 2.2 However, specifically with regard to part 3 of the policy, Pigeon do not consider it to be justified or consistent with national policy.
- 2.3 The wording of the policy is overly prescriptive and seeks to replicate other legislation/requirement, such as the Water Framework Directive in criterion 3(b). This would be in conflict with paragraph 16 (f) of the NPPF which requires plans to be prepared, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area.
- 2.4 Furthermore, criterion 3(b) applies an onerous requirement which is to enhance groundwater rather than requiring it to be protected. The JLP does not define what will constitute an 'enhancement' and does not provide clarification as to how this would be measured.
- 2.5 For this reason, Pigeon consider the policy to be ambiguous, which could lead to confusion in the decision making process which again would be in conflict with paragraph 16 (d) of the NPPF.
- 2.6 The Councils' offer no justification for including this within the policy as part of their evidence base. As such, Pigeon have suggested a policy re-wording in accordance with national policy within Paragraph 3.65 on page 32 of their Regulation 19 response (**Appendix 1**) to the Final Draft Local Plan.

#### **Question 7.4**

**a) Is policy LP18 consistent with national policy?**

**b) Are the requirements of the policy clear? In particular is there sufficient clarity regarding County Wildlife Sites, environmental corridors and how off-setting would work?**

**c) Would the policy be effective?**

**d) Is the policy based on robust evidence that justifies its requirements particularly in relation to**

**i. the minimum 10% increase for biodiversity**

**ii. wildlife corridors?**

**e) Is it sufficiently clear how the net gains for biodiversity would be measured?**

- 2.7 Pigeon consider that there are a number of parts of this policy which are not consistent with national policy and which are unclearly worded, which will cause difficulties in applying the policy for applicants and future decision makers.
- 2.8 Paragraph 175 of the NPPF refers to a biodiversity mitigation hierarchy which is to avoid, to mitigate and then to compensate. Taking Part 1 of Policy LP18, it requires schemes to firstly enhance, then avoid, then mitigate and lastly to compensate and that adherence to this hierarchy should be demonstrated in planning applications. The need to start with enhancement is in direct conflict with national policy and should therefore be removed from the wording of the policy.
- 2.9 Taking Part 2 of the policy, there are a number of elements to this which are also unclear. At Part 2(a) reference is made to designated and 'potentially' designated wildlife sites. The JLP offers no clarification to what may constitute a 'potentially' designated site. Therefore in order to avoid confusion on this point, Pigeon would suggest that reference to 'potentially' designated sites is removed from the policy.
- 2.10 In response to the Inspectors questions, whilst Pigeon support the Councils' ambition to create a network of wildlife corridors, as drafted, the wording of the policy does not take into consideration the practical difficulties of achieving this. Such corridors are likely to span over multiple land ownerships and will therefore need the consent of the relevant landowner(s) which may be outside the control of the applicant.
- 2.11 Therefore, Pigeon suggest that the wording of criterion 2(d) is amended to seek this requirement where possible and that if this criterion is based upon a relevant strategy, as alluded to in paragraph 15.16 of the JLP, that this is referenced accordingly. If not, then Pigeon would suggest that the policy will not be effective, when applied by future decision makers.

- 2.12 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. It however does not stipulate a specific percentage that needs to be demonstrated.
- 2.13 The requirement for providing at least 10% biodiversity net gain is contained within the Environment Bill, which has not been passed and is not adopted legislation. As such, it would be premature for the JLP to include this requirement within this policy. Therefore, Pigeon would suggest that this part of the policy needs to identify that it encourages these opportunities in line with the NPPF and PPG, but that it cannot be compulsory.
- 2.14 Finally, the policy makes reference to adopted protocols with regard to biodiversity offsetting, but it is not clear what these are and the measures that the Councils' may put in place against which future proposals will be considered against. Again, this means that the policy as written would not be effective and would not accord with paragraph 16 (d) of the NPPF in that policies need to be clearly written and unambiguous.
- 2.15 As such, Pigeon have suggested a policy re-wording in accordance with national policy within their Regulation 19 response (**Appendix 1**) to the Final Draft Local Plan (Paragraph 3.72/Page 33).

#### **Question 7.5**

**a) Is policy LP19 clear and would it be effective?**

**b) To be sound does the policy need to refer to local landscape designations in neighbourhood plans, and retain existing Visually Important Open Spaces and Special Landscape Area designations?**

- 2.16 Pigeon remain broadly supportive of a policy which seeks to protect and where possible enhance the local landscape. However, they are concerned that the policy as drafted could be unclear and conflict with national policy.
- 2.17 For the most part, the policy refers to protecting and enhancing landscape character and appears to have taken its criteria from Paragraph 170 of the NPPF. At criterion 1(c), the policy makes reference to landscape value. In order to avoid ambiguity and to ensure that the policy is effective, it should be clear that this policy is seeking to protect and enhance a local landscape, which in some areas will have local features of value.
- 2.18 This is not the same as possessing landscape value worthy of the status afforded to 'valued landscapes' as demonstrated through case law, under Paragraph 170 of the NPPF.
- 2.19 Pigeon is of the view that the policy does not need to include reference to local landscape designations which are set out in made Neighbourhood Plans. As part of the Development Plan, these local designations are set out in the Neighbourhood Plans, which have already been examined and so do not need to be repeated in the JLP.

## Question 7.6

**a) Is policy LP20 consistent with national policy?**

**b) Are the requirements of the policy clear, and would they be effective?**

**c) To be found sound does the policy:**

**i. need to identify how development in the project areas and in the setting of the AONB will be assessed?**

**ii. Refer to the need to conserve quality views and the distinctiveness of the AONB and to AONB management plans?**

**iii. Refer to potential future extensions to the AONB?**

**iv. Require that proposals are accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment?**

2.20 The wording of Policy LP20 supports the thrust of national policy set out in Paragraph 172 of the NPPF, in that any development should conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty and that there are limitations on the scale and extent of development possible in these designated areas.

2.21 In order to assist the Councils' to determine schemes within the AONBs, Pigeon consider that it will make the Policy more effective if the Policy sets out how such schemes will be assessed. This is because, there are parts of the AONBs which in Pigeon's view are less sensitive, or have changed considerably in character, since their designation.

2.22 An example of this is the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, which was designated in 1970. Taking the area around the Orwell Crossing specifically, this has changed significantly since the designation of the AONB with the construction of the bridge in recent decades. There will be other parts of the AONB's that have experienced change in other ways.

2.23 Therefore, in order to assess proposals in the AONB and to take account of the visual and landscape qualities, an objective way of doing this would be to require planning applications to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

2.24 Following a methodology which is prescribed by a professional institute will provide a level of objectivity to development proposals, which will help to distinguish less sensitive areas of the AONB, which could then reasonably accommodate some development whilst still complying with the other policy requirements.

2.25 As such, Pigeon has suggested a policy re-wording in accordance with national policy within their Regulation 19 response (**Appendix 1**) to the Final Draft Local Plan (Paragraph 3.78/Page 35).



## Question 7.11

**a) Are the criteria in policy LP25 justified and consistent with national policy? In particular is there robust evidence to justify the targets within the policy and do they take into account viability?**

**b) Are the requirements of the policy clearly articulated and would the policy be effective?**

- 2.26 Like many other Councils', Babergh and Mid Suffolk declared a climate emergency in September 2019. In this regard, Pigeon is committed to ensuring that each of their schemes are highly sustainable, creating environmental friendly places for residents to live, work and socialise in. As such, Pigeon fully support the inclusion of a policy within the JLP which requires schemes to minimise their reliance on fossil fuels and adopt a more sustainable approach to energy use.
- 2.27 However, to ensure that the policy can be effectively applied to future schemes in a manner that fulfils the reasons for including such a policy within the Plan, Pigeon has made suggestions in relation to the wording of the policy to ensure that it is clear and consistent with national policy.
- 2.28 Pigeon has suggested that a way of simplifying the policy wording, is to encourage schemes to exceed Building Regulations where practical, rather than setting specific targets. During the Plan period, Building Regulations will be further amended and to specify that new schemes will be expected to achieve current Building Regulations prevailing at the time, with respect to reduction in CO2 emissions, water efficiency and energy efficiency, will provide longevity to the policy and will ensure that it is consistent with the NPPF.
- 2.29 Paragraph 150 (b) of the NPPF sets out that any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards. The benefit of adopting this approach is that through the use of Building Regulations it provides a consistency of approach, which all parties know is technically and financially feasible. However if Councils' adopt their own standards, which mandate that schemes have to exceed Building Regulations, then this can complicate matters and add financial cost, which may hinder the deliverability of schemes.
- 2.30 This point is demonstrated in the Councils' Viability Study (ER02). It identifies that Policy LP25 will have a high impact on the viability of developments. Table 4-1 provides some policy cost inputs and assumptions. With regard to Policy LP25 it has allowed a cost of £3,500 per dwelling to provide fixtures and fittings and equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy through low carbon/renewable energy.
- 2.31 The figure of £3,500 is a midpoint figure taken from the Energy Saving Trust (2006), which indicated a cost of between £2,500 and £5,000 per dwelling. Pigeon consider that this allowance is out of date and does not accurately reflect the true cost of meeting the requirements of Policy LP25. The cost is anticipated to be 5-10% of build cost and as such the Councils figure of £5,000 should be used, albeit the true cost currently is likely to be higher. This would suggest that the Councils have not considered the high viability

impact of this policy as a whole or whether the costs associated with delivering this standard are accurate and up-to-date.

### **Question 7.12**

**Are the requirements of policy LP26 justified and clearly articulated and would the policy be effective? In particular:**

**a) is the requirement to meet Space Standards in the Technical Housing Standards based on robust evidence?**

**b) does the policy need to encourage the use of design codes and use of the Design Review Panel?**

**c) is 1f consistent with LP06?**

**d) is it sufficiently clear as to when part 2k will be applied?**

2.32 Whilst Pigeon welcome an overarching design policy within the JLP, it is considered that Policy LP26 is overly prescriptive and in certain places, repeats the requirements set out elsewhere in the Plan.

2.33 Paragraph 127 (c) of the NPPF states that 'planning policies should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history.... while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities). As drafted, Policy LP26 is therefore not consistent with this part of national planning policy because it refers to safeguarding and responding to the character and context of the area, i.e. maintaining the status quo. In order to be consistent with the NPPF, reference should for example be made in the wording of the policy to enhancing the local area, which would not prevent change from occurring or schemes which introduce modern, but sympathetic architecture to an area.

2.34 Criteria 1(b) and (d) are highly ambiguous and could be interpreted a variety of ways. This is not in accordance with paragraphs 125 and 126 of the NPPF which requires 'Plans to set out clear design vision' and 'provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage'.

2.35 Criteria 1(c) and (f) are addressed through policies LP25 and LP06 respectively and should not be repeated again within this policy.

2.36 Criterion 2(e) is unclear with regard to when schemes will be required to undertake a design review. It refers to schemes of 'exceptional design' and/or 'in a sensitive area/landscape'. The JLP does not define any of these terms which will lead to ambiguity when applied during the decision-making process.

2.37 Furthermore, the requirement for a scheme of any size, which meet these criteria is considered to be onerous. There is also no indication of costs and the implication for the viability of development by including such requirements.

- 2.38 Pigeon is concerned that the imposition of such standards as set out in Policy LP26 will have an impact upon the delivery of housing developments. The Policy requirements are considered to be overly prescriptive and the need for such standards does not appear to be robustly justified by evidence.

### **Question 7.13**

#### **Are the requirements of policy LP27 justified and would it be effective?**

- 2.39 Pigeon is supportive of a Policy which encourages and facilitates the development of renewable energy in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts which is in line with national policy. However, Pigeon raise an objection with the current wording of the Policy, on the basis that it is not 'justified'.
- 2.40 Part '2' requires sites for energy development schemes to be restored when energy generation ceases or becomes non-functioning for a period of six months. Pigeon consider that this requirement is not 'justified' as it applies a blanket approach to all sites. Pigeon is of the view that each site should be subject to their individual site specific circumstances which should have been addressed via planning conditions attached to the original consent.

### **Question 7.14**

#### **Are the requirements of policy LP28 clear and justified?**

- 2.41 Pigeon's detailed comments in respect of Policy LP28 are set out in their representations to the Regulation 19 Consultation (**Appendix 1**). Pigeon have no further points to raise at this time in respect of question 7.14, but reserve the right to articulate any further comments at the relevant Matter 7 Hearing Session.

### **Question 7.15**

#### **Are the requirements of policy LP29 clear and justified?**

- 2.42 Pigeon's detailed comments in respect of Policy LP29 are set out in their representations to the Regulation 19 Consultation (**Appendix 1**). Pigeon have no further points to raise at this time in respect of question 7.15, but reserve the right to articulate any further comments at the relevant Matter 7 Hearing Session.

## **Appendix 1: Regulation 19 Representations**



**Turley**

## **Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils**

Representations to the Joint Local Plan Pre-Submission Document - Regulation 19

Response on behalf of Pigeon Investment Management Ltd and their Landowners

December 2020

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**Client**

Pigeon Investment Management Limited

**Our reference**

PIGC3025

December 2020

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Turley on behalf of Pigeon Investment Management Ltd ('Pigeon') and their Landowners, in respect of a number of land interests within both Babergh and Mid Suffolk.
- 1.2 These representations are provided in response to Babergh & Mid Suffolk's (the 'Councils') consultation on the Pre-Submission Version of the Joint Local Plan 2018 – 2037, its supporting evidence base and intended site allocations.
- 1.3 Turley has previously submitted representations on behalf of Pigeon and their Landowners to the Council's previous consultations on the emerging Local Plan in 2017, 2018 and 2019.
- 1.4 A number of Pigeon's sites are now included within the Plan as draft allocations. The full list of sites in Pigeon's interest are detailed below. Further details regarding the status of the sites and their proposed schemes are included in **Appendix 1**.
- Land North of Springlands Way, Sudbury;
  - Land at Tye Farm, Great Cornard;
  - Land North East of Heath Road, Woolpit;
  - Land at Turkey Hall Lane, Bacton
  - Garage Field, Land to west of the A137, Wherstead;
  - Walled Garden and Clock Paddock, Wherstead;
  - Suffolk Leisure Park, Wherstead;
  - Stevins' Site, Wherstead;
  - Land north of Burstall Lane and west of B113, Sproughton; and
  - Land East of Norwich Road, Barham and Land North of Church Lane, Barham.
- 1.5 Whilst Pigeon are very encouraged by the proposed allocation of some of the sites identified above we would strongly urge the Councils to give further consideration to the allocation of the following sites:
- Land North of Springlands Way, Sudbury;
  - Garage Field, Land to west of the A137, Wherstead;
  - Walled Garden and Clock Paddock, Wherstead;
  - Suffolk Leisure Park, Wherstead;

- Stevins' Site, Wherstead; and
  - Land North East of Heath Road, Woolpit.
- 1.6 For all sites, detailed evidence has been provided to demonstrate that no significant environmental or technical constraints exist to impact on the delivery of the proposed scheme in a sustainable manner. The inclusion of the above sites will both strengthen the supply of housing and bring forward new employment opportunities as well as providing additional investment in transport and community infrastructure.
- 1.7 In accordance with paragraph 11a of the National Planning Policy Framework, Local Planning Authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. The recommendations set out in these representations will ensure that the Joint Local Plan has the flexibility and resilience to adapt to changes both in the local market and wider economy.
- 1.8 Pigeon considers that the Duty to Cooperate has been met by Babergh and Mid Suffolk in preparing the Plan and that it is legally and procedurally compliant.
- 1.9 Pigeon continues to support the thrust of the emerging Local Plan, taken as a whole, but advocates a number of positive changes to strengthen the overall soundness and deliverability of the emerging Plan. The Councils' housing requirement has increased significantly, therefore in order to significantly boost the supply of housing land and delivery in the two districts and support economic growth, the plan needs to ensure that it identifies 'deliverable' sites, in sustainable locations. This must be sufficient to provide a continuous delivery of new housing and employment land over the Plan period where there is an identified need.
- 1.10 At present Pigeon and their Landowners do not consider the Plan to be sound for the following principal reasons;
- Insufficient housing requirement to meet minimum local housing need along with potential unmet needs of Ipswich BC and support planned economic growth within the two Districts.
  - Insufficient flexibility within the housing supply to meet the housing requirement;
  - Insufficient flexibility within new employment sites to meet planned economic growth;
  - Insufficient justification of the optional technical standards for accessibility;
  - Requirement to incorporate a greater degree of flexibility for delivery of self-build homes and specialist or support accommodation depending on the locality;
  - Affordable housing policy needs to recognise the broader definition in line with national policy; and,



- Prescriptive policy on sustainable construction which should be more flexible to ensure delivery of schemes.

1.11 Pigeon and their Landowners reserve the right to articulate their objections at the relevant matter hearings once the Examination in Public has commenced.

## 2. Part 1 – Objectives and Strategic Policies

### Duty to Cooperate

#### **100 Word Summary**

*There is the potential that the JLP will need to accommodate a proportion of unmet housing need (circa 300 new homes) from Ipswich Borough. This is a matter that should be considered and addressed by the JLP which should provide flexibility to respond to any changing circumstances. Babergh and Mid Suffolk should continue to work collaboratively with the authorities in the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area so that the JLP can be prepared with sufficient flexibility to accommodate any arising unmet needs which may be identified as part of the Ipswich EiP under the Duty to Cooperate.*

2.1 Babergh & Mid Suffolk form part of the wider Ipswich Housing Market Area (HMA) and the Ipswich Functional Economic Area (FEA). In accordance with Section 10 of the Localism Act 2011 and Paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), these authorities have a duty to co-operate within these areas. Pigeon consider that Babergh and Mid Suffolk have met the Duty to Cooperate requirements.

2.2 Paragraphs 25 and 26 of the NPPF, inter alia, state that:

*25. Strategic policy-making authorities should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans.....*

*26. Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.*

2.3 The local authorities within the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) are aware of the issue relating to the unmet housing needs that will arise from Ipswich over the Plan period. The consideration of this issue is also expressed through the policies of the adopted Ipswich Local Plan (2017) (Policy CS6 ‘The Ipswich Policy Area’ and Policy CS7 ‘The Amount of Housing Required’).

2.4 This requirement was highlighted in the Inspector’s Report on the Examination of the Ipswich Local Plan, dated January 2017 who identified a continuing need for the local authorities within the Ipswich HMA to co-operate in order to ensure that the area’s housing and employment needs are met. At Paragraph 32 the Inspector concluded that:

*“Fundamentally, given the circumstances which the Ipswich Policy Area authorities currently find themselves in, there would be much to gain from the adoption of the submitted plans (subject to necessary modifications) as soon as possible. At the same time there would be likely to be little to lose in terms of getting firm proposals in place to address potential unmet housing needs. Consequently, adoption of the plans modified to require review to determine and deliver housing needs across the HMA for the long term, is thus soundly based.”*

### **Flexibility to Meet Unmet Needs from Ipswich**

- 2.5 Paragraph 60 of the NPPF and the PPG (2a-010) state that the minimum housing need identified by the standard method should be exceeded to ensure that unmet needs from neighbouring areas can be accommodated.
- 2.6 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment, May 2017 (SHMA) identifies that the 2014 based household projections for Ipswich were incorrect and so adjusts these projections to identify an objectively assessed need for 11,420 new homes for Ipswich in the period 2014-36.
- 2.7 The 2014 projections are used in the standard method for the purposes of the examination of both the Ipswich Local Plan Review and the Joint Local Plan (JLP). Therefore the errors in the 2014-based household projections need to be adjusted before applying the standard method in Ipswich, to reflect a need for at least 11,420 new homes in Ipswich Borough over the period 2014-36.
- 2.8 In the period 2014-18, a total of 1,370 homes were delivered. Therefore in order to meet the minimum local housing need of Ipswich, there remains a residual need for at least 10,050 new homes over the period 2018-36.
- 2.9 The Position Statement produced by Ipswich Borough Council in relation to Matter 3 of the examination of the Ipswich Local Plan Review, identifies that there is a supply of 9,426 new homes over the period 2018-36. However in August 2020 the examining Inspectors requested additional evidence in relation to likely start dates, build out rates and completions for each of the allocated sites, which suggests that the actual supply is likely to be less and potentially significantly less, than the predicted 9,426 new homes. In the interim, there is an unmet need of at least 624 new homes which potentially may need to be accommodated within the neighbouring authorities, including Babergh and Mid Suffolk, to accord with Paragraph 60 of the NPPF.
- 2.10 Some 48% of the workforce of Ipswich who commute from the Housing Market Area originate from either Babergh or Mid Suffolk. Using this percentage share as a broad indicator of the scale of the unmet need, results in a requirement for around 300 homes in these areas in addition to local needs, in the period 2018-36. The exact extent and distribution of this unmet need is a matter for discussion between these authorities and Ipswich Borough. However the evidence suggests that it may be necessary to increase the housing requirement for Babergh and Mid Suffolk within the JLP by around 300 homes during the Plan period to proportionately address unmet needs from Ipswich.
- 2.11 Criterion 2 of Table 1 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP (Duty to Cooperate - Key Issues) states: *'No Duty to Cooperate partners have identified any unmet need to be met by Babergh or Mid Suffolk District Council'*. Whilst we appreciate that this is currently the case, as stated above, there is a strong possibility that the Inspector for the Ipswich Local Plan EIP will conclude the development needs of Ipswich cannot be wholly met within its tightly drawn administrative boundaries over the course of the new plan period.
- 2.12 Therefore there is the potential that the JLP will need to accommodate a proportion of this unmet need (circa 300 new homes) which is a matter to be considered and addressed by the JLP in order to demonstrate that the Plan is flexible enough to respond to any changing circumstances. Accordingly whilst Ipswich Borough Council has not

specifically identified any potentially unmet needs, and therefore we consider that the Councils have met the Duty to Cooperate, the JLP should be prepared with the sufficient flexibility to accommodate any unmet needs which may arise as part of the examination of the Ipswich Local Plan. It should be noted that this is an ongoing requirement during the preparation of the Plan and that if any unmet need is identified, this could be addressed through Main Modifications to the housing requirements if necessary.

- 2.13 Pegasus Group has been instructed by Pigeon Investment Management Ltd to review the housing need requirement of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP and the supporting evidence base which underpins the Regulation 19 consultation. Further detailed, consideration of the above issue and the local housing need of Babergh and Mid Suffolk is provided within the Review of Housing Need Report (December 2020) produced by Pegasus and enclosed at **Appendix 2** and discussed against the relevant Policies below.

### **SP01 – Housing Needs and Requirements**

#### ***100 Word Summary***

*Policy SP01 is **unsound** and **not consistent with the NPPF** as it does not plan positively for the housing needs of Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The assessment of need (SHMA, 2019) identifies a minimum figure of 19,247 new homes. The assessment indicates that the proposed housing requirement will not meet the need for market or affordable housing by a significant margin. There is no allowance for economic need and the Plan should identify a supply of circa 5% in excess of the identified minimum cumulative housing need to provide flexibility. This would produce a need for at least **23,345** new homes.*

- 2.1 Paragraph 60 of the NPPF identifies that the minimum number of homes required should be determined using the standard method in national planning guidance, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach.
- 2.2 The PPG (2a-013) identifies that where strategic policies are being prepared jointly, as is the case in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, the minimum housing need should be calculated from the sum of the standard method for each LPA. The distribution of this housing need can however be met in the most sustainable distribution across the whole plan area and the PPG does not require that the needs of each LPA should necessarily be met within each LPA boundary.
- 2.3 The standard method provides the minimum local housing need which in this case should be exceeded to take account of economic circumstances, demographic factors, unmet needs and recent assessments of need. At **Appendix 2** of this Statement is a Review of the Councils' Housing Need by Pegasus. These representations do not seek to repeat the contents of that review, but for the sake of completeness sets out the key conclusions and recommendations of the report.
- 2.4 In summary the assessment undertaken by Pegasus demonstrates that the standard method has been misapplied in the JLP and does not provide for the minimum necessary to accord with national policy. The figure which arose from the standard method at the 2018 base-date of the Plan period produces a minimum need for **19,175** new homes rather than the 18,069 identified in the draft Joint Local Plan.

2.5 However, Pigeon considers that in Babergh and Mid Suffolk the minimum housing need figure should be exceeded and the new housing requirement in the JLP should be proportionately increased for the following reasons:

- 1) There is a recent assessment of need (SHMA Partial Part 2 Update, January 2019) which identifies a minimum figure of **19,247** new homes comprising 8,132 in Babergh and 11,115 in Mid Suffolk;
- 2) The recent assessment of need also indicates that the proposed housing requirement will not meet the need for market housing by a significant margin and it will not meet the need for affordable housing;
- 3) There would be a need for **21,933** new homes even to support the planned slowdown in economic growth comprising 8,284 in Babergh and 13,649 in Mid Suffolk;
- 4) There has been a startling imbalance between the jobs growth and the number of homes delivered across the wider area in recent years, which if perpetuated as planned by the JLP, will compound the disparity between the number of jobs and the labour supply such that it will be reliant upon a greater number of workers commuting greater distances to support the planned slowdown of economic growth;
- 5) The JLP does not take any account of the likely unmet needs of Ipswich which will need to be addressed across the Housing Market Area under the duty to cooperate. There is likely to be an unmet need from Ipswich which will need to be determined through the Ipswich Local Plan Examination and subsequently distributed under the Duty to Cooperate, but this is likely to result in an additional need to deliver circa 300 homes across the Plan period, or a cumulative total of **22,233** new homes;
- 6) The figure which arises from the standard method is subject to frequent changes and so it is necessary to prepare the JLP with sufficient contingency to ensure that a sufficient number of sites are identified to meet the housing need taking account of the standard method which exists at the base-date;
- 7) In accordance with the findings of numerous Inspectors it is necessary for the Plan to identify a sufficient supply to provide for circa 5% in excess of the identified minimum housing need to provide the necessary flexibility. This would produce a need to plan for at least **23,345** homes to respond to the cumulative need for 22,233 new homes.

2.6 In conclusion, the current approach under Policy SP01 is unsound as it is **not consistent with national planning policy guidance and is not justified** as it does **not plan positively** for the housing needs of Babergh and Mid Suffolk. As such, Pigeon **object** to the Policy as currently worded.

2.7 Rather than provide for the minimum, Pigeon would advise that the strategy should ensure sufficient flexibility to ensure that the housing requirement (whatever that may eventually prove to be) will be delivered with an appropriate allowance that seeks to maximise, not constrain, economic growth. In accordance with the approach endorsed

by Inspectors at recent Local Plan Examinations it is strongly recommended that the Councils plan for a housing figure 5% greater than the identified requirement which would require sufficient sites to deliver a total quantum of 23,345 new homes.

- 2.8 It is therefore considered that in order for the JLP to be found sound it will be necessary to amend the policy wording to set a minimum housing requirement for **23,345** new homes as set out below:

**Policy SP01 – Housing Needs**

*Across the plan area the mix, type and size of the new housing development will be expected to reflect established needs in the most relevant district needs assessment, or any local housing needs surveys where relevant.*

**Babergh:**

*The Joint Local Plan will seek to deliver a minimum of ~~7,904~~ **8,856** net additional dwellings (~~416~~ **466** dwellings per annum) within the Babergh district over the plan period (2018 – 2037).*

**Mid Suffolk:**

*The Joint Local Plan will seek to deliver a minimum of ~~10,165~~ **14,489** net additional dwellings (~~535~~ **763** dwellings per annum) within the Mid Suffolk district over the plan period (2018 – 2037).*

- 2.9 Further housing allocations should therefore be identified within Part 3 Place Maps and Policies to meet this requirement. Pigeon propose the following sites as sustainable sites for housing to address unmet need.

- Land North of Springlands Way, Sudbury;
- Suffolk Leisure Park, Wherstead; and
- Land North East of Heath Road, Woolpit.

**SP02 – Affordable Housing**

**100 Word Summary**

*As drafted Policy SP02 requires a 35% requirement for affordable housing on sites of ten or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more. Pigeon supports this figure in principle, however this figure will impact upon the residual market component available to meet minimum requirements. This demonstrates that more sites will need to be allocated in the emerging Local Plan. Pigeon **object** to Part '3' of the Policy because it is not **justified**. Pigeon would advise the Councils to reconsider their approach to ensure that sufficient levels of both market and affordable housing are delivered over the Plan period.*

- 2.10 As currently drafted Policy SP02 requires a 35% requirement for affordable housing on relevant sites of ten or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more. Pigeon supports this figure in principle, however for the reasons given below, this figure will impact upon the

residual market component available to meet minimum requirements, which clearly demonstrates that more sites will need to be allocated in the emerging Local Plan.

- 2.11 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Partial Part 2 Update, January 2019, assesses the need for affordable housing in the context of the standard method. In Figure 7.1 the SHMA identifies a need for 73.2% of new housing in Babergh to be in the market sector, with the remaining 26.8% in the affordable sector. In Mid Suffolk, Figure 3 identifies a need for 77.3% to be in the market sector and the remaining 22.7% in the affordable sector.
- 2.12 These figures have been generated from the minimum need identified in the SHMA, namely 428 homes per annum in Babergh and 585 homes per annum in Mid Suffolk. Therefore, it can be calculated that the evidence actually identifies a need for 313 and 452 market homes per annum in Babergh and Mid Suffolk respectively or a total of 765 market homes per annum across the plan area, with a need for 115 and 133 affordable homes per annum respectively, or a total of 24879 new affordable homes across the plan area.
- 2.13 The proposed delivery of 2,096 affordable homes in Babergh of the total proposed housing requirement of 7,904 new homes indicates that 5,808 market homes will be provided in Babergh as compared to the need for 5,953.
- 2.14 Similarly, the proposed delivery of 2,428 affordable homes in Mid Suffolk of the total proposed housing requirement of 10,165 new homes indicates that 7,737 market homes will be provided in Mid Suffolk as compared to the need for 8,592.
- 2.15 This demonstrates that that the JLP does not plan to address the need for market housing by a considerable margin particularly in Mid Suffolk. The combination of Policy SP02 and the proposed reduced housing requirement therefore results in an under-delivery of affordable housing and a significant under-delivery of the required level of market housing identified by the evidence base.
- 2.16 As a result of the proposed unjustified constraint on market housing, there will be fewer opportunities for those capable of accessing such housing to do so, and this is likely to have a further adverse effect on affordability. The likely consequence of this is that it will increase the number of households falling into affordable need as they are unable to access the constrained supply of market accommodation. This is wholly unsustainable.
- 2.17 Therefore, as concluded by Pegasus in their Housing Need Report at **Appendix 2**, the housing requirement needs to be increased to ensure that sufficient provision is made for the required market housing. Accordingly, the minimum housing need for the two authorities should be for at least **19,247 new homes** comprising 8,132 in Babergh and 11,115 in Mid Suffolk as identified by the Council's own evidence base.
- 2.18 For the reasons set out above, Policies SP01 and SP02 are not considered to be sound as they are not **'justified'**, taking into account reasonable alternatives **or consistent with National Policy**. Pigeon therefore **object** to Part '3' of the Policy as currently worded and would strongly urge the Councils to therefore reconsider their approach, in particular to the overall housing requirement, to ensure that sufficient levels of both market and affordable housing are delivered over the Plan period.

### **Policy SP02 – Affordable Housing**

3. The Plan will assist to deliver ~~2,096~~ **2,179** affordable dwellings in Babergh and ~~2,428~~ **2,523** affordable dwellings in Mid Suffolk up to 2037.

### **Policy SP03 - Settlement Hierarchy**

#### **100 Word Summary**

*The strategic transport corridor for the A12/A14 is identified in the JLP. The sustainability of the settlements within this corridor, including Core Villages such as Thurston and Woolpit, are enhanced given the proximity to the strategic road network and public transport services that serve these routes. For this reason, and in order to ensure that the Policy is sound and justified, Pigeon would suggest that Policy SP03 is amended so that the second tier of the Settlement Hierarchy refers to Market Towns and A12/A14 Settlements, recognising the strategic importance of this corridor for job and housing growth.*

- 2.19 As set out in their representations to the Regulation 18 Consultation, Pigeon welcomes the approach set out under Policy SP03 and in Tables 2 and 3 of the JLP, in particular the strategy to focus development towards the Ipswich Fringe settlements, Market Towns/Urban Areas and Core Villages.
- 2.20 In particular, Pigeon is supportive of the Council's approach to define the Ipswich Fringe Area as its own category at the top of the settlement hierarchy. As recognised at paragraph 8.2 of the JLP the Ipswich Fringe Areas (IFA) *'have historically been strategic designations as growth areas in recognition of the cross-boundary influence of the county town of Ipswich as a regional service centre'*. It is an area where the Councils consider significant new housing and employment growth could be accommodated with good links to transport infrastructure and services and facilities.
- 2.21 As set out at paragraph 9.07 of the JLP, the approach to the spatial distribution of housing in the Plan *'seeks to secure a balance to growth in the strategic transport corridor areas, as well as ensuring that other market towns and rural communities benefit from appropriate growth'*.
- 2.22 The strategic transport corridor for the A12/A14 is identified on the key diagram at page 16 of the JLP. The sustainability of the settlements within this corridor, including Core Villages such as Thurston and Woolpit, are enhanced given the proximity to the strategic road network and public transport services that serve these routes.
- 2.23 To be consistent with the approach taken with regards to the Ipswich Fringe Areas it is considered that the strategic importance of those settlements within the A12/A14 corridor should also be specifically recognised in the settlement hierarchy.
- 2.24 For this reason, and in order to ensure that the Policy is sound and justified, Pigeon would suggest that Tables 2 and 3 of the JLP are amended so that the second tier of the Settlement Hierarchy refers to Market Towns and A12/A14 Settlements. Within this amended tier, Pigeon would suggest that the following Core Villages are identified:



### **Policy SP03 - Settlement Hierarchy**

*Babergh Market Towns and Urban Areas A14/12 Settlements*

*Hadleigh, Pinewood, Sudbury, Sproughton, Wherstead, East Bergholt, Capel St Mary.*

*Mid Suffolk Market Towns and Urban Areas A14/12 Settlements*

*Eye, Needham Market, Stowmarket, Woolpit, Thurston, Barham and Claydon, Haughley, Stowupland.*

### **SP04 – Housing Spatial Distribution**

#### **100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is generally supportive of the approach set out under Policy SP04 which refers to the focus being on growth at the Ipswich Fringe, Market Towns and Urban Areas and Core Villages. However, it is considered that the Market Town of Sudbury has not received a proportionate share of growth over the Plan period given its population size, good access to public transport and the existing range of services and facilities. However this matter can be suitably dealt with by way of a Main Modification to the Policy.*

- 2.25 Pigeon is generally supportive of the approach set out under Policy SP04 which refers to the focus being on growth at the Ipswich Fringe, A14/A12 Settlements, Market Towns and Urban Areas and Core Villages. However, it is considered that the Market Town of Sudbury has not received a proportionate share of growth over the Plan period given its population size, good access to public transport and the existing range of services and facilities.
- 2.26 As currently drafted the spatial distribution for the Babergh Market Towns and Urban Areas of Hadleigh, Sudbury and Pinewood, during the Plan period 2018-37 is 1,430 new homes. In this regard, Table 04 on page 43 of the JLP sets out the minimum housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area of Hadleigh of 871 new homes. This leaves a total of only 559 new homes to be shared between Sudbury and Pinewood.
- 2.27 The lack of strategic development in these Market Towns is however not sustainable, notably in relation to Sudbury and could lead to a lack of investment in existing services and facilities, impacting on future vitality and viability, as well as failing to address more localised housing needs.
- 2.28 The Councils' approach as currently set out under Policy SP04 does not provide a sufficient supply of land to meet the housing requirements across Babergh and Mid Suffolk over the Plan period. At present the emerging Plan directs virtually the same level of growth to the Core Villages as to the Market Towns. It is considered however that Sudbury has the scope to accommodate further proportionate growth in a highly sustainable manner.
- 2.29 Pigeon also consider that the Councils have not fully considered the implications of achieving biodiversity net gain and how this might effect the net developable areas and site capacity. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions.

- 2.30 Biodiversity net gain requires applicants to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development. Developers are required to assess the type of habitat and its condition before submitting plans, and then demonstrate how they are improving biodiversity – such as through the creation of green corridors, planting more trees, or forming local nature spaces.
- 2.31 In some cases it is unlikely that the allocations will be able to deliver the quantum of development proposed and deliver biodiversity net gain. On this basis and taking into account the higher than planned for housing requirements, Pigeon would strongly urge the Council to therefore give consideration to allocating additional sites.
- 2.32 In the first instance the additional housing growth should be directed towards the Market Towns. Together with the Ipswich Fringe Area, these settlements are the most sustainable locations for strategic growth. However the level of growth directed to these settlements under the current strategy is not reflective of their position in the settlement hierarchy.
- 2.33 With regard to the Core Villages, a distinction should be drawn between those Core Villages that lie within the A14 or A12 corridors and those outside, with priority given to directing growth to the Core Villages within these two strategic transport corridors. At present, the policy is not clear in this regard and the levels of growth directed to villages outside these corridors such as Bottesdale & Rickinhall, Debenham and Stradbroke is questioned.
- 2.34 The soundness of the plan could be undermined by not allocating an appropriate level of strategic growth at sustainable market towns such as Sudbury, however this matter can be suitably dealt with by way of a Main Modification.

#### **SP05 – Employment Land**

##### ***100 Word Summary***

*Policy SP05 is not considered sound as it has not been ‘positively prepared’ to meet the employment requirements of the Districts. As such, Pigeon **object** to this Policy as it only identifies existing employment sites. Such an approach does not provide for a positive plan as it does not facilitate the potential to maintain or increase economic growth, contrary to Paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The JLP acknowledges that the deliverability of sites throughout the Local Plan period within both districts is critical and as such the Policy should be amended to secure positive economic growth over the Plan period.*

- 2.35 In general Pigeon are supportive of Policy SP05 which seeks to ensure a continuous range and diversity of sites and premises, which are fit for purpose, are available across the Districts of Babergh and Mid Suffolk, throughout the plan period.
- 2.36 Within the Ipswich Economic Area (IEA), the A14 road and rail corridor is the main arterial route for goods between Europe and the distribution warehouses in the English Midlands. As identified in the Sector Need Assessment undertaken by Lichfields in 2017 on behalf of Babergh, Mid Suffolk, Ipswich and Suffolk Coastal councils, the corridor also aligns with the key commercial property market in the IEA from Felixstowe westwards

to Stowmarket. Whilst overall, the Lichfields Sector Needs Assessment shows that Babergh and Mid Suffolk have modest net additional employment land requirements, sectoral forecasts 'identify higher growth potential in B class sectors in strategic locations largely mirroring the emphasis along the transport corridors'.

- 2.37 Given the concentration of commercial activity around the A12/A14 corridor, Pigeon are generally supportive of the strategic employment sites identified in Policy SP05. However the Policy currently only identifies existing employment sites. This is on the basis that the Joint Local Plan identifies under Key Economic Issues that there is expected to be a 9.3% increase in jobs in Babergh and a 14.7% increase in Mid Suffolk, which represents a slowdown in growth when compared to past trends.
- 2.38 Such an approach does not provide for a positive plan as it does not facilitate the potential to maintain or increase economic growth, contrary to Paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The employment land requirement which has been calculated on this basis is not therefore considered to be sound, which in turn could act as a further constraint on economic growth.
- 2.39 Whilst it is acknowledged within the JLP that the deliverability of economic sites is critical, disappointingly the approach under Policy SP05 provides little flexibility to ensure there is a sufficient supply of available sites within strategic transport locations, which are supported in principle within Policy SP05, subject to a criteria-based approach.
- 2.40 Pigeon consider that two of their Sites should be allocated under Policy SP05. These are 'Land at Garage Field, Wherstead' (SHELAA Ref: SS1168) for mixed use employment comprising Motorway Service Station and associated uses, and B2, B8 and E employment uses and 'Walled Garden and Clock Paddock, Wherstead (SHELAA Ref: SS1027) for Class E employment uses. Delivery Statements for these Sites have been prepared and submitted alongside these representations.
- 2.41 The allocation of these Sites will enable the Council to deliver a new allocation that complements Wherstead Business Park in line with the current employment allocation (SP05) as an upgraded roundabout on Junction 56 of the A14 will be delivered under the Garage Field Site which has planning permission. This improvement to the A14 is identified in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 2.42 An Employment Land Review for Wherstead has been undertaken by Savills and submitted in support of the Delivery Statement for the Site. The review identifies that Babergh has approximately 2.6 years of employment land supply, which is significantly less than its surrounding Districts. The report identifies Babergh is constrained in the industrial market and identifies the need for high quality industrial development, particularly in Wherstead due to its strategic A14 location on the outskirts of Ipswich.

#### **Changes of Use within E Class**

- 2.43 Point '4' of Policy SP05 has been inserted to address uses within the E use class which came into force on 1 September 2020. There is a transitional period for the implementation of the new use classes until 31 July 2021, to allow for a consultation on permitted development associated with these new use classes to take place in 2021. Notwithstanding this consultation, Pigeon would question the insertion of this paragraph into the Policy given that uses within the E class can move freely between

uses, as it is not deemed to be development, and therefore a planning application for change of use would not be required. As such, this point is '**not consistent with national planning policy**' and is a soundness issue which needs to be addressed.

- 2.44 For the reasons set out above, Policy SP05 is not considered sound as it has not been '**positively prepared**' to meet the employment requirements of the Districts and it is '**not consistent with national planning policy**'. As such, Pigeon **object** to this Policy as currently worded and seek modifications. The JLP acknowledges that the deliverability of sites throughout the Local Plan period within both districts is critical. The Savills Employment Land Review has identified a shortfall of employment provision in Babergh and has identified a need for high quality employment development in Wherstead due to its strategic location along the A14 which provides a direct link to the Port of Felixstowe.
- 2.45 Pigeon strongly urges the Council to consider the allocation of the land identified as Garage Field, Wherstead (ref: SS1168) along with the Walled Garden site, Wherstead (ref: SS1027). These Sites are available now with very good road access and transport connections, they have level land, with no environmental constraints and ready connections to the services. The inclusion of these Sites will strengthen the Councils' supply of employment sites in one of the most sustainable locations for economic growth. This is a matter which can be suitably dealt with by way of a Main Modification.

#### **SP08 – Infrastructure Provision**

##### **100 Word Summary**

*The objective of Policy SP08 is to provide a policy framework for securing an appropriate level of infrastructure, including developer contributions and obligations. Although Pigeon welcome a Policy concerning developer contributions and obligations, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the current wording of the Policy on the basis that the Policy is not '**justified**'. Pigeon request that reference to Developer Contributions are removed from the Policy wording and that it makes clear reference to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.*

- 2.46 Policy SP08 of the Joint Local Plan states that:
- “The required infrastructure will be provided through a combination of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Planning Obligations, Developer Contributions and where appropriate funding assistance from the Councils / other provider organisations”*
- 2.47 Changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy were introduced on 1st September 2019. One of the key changes is the removal of the pooling restrictions in relation to Section 106 agreements. If a charging authority decides that it wants to stop charging CIL it will have to follow a prescribed procedure.
- 2.48 This will involve preparing an infrastructure funding statement setting out details of the CIL receipts for the last five years, together with an assessment of the impact in the following five years of not having a charging schedule. The measures to be put in place to fund infrastructure needs will also need to be published. This will need to reflect and be consistent with the Councils' Infrastructure Delivery Plan produced in support of the Joint Local Plan.

- 2.49 The Policy specifically refers to Developer Contributions as well as Planning Obligations, Pigeon is of the view that these are the same thing and therefore there is no need to refer to both within the Policy. Reference to Developer Contributions should be removed from the Policy wording.
- 2.50 In light of the changes to CIL in 2019, Babergh and Mid Suffolk should provide clarification as to their approach for funding the required improvements to infrastructure. In the absence of such clarification Policy SP08 is not considered sound. This is a matter which can be suitably dealt with by way of a Main Modification.

### 3. Part 2 – Local Policies

#### LP01 – Windfall Development in Hamlets and Dwelling Clusters

##### 100 Word Summary:

*Whilst Pigeon remain supportive of a Policy concerning development within Hamlets and Dwelling Clusters, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the policy as currently worded because it is not '**positively prepared**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. In order to be considered sound, Pigeon considers that the wording of the Policy needs to be more positive to enable small scale development outside of settlement boundaries of defined hamlets, where these are well related to existing development and would be sustainable. The Policy should also positively encourage opportunities for self and custom build housing in such instances in accordance with Policy LP10.*

- 3.1 As drafted, Policy LP01 sets out the Councils' approach to windfall development within dwelling clusters and/or defined hamlets. The Councils' have defined a dwelling cluster as a nucleus of at least 10 dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing adopted highway with no settlement boundary.
- 3.2 Whilst Pigeon remain supportive of a Policy concerning development within Hamlets and Dwelling Clusters, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the policy as currently worded because it is not '**positively prepared**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. In order to be considered sound, Pigeon considers that the wording of the Policy needs to be more positive to enable small scale development outside of settlement boundaries of defined hamlets, where these are well related to existing development and would be sustainable. The Policy should also positively encourage opportunities for self and custom build housing in such instances in accordance with Policy LP10.
- 3.3 Policy LP01 has made an allowance for windfall development within dwelling clusters, which do not have a settlement boundary. However, the wording of the Policy remains that proposals for windfall development are only permitted in defined Hamlets.
- 3.4 It is evident that there are a number of settlements defined as Hamlets within the proposed settlement hierarchy, set out at Policy SP03, with differing levels of services and facilities as well as variation in their proximity to higher order settlements. The NPPF is clear in Paragraph 78 that "*to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*". Planning policies should therefore "*identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services*".
- 3.5 The NPPF identifies that development in rural areas is important to rural communities and contributes to its vitality. Land which falls outside but adjacent to the settlement boundary would effectively be categorised as 'countryside' where development is restricted.
- 3.6 Pigeon suggests that a criteria-based approach should be adopted to allow for a proportionate level of development outside of the settlement boundary within Hamlets on sites which are sustainable and deliverable and can make a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing or provide opportunities for self and custom build housing. This

would accord with Paragraph 78 of the NPPF and would maximise opportunities to deliver sufficient land for the supply of housing in sustainable locations. Furthermore, it would assist the Council in meeting its housing need for the Districts.

- 3.7 Pigeon suggests that the wording to Policy LP01 is amended as follows in order to be more consistent with the NPPF and found sound:

**LP01 – Windfall Development in Hamlets and Dwelling Clusters**

1. *Proposals for windfall development (including self-build/custom-build) either within or adjacent to existing dwelling clusters and/or a defined hamlet may be acceptable, subject to all the following criteria applied:*

*a) It would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the settlement, landscape (including the AONB), residential amenity or any heritage, environmental or community assets.*

*b) It would not result in consolidating sporadic or ribbon development or result in loss of gaps between settlements resulting in coalescence. The cumulative impact of the proposal on the location, context and infrastructure is considered acceptable.*

*c) The scale of development is infill only, for ~~a single dwelling and/or a pair of semi-detached~~ up to a maximum of 5 dwellings.*

*d) Special regard shall be given to development proposals preserving and enhancing the AONB and to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity affected by the proposal.*

*e) All new development will be expected to minimise dependence on fossil fuels and make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of climate change through implementation of sustainable construction practices and renewable energy technologies.*

**LP06 – Mix and Type of Composition**

**100 Word Summary**

*Whilst Pigeon remain supportive of a Policy which promotes the delivery of affordable and adaptable homes on major developments, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the Policy as currently worded because it is not '**justified**' on the grounds that the Councils have not provided the necessary evidence to support the need for 50% of homes to meet the requirements of part M4(2), an optional Building Regulation standard.*

- 3.8 Whilst Pigeon remain supportive of a Policy which promotes the delivery of affordable and adaptable homes on major developments, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the Policy as currently worded because it is not '**justified**' on the grounds that the Councils have not provided the necessary evidence to support the need for 50% of homes to meet the requirements of part M4(2), an optional Building Regulation standard.

- 3.9 Criterion (b) requires 50% of homes to meet the requirements of Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. The Councils' have not provided the necessary evidence to support the compulsory requirement to implement an optional Building Regulation.
- 3.10 The PPG (56-002) sets out '*local planning authorities will need to gather evidence to determine whether there is a need for additional standards in their area, and justify setting appropriate policies within their Local Plans*'. Pigeon acknowledges that the evidence base demonstrates that during the Plan period, in both Districts, the population of older persons will increase. However, aside from this change in the demographic of the population, the JLP does not justify how it has arrived at the proposed quantum of homes that need to meet Part M4(2).
- 3.11 The Policy also fails to consider that all new homes will be built to Part M4(1) which will mean that they are already considerably more accessible than the existing housing stock.
- 3.12 Pigeon are therefore concerned that this part of Policy LP06 is not '**justified**' and that Babergh and Mid Suffolk have not undertaken the necessary research in order to justify the requirement of 50% of the dwellings on sites of 10 units or more, to be built to Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations and the impact that this is likely to have upon the viability of schemes coming forward in the future.
- 3.13 Furthermore, reference to supported and special needs housing should be removed from Policy LP06 as it is addressed in Policy LP07.
- 3.14 For the reasons set out above, Pigeon **object** to Policy LP06 on the basis that it is not '**justified**'. To be considered sound, it is strongly suggested that the Policy is re-worded as follows:

***Policy LP06 – Mix and Type of Composition***

*1) For all major housing development proposals for ten units or more, or sites of 0.5ha or more, ~~including supported and special needs housing~~, the scheme composition:*

*a) Must accommodate 35% affordable housing to meet affordable housing need.*

*~~b) Must accommodate 50% of the dwellings which meet the requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings under Part M4(2) of Building Regulations (or any relevant regulation that supersedes and replaces).~~*

*c) Will be expected to reflect the mix and type (including bungalows) of housing needs identified in the most relevant district needs assessment evidence supported by the Council. Any bungalows provided will be required to remain in perpetuity through the removal of permitted development rights. Therefore, it may be necessary for the Local Planning Authority to apply conditions and/or request in a planning obligation/legal agreement.*



**LP07 – Supported and Special Needs Housing**  
**100 Word Summary**

*Whilst Pigeon is supportive of a Policy which addresses supported and special needs housing, Pigeon would raise an **objection** to the Policy as currently drafted on the basis that the Policy is not '**positively prepared**', '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. As drafted, the Policy fails to address the level of need set out in the SHMA (2017) or recognise the significant differences within the specialist housing sector. To be found sound, Pigeon considers that the Policy needs to be more positive reflecting the needs of an ageing population which is a key issue for the two Districts.*

- 3.15 Whilst Pigeon is supportive of a Policy which addresses supported and special needs housing, Pigeon would raise an **objection** to the Policy as currently drafted on the basis that the Policy is not '**positively prepared**', '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'.
- 3.16 In order to be considered sound, Pigeon considers that the Policy needs to be more positive towards such development reflecting the fact that meeting the needs of an ageing population is a key issue for the two Districts. This is clearly reflected in the Local Plan which alongside delivering housing, housing need and housing affordability, recognises that the increasing age of the population is a significant factor contributing to the overall level of population growth and is accordingly defined as one of the 'Key Social Issues' which the Plan seeks to address.
- 3.17 The SHMA (May 2017) identifies that the most significant feature in population change in the Districts over the Plan period is the expected growth of the over 65 age group. Given the resource demands often associated with older people, these figures are very significant and will impact on the demand for different house types and tenures in the Districts.
- 3.18 As such, Pigeon are of the opinion that this will need a proactive strategy to manage growth and meet the changing needs of residents over their lifetime or as their circumstances change. This will be best achieved by supporting a range of housing products to meet different needs and maximise choice. These will include Independent / Retirement Living, Extra Care housing, care and nursing homes and affordable housing, as well as securing market housing designed to be accessible for a range of people.
- 3.19 As currently drafted, Pigeon's view is that the Policy is too rigid in its requirements and does not provide the level of flexibility or encouragement that is necessary to address the growing needs in the two Districts. The Policy fails to address the level of need set out in the SHMA (2017) or recognise the significant differences within the specialist housing sector in respect of use class and the level of care and support provided.
- 3.20 As such, it is likely that some care provision may be appropriate on sites and locations where residential development might not be appropriate. This, in turn, may impact upon the viability of providing affordable accommodation. Furthermore, it is not always appropriate for design, financial viability or management reasons for affordable specialist units to be located on site.

- 3.21 The precise amount and type of specialist accommodation required will depend on a range of factors including the choices of individual people and households. Identifying sites for such provision will require a degree of flexibility and for the Council to work with developers to ensure an appropriate mix is delivered and in sustainable locations. Through this dialogue, it is likely that some care provision may be appropriate on sites and locations where residential development might not be appropriate.
- 3.22 Pigeon therefore consider that the Council should adopt a criteria-based policy approach which allows the provision of such facilities on the edge of, but outside, the settlement boundaries of sustainable settlements where these would not give rise to unacceptable impacts and would otherwise comply with other policies in the Plan.
- 3.23 Pigeon suggests that the wording to Policy LP07 is amended as follows:

***Policy LP07 – Supported and Special Needs Housing***

*Proposals for supported and special needs housing, including extensions, conversions and new developments, will be supported where they are:*

- a) Located on sites appropriate for residential development.*
- b) **Where possible be** within well located areas and connected to urban areas or main core villages that have sufficient access to local services and facilities (particularly health services) and public transport for long-term sustainability.*
- c) Have sufficient amenity standard, including access to open space for the residents.*
- d) Well designed to a high quality standard and meet any special needs of the residents of the property and is sympathetic to the surrounding townscape and/or landscape.*
- e) Give special regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity affected by the proposal.*
- f) Ensures heritage assets and their settings are maintained, protected and enhanced.*
- g) Meets necessary adequate shared facility standards.*
- h) Meets the requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings under Part M4(2) of Building Regulations (or any relevant regulation that supersedes and replaces).*
- Where there is an identified need, supported by up-to-date housing needs information, proposals for supported and special needs housing will be supported adjacent to the settlement boundary subject to the above standards in criteria c – h above being applied as well as the following criteria:***

*i) It would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the settlement, landscape (including the AONB), residential amenity or any heritage, environmental or community assets.*

*ii) It would not result in consolidating sporadic or ribbon development or result in loss of gaps between settlements resulting in coalescence. The cumulative impact of the proposal on the location, context and infrastructure is considered acceptable.*

*iii) Special regard shall be given to development proposals preserving and enhancing the AONB and to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity affected by the proposal.*

*iv) All new development will be expected to minimise dependence on fossil fuels and make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of climate change through implementation of sustainable construction practices and renewable energy technologies.*

#### **LP08 – Affordable, Community Led and Rural Exception Housing 100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is generally supportive of a Policy which offers flexibility for proposals outside the built-up area and provides a positive opportunity to meet housing need as a rural exception in line with the guidance in the NPPF. However, Pigeon raises an **objection** to the Policy as currently drafted on the basis that the Policy is not '**consistent with national policy**'. To be found sound, the policy needs to be drafted so that it recognises the full range of affordable tenures as set out in NPPF Annex 2 in line with Paragraph 62 of the NPPF.*

- 3.24 Pigeon is generally supportive of a Policy which offers flexibility for proposals outside the built-up area and provides a positive opportunity to meet housing need as a rural exception in line with the guidance in the NPPF. However, Pigeon raises an **objection** to the Policy as currently drafted on the basis that the Policy is not '**consistent with national policy**'.
- 3.25 Part 3 of the Policy states that a threshold of up to 35% of market housing would be supported to ensure that they are financially viable to deliver and ensure greater flexibility. However, this does not provide clarity to the development industry over issues such as location of these exception sites or what scale will be acceptable.
- 3.26 To be found sound, Part 3 of the Policy needs to be drafted so that it recognises the full range of affordable tenures as set out in NPPF Annex 2 in line with Paragraph 62 which include affordable housing for rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing (including First Homes) and other affordable routes to home ownership for those who are not able to achieve home ownership through the market.

## **Policy LP08 – Affordable, Community Led and Rural Exception Housing**

### **3. Rural Exception Housing**

*Up to 35% of market housing on rural exception sites will be supported, where it is financially necessary in order to secure and deliver additional local affordable housing<sup>FOOTNOTE</sup>. A financial appraisal must be submitted to evidence the need for open market housing to cross-subsidise affordable housing on the rural exception site.*

FOOTNOTE: As defined within the NPPF.

## **LP09 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople**

- 3.27 Pigeon recognise that Local Plans are required to plan positively to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. As such, Pigeon **supports** the approach adopted by Mid Suffolk and Babergh in their Joint Local Plan of undertaking an up-to-date Needs Assessment to inform the Local Plan. Furthermore, within Policy LP09, the principle of seeking individual sites to meet the needs of the Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population where they arise as opposed to accommodating the pitches as part of the proposed residential allocations which do not reflect individual needs is fully supported by Pigeon.

## **LP10 – Moorings, Marinas and Houseboats**

### **100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is generally supportive of a Policy which identifies suitable mooring, marina and houseboat locations for the purposes of new or extended facilities. However, Pigeon **object** to the Policy on the basis that it is not ‘justified’. The latest Needs Assessment for Boat Dwellers (2017) identifies that there are too few permanent and transit moorings in the local area. The Policy should be re-worded to include a degree of flexibility for other sites to come forward which are considered acceptable, provided they meet the criteria set out in the Policy to ensure that any impacts are adequately mitigated.*

- 3.28 Policy LP10 identifies four suitable mooring, marina and houseboat locations for the purposes of new or extended facilities. Pigeon recognises that since the Preferred Options Consultation, the policy has been revised to now include moorings, marinas and houseboats at Woolverstone, Shotley and Fox’s at Wherstead in addition to Pin Mill.
- 3.29 Paragraph 13.52 of the emerging Local Plan states that ‘the Council will work with partner agencies to identify suitable moorings to meet the needs identified in an up-to-date needs assessment’. Reviewing the latest Needs Assessment for Boat Dwellers (2017) (Core Library Reference EH03) it identifies that there are too few permanent and transit moorings in the local area. There is no reference to where the moorings are needed and Pigeon would assume that this would be identified through a future needs assessment. Yet, within the draft policy, the Council have prescribed the four locations where moorings, marinas and houseboats will be supported. Therefore, Pigeon **object** to the Policy on the basis that it is not ‘justified’.

- 3.30 Pigeon suggest a rewording of the Policy to include a degree of flexibility for other sites to come forward which are considered acceptable provided they meet the criteria set out to ensure that any impacts are adequately mitigated.

**Policy LP10 – Moorings, Marinas and Houseboats**

~~1. Outside of the defined moorings and marinas located at Pin Mill, Woolverstone, Shotley and Fox's at Wherstead, there will be no introduction or extension of moorings, marinas and houseboats or the ancillary land based activities across the Stour and Orwell estuaries SPA and Ramsar site (Suffolk Coast RAMS zone of influence).~~

**1. Proposals for new moorings, marinas and houseboats** ~~2. Within the defined moorings and marinas, planning permission will only be granted if all of the following criteria are met to the satisfaction of the LPA:~~

*a) The proposal will not result in any adverse effect (either through construction and or operation) on the integrity of the Stour and Orwell SPA and Ramsar sites and the Suffolk Coast and Heath AONB. If planning permission is granted a CEMP must be agreed prior to commencement of development to demonstrate mitigation of construction impacts.*

*b) The proposal must demonstrate appropriate measures to ensure there is no risk of deterioration in Water Framework Directive (WFD) status for the River Stour and Orwell.*

**2.** ~~3.~~ *A project level HRA will be required for each houseboat planning application and all proposals will need to demonstrate acceptable environmental protection measures and a Construction and Environment Management Plan will be required.*

*a) If planning permission is granted a Construction Environment Management Plan must be agreed prior to commencement of development to demonstrate mitigation of construction impacts.*

*b) Additionally, for houseboat proposals within the defined area of Pin Mill, Chelmondiston:*

*i. The total number of houseboats is no greater than 28 units.*

*ii. The vessels must be river worthy and capable of floating*

*iii. Access must be via a jetty*

*iv. The boat is secured to the access jetty and or a mooring post.*

*v. The applicant enters into a legal agreement for the removal of any vessel that becomes unfit for habitation or is abandoned.*

**LP11 – Self-Build and Custom-Build**

**100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is supportive of the inclusion of a Policy in relation to self-build and custom-build housing. However, Pigeon **object** to the Policy as currently worded on the basis that it is not '**positively prepared**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. Pigeon is concerned that as currently drafted it is not clear from the Policy how the 'variety of land and locational*

*interests' of those on the register will be proactively met and delivered. Therefore Pigeon suggests that the Policy should be worded to support self-build and custom-build on the edge of villages beyond settlement envelopes subject to meeting reasonable criteria.*

- 3.31 Pigeon is supportive of the inclusion of a Policy in relation to self-build and custom-build housing. However, Pigeon **object** to the Policy as currently worded on the basis that it is not '**positively prepared**' or '**consistent with national policy**'.
- 3.32 The Government is committed to increasing housing supply and helping people achieve their aspirations of owning a home. As such, the Government wants to see greater diversity in the housing market of which the self-build and custom-build sector play a key role in achieving this ambition.
- 3.33 National planning policy and practice guidance is clear that local planning authorities should identify local demand for self-build and custom-build in their areas and make provision for it in their Local Plans. Paragraph 13.56 of the emerging Local Plan states that there were 164 people on the self-build and custom-build register in April 2018 all with a variety of land and locational requirements. It is expected that the number of people on the register has increased in the last 2.5 years.
- 3.34 Pigeon is concerned that as currently drafted it is not clear from the Policy how the 'variety of land and locational interests' of those on the register will be proactively met and delivered.
- 3.35 The Council should analyse the current preferences of entries on its Register to ascertain the specific land and locational requirements in order to provide a broader context to the Policy and offer a more flexible approach to self-build and custom build provision. In Pigeon's experience, many of these requirements are for people to build their own home within or close to their existing communities and to seek individual plots in village locations. In this regard, it is considered that the Policy should set out a bespoke approach to meeting the range of needs and requirements and should ensure that this is consistent with other policies within the emerging Local Plan such as LP01.
- 3.36 Pigeon considers that the Policy lacks certainty and it is unclear how it has been informed by evidence. The critical barriers to self-build and custom-build have historically included access to suitable plots of land to build upon. Therefore Pigeon suggests that a more proactive approach is required to support self-build and custom-build on the edge of villages beyond settlement envelopes subject to meeting reasonable criteria. These could include not causing any undue harm to the character and appearance of the area or any harmful visual intrusion into the surrounding landscape, which are site specific judgements to be made on a case by case basis.
- 3.37 It is evident that there are a number of settlements defined as Hinterland or Hamlet Villages within the proposed settlement hierarchy with differing levels of services and facilities as well as variation in their proximity to higher order settlements. As such, the Council should adopt a proactive approach to promote proposals for a single group of self-build / custom build homes provided they are within proximity of a key rural service centre. This would allow for a proportionate level of development outside of the settlement boundary within Hinterland and Hamlet Villages on sites which are

sustainable and deliverable and can make a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing.

3.38 Pigeon suggests that the wording to Policy LP11 is amended as follows:

**Policy LP11 – Self-Build and Custom-Build**

*1. The Councils will support proposals for self-build/custom-build housing or proposals that make a proportion of serviced dwelling plots available for sale to self-builders or custom builders, on ~~appropriate~~ sites either within or adjacent to settlement boundaries subject to compliance with all other relevant policies in this Plan and subject to all the following criteria applied:*

~~and where in compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan.~~

*a) It would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the settlement, landscape (including the AONB), residential amenity or any heritage, environmental or community assets.*

*b) It would not result in consolidating sporadic or ribbon development or result in loss of gaps between settlements resulting in coalescence. The cumulative impact of the proposal on the location, context and infrastructure is considered acceptable.*

*c) Special regard shall be given to development proposals preserving and enhancing the AONB and to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity affected by the proposal.*

*d) All new development will be expected to minimise dependence on fossil fuels and make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of climate change through implementation of sustainable construction practices and renewable energy technologies.*

**LP12 – Employment Development**

**100 Word Summary**

*Whilst Pigeon support the principle of Policy LP12, which seeks to support economic growth within the two Districts, Pigeon raises an **objection** to the Policy as currently worded given it is not '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. Pigeon question the rationale behind the Policy which does not positively support all economic development despite it being one of the main Plan objectives alongside housing, environment and healthy communities and infrastructure. Pigeon suggests that the wording to Policy LP12 is amended in order to be more consistent with the NPPF.*

3.39 Whilst Pigeon support the principle of Policy LP12, which seeks to support economic growth within the two Districts, Pigeon raises an **objection** to the Policy as currently worded given it is not '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that '*planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt*'. Furthermore, '*significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity*'.



3.40 Pigeon therefore question the rationale behind the Policy which does not positively support all economic development despite it being one of the main Plan objectives alongside housing, environment and healthy communities and infrastructure. This is particularly the case for:

- The expansion of existing employment sites;
- The expansion of existing firms; and
- The development of small scale new employment development.

#### **Support for the expansion of existing employment sites**

3.41 Pigeon considers that the Policy fails to provide specific support and encouragement for the expansion of existing employment sites in sustainable locations to fulfil the ambitious economic strategy. The wording of Policy LP12 is not sufficiently clear in its support for the intensification of existing employment sites despite stating in the supporting text that one of the aims of the Policy is to “*maintain an environment where businesses can develop confidently with positive policies that protect their amenity and ability to thrive.*” Pigeon is of the opinion that the expansion of existing sites is a specific component of the employment land supply in the two Districts and should therefore be specifically encouraged.

#### **Support for expansion of existing firms**

3.42 The Districts support a substantial and diverse employment base which include a number of firms which are of particular importance for manufacturing, distribution and other employment service uses. However, Pigeon contends that the Policy as currently drafted does not recognise the importance of existing firms and their growth and development.

3.43 The Policy fails to provide adequate support for the expansion of existing businesses or the upgrading, improvement or expansion of existing sites. In view of this, Pigeon suggests the insertion of additional policy wording dealing specifically with the growth and expansion of existing businesses which reflects the guidance within the NPPF. This should be worded to support sustainable economic growth and expansion of all types of businesses in the two Districts to allow the growth of existing businesses without the need to relocate.

#### **Development of small scale new employment development**

3.44 This is also the case for micro and SME scale of businesses of which their importance is noted within the supporting text of Policy LP12. However, no specific provision is noted within the Policy for existing operators and it only includes support for the change of use of residential to small scale employment. In this regard, Pigeon questions what part ‘3’ of the Policy is seeking to regulate. For example, does the Policy concern changes of use of residential to employment, or change of use for ancillary residential buildings within a residential curtilage to employment? If it is the former, then Pigeon would question whether this part of the Policy is consistent with the housing objectives and whether the loss of residential to employment uses has been factored into the overall housing



provision. Pigeon therefore consider that further clarification should be provided that this factor has been taken into account.

- 3.45 The Policy should include wording to specifically support micro and SME businesses in recognition of their contribution to employment provision. As noted within the supporting text to Policy LP12, the suitable expansion of these businesses plays a vital role in the local economy.

#### **Changes of Uses within E Class**

- 3.46 Part '2' of Policy LP12 has been inserted to address uses within the E use class which came into force on 1 September 2020. There is a transitional period for the implementation of the new use classes until 31 July 2021, to allow for a consultation on permitted development associated with these new use classes to take place in 2021. Notwithstanding this consultation, Pigeon questions the insertion of this paragraph into the Policy given that uses within the E class can move freely between uses, as it is permitted development, and therefore a planning application for change of use would not be required. As such, this point is '**not consistent with national planning policy**'.

- 3.47 Overall, the NPPF requires employment policies to be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to enable a rapid response to unforeseen changes in economic circumstance. Events in 2020 have demonstrated the critical importance of being able to do this in an effective manner. Given the NPPF's emphasis on securing sustainable economic growth and the need to respond to current economic conditions Pigeon considers that a criteria based approach is required for new employment development. As such, proposals for economic development outside the identified employment areas should be permitted where they meet sustainable development criteria and satisfy reasonable amenity and transport accessibility requirements.

- 3.48 In summary, Policy LP12 does not currently meet the objectives set out within the NPPF and so should be revised so that it adopts a more positive, criteria-based, approach which recognises all types of new employment development with supporting text that is fully responsive to changing needs over time.

- 3.49 This should include supporting a range of new employment opportunities in sustainable locations which accord with the Development Strategy (e.g. located within the Main Towns, A14 and A12 corridors), particularly where good accessibility to main transport routes is available and where the development is compatible with adjoining uses, would not give rise to any adverse impacts on existing residential amenity or otherwise conflict with other existing land uses.

- 3.50 In addition to the points raised above, Pigeon suggests that an additional Part be added to Policy LP12 as follows:

#### **Policy LP12 – Employment Development**

*4. To promote sustainable growth through maintaining flexibility in the provision of employment sites permission, will be granted on land for employment generating uses, subject to the following criteria:*

- *The site is located in one or more of the following areas:*
  - *Ipswich Fringe;*

- *Adjoining or is well related to the settlement boundary of a Main Town;*
- *Located adjacent or well related to either the A14 or A12;*
- *The proposed development and use will not result in significant detrimental impact to the environment; or*
- *The proposed development and use will not be detrimental to the amenity of adjoining residents.*

### **LP13 – Safeguarding Economic Opportunities**

#### **100 Word Summary**

*Whilst Pigeon supports the principle of Policy LP13, which seeks to support economic growth within the Districts, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the Policy as currently worded as it is not '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. At present, the Policy wording is not sufficiently clear and represents a restrictive approach. The NPPF requires employment policies to be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstance. Pigeon suggests that the wording to Policy LP12 is amended in order to be more consistent with the NPPF.*

- 3.51 Policy LP13 seeks to ensure an adequate supply of land and premises for economic growth and aims to ensure that a continuous range and diversity of appropriate employment sites and premises are available throughout the plan period.
- 3.52 Whilst Pigeon supports the principle of Policy LP13, which seeks to support economic growth within the Districts, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the Policy as currently worded as it is not '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'.
- 3.53 Pigeon is specifically concerned with Part '3' of the Policy which concerns loss of employment land or premises to non-employment generating uses. Pigeon is of the view that part '3' of the Policy is unnecessary and therefore cannot be justified. If it has been clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the land or premises then there should not be any reason to compensate for its loss.
- 3.54 At present, the Policy wording is not sufficiently clear and represents a restrictive approach. The NPPF requires employment policies to be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstance. The NPPF also promotes the effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses.
- 3.55 Paragraph 118 (d) of the NPPF states that planning policies should "*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet the identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.*" In view of this, Pigeon suggest that Part '3' is deleted to enable appropriate flexibility to ensure that the Policy is justified and not unduly restrictive and consistent with the NPPF.

#### ***Policy LP13 – Safeguarding Economic Opportunities***

*1. In order to protect the operation of existing businesses, proposals for development in the vicinity of land and premises in lawful business,*

*commercial and employment activity may only be approved where such activity would not be compromised through amenity conflicts arising from the proposed development.*

*2. The Councils shall resist the loss of identified employment sites, as well as other land and premises in lawful employment/commercial use. Proposals that would lead to the full or partial loss of employment sites or premises will be required to demonstrate:*

*a) That the possibility of re-using or redeveloping the land for other commercial, employment, business or community uses have been explored by a period of sustained marketing for 6 months by an independent qualified assessor. This must be undertaken at a realistic asking price, on a range of terms and in an appropriate format. The approach for the marketing campaign must be agreed by the Development Management case officer from the outset;*

*b) The proposal would not give rise to amenity conflicts with existing or proposed employment uses/activities in the vicinity of the site.*

~~*3. Where relocation of an employment use is proposed which would result in full or partial loss of the existing employment site to an alternative use the proposer will need to demonstrate that there would be an overriding environmental or community benefit from redevelopment or change to another business or community use, which outweighs the benefit of the current employment use continuing. In this situation the Council may also seek contributions to help offset the economic impact of the loss of business opportunities. Contributions may include any combination of:*~~

~~*a) Alternative land or premises;*~~

~~*b) Financial contributions towards infrastructure installations to enable the delivery of replacement employment premises on Strategic Employment Sites;*~~

~~*c) Financial contributions towards skills, training and qualifications for displaced employees.*~~

## **LP14 – Town Centre and Retail**

### **100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon recognises and welcomes the changes to the wording of this Policy since the Regulation 18 consultation. The policy is more flexible, recognising the changing nature of the high street retail market. Notwithstanding the changes, Pigeon would **object** to point 2 of the policy on the basis that it is not '**consistent with national policy**'. Policy LP14 should clarify the range of uses permitted in town centre locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre, in line with the full range of 'Main Town Centre Uses' as identified in Annex 2 of the NPPF.*

- 3.56 Pigeon recognises and welcomes the changes to the wording of this Policy since the Regulation 18 consultation. The policy is more flexible, recognising the changing nature of the high street retail market, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exacerbated existing concerns about the survival of the high street.
- 3.57 Notwithstanding the changes, Pigeon would **object** to point 2 of the policy on the basis that it is not '**consistent with national policy**'.
- 3.58 In line with Paragraph 85 of the NPPF, planning policies should clarify the range of uses permitted in town centre locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre. This should include the full range of 'Main Town Centre Uses' as identified in Annex 2 of the NPPF as well as public facilities and public services that should be in town centres, public space, and other uses that contribute to their viability and vitality in the future. Town centres should be viewed in the context as being places to meet, eat, live, work and pursue leisure and cultural activities, as well as places to shop.
- 3.59 The MHLG have a current consultation on changes to permitted development rights which will affect uses found in Town Centre locations. The consultation expires in January 2021 and as such, the changes arising from that consultation will need to be considered as part of this Policy, including the ability for the new Class E uses to convert to residential use without the need for planning permission.
- 3.60 To address the comments raised and ensure that the Policy is sound, Pigeon suggest revised wording for Part '2' of the Policy:

**Policy LP14 – Town Centre and Retail**

*2. To maintain vitality and viability of town centres, proposals **within Town Centre Boundaries**;*

*a. **Will be supported where they include Main Town Centre Uses and complementary residential uses**; That include 'above the shop' homes, and/or a mix of retail and other leisure and cultural activity, including support for the evening economy, and improvements to the public realm (such as tree planting and green infrastructure) will be encouraged.*

*b. That ensure new and existing open spaces, community facilities, including meeting places that are accessible to all will be supported in principle.*

**LP15 – Tourism and Leisure**

- 3.61 Pigeon is supportive of Policy LP15 which promotes new tourism and leisure facilities and the expansion of existing ones, which is in line with Paragraph 83 of the NPPF. However, Pigeon raises an **objection** to the Policy as currently worded on the basis that it is not '**consistent with policy**'.
- 3.62 The Policy should allow for ancillary residential accommodation to be brought forward where it would assist with the viability of the business and/or to enable new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation) which could compliment the principal use, as allowed for in Paragraph 81 of the NPPF.

3.63 To address the comments raised and ensure that the Policy is sound, Pigeon suggests an additional criterion (h) under Part 2 of this Policy:

**Policy LP15 – Tourism and Leisure.**

*2. In addition to the criteria above, proposals in the countryside may be supported where the proposal:*

*a) Increases access, enjoyment and interpretation of the countryside, appropriately, sensitively and sustainably;*

*b) Provides appropriate parking and access and ensures the associated traffic movement would not compromise highway safety;*

*c) Improves accessibility for existing settlements, which are not well served by public transport;*

*d) Reflects the intrinsic quality and respects the character of the countryside by having regard to the Councils Landscape Guidance and any other relevant documents endorsed by the LPA;*

*e) The proposal must follow a hierarchy of seeking firstly to avoid impacts, mitigate for impacts so as to make them insignificant on the local ecology, biodiversity, trees and hedgerows, or as a last resort compensate for losses that cannot be avoided or mitigated for;*

*f) Is of an appropriate scale for their context; ~~and~~*

*g) Safeguarding and where possible enhancing the historic interest of the asset including its setting; and,*

*h) Requires some residential accommodation as an ancillary part of the scheme either where it is financially necessary to secure and deliver the tourism or leisure use or where it enables new and flexible working practices such as live/work units.*

**LP17 - Environmental Protection**

3.64 Pigeon is supportive in principle with the aim of Policy LP17 in that it seeks to ensure that developments are environmentally sustainable. However, Pigeon raises an **objection** to Part '3b.' of the Policy as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is overly prescriptive and therefore not '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'.

3.65 The Policy specifically refers to 'enhancing' groundwater, surface water features and aquatic pollution which is considered an onerous requirement which is wholly unjustified. As such, Pigeon suggests the Policy is reworded to remove the reference to 'enhancing' and refer to protecting groundwater rather than setting strict standards.

## **Policy LP17 - Environmental Protection**

### **3. WATER**

*a. Development will be required to comply with the relevant SCC Construction Surface Water Management Plan.*

*b. Development proposals will need to demonstrate that it protects ~~and enhances~~ groundwater, surface water features and must not lead to a deterioration in the quality of the environment to help achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.*

## **LP18 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

### **100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon recognise the contribution that development can make to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. However, Pigeon have some concerns with the detailed wording of the Policy and **object** to it on the basis that it is not '**consistent with national policy**'. In order to be found sound, a number of amendments are required to the Policy as set out in the full representation below to ensure that biodiversity on sites can be maintained and enhanced.*

- 3.66 Pigeon recognise the contribution that development can make to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. However, Pigeon have some concerns with the detailed wording of the Policy and **object** to it on the basis that it is not '**consistent with national policy**'.
- 3.67 Part '1' of the Policy sets out a hierarchy of how development should approach biodiversity. This is not consistent with Paragraph 175 of the NPPF or with the PPG, which set out that the mitigation hierarchy should be avoidance, mitigation and then to compensate. The hierarchy at point one, inserts the need to enhance habitats as the first step, which should be removed to make this part of the Policy sound.
- 3.68 The final sentence of criterion 2(c) is that '*enhancement for biodiversity should be commensurate with the scale of development*'. Pigeon suggests that this sentence be removed from the Policy. The enhancement for biodiversity should be on the basis of the findings of an up to date Ecological Appraisal and relate to a site specific assessment, rather than the scale of development.
- 3.69 Criterion 2(d) refers to the '*enhancement and management of local networks of biodiversity with wildlife corridors that connect areas*'. Whilst this ambition is supported by Pigeon, the Councils do need to recognise that the enhancement and management of such networks are likely to fall into multiple land ownerships and therefore, schemes should only do so where possible. Furthermore, the term '*local networks of biodiversity*' are not defined in the Plan. This term is considered to be ambiguous and is likely to lead to difficulties in the application of the Policy in the determination of planning applications. This would therefore be in conflict with Paragraph 16(d) of the NPPF.
- 3.70 Criterion 2(e) refers to schemes identifying and pursuing opportunities for securing the equivalent of a minimum 10% increase in net biodiversity gain. This part of the Policy needs to identify that it encourages these opportunities, in line with the NPPF and PPG. It cannot be compulsory. Pigeon supports the recognition that the Council will support

'biodiversity offsetting' and reference is made to delivering a net gain in accordance with adopted protocols. However it is not clear what these 'adopted protocols' are and what the Council propose to put in place with respect to off-site measures and credits that will be considered against any future proposals.

- 3.71 Criterion 2(f) refers to the need for schemes to apply additional measures to assist with the recovery of protected species as listed at Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This list contains 942 species, which are protected under separate environmental legislation. The inclusion of this criterion is unnecessary and is addressed within Part '3' of the draft policy, as confirmed through footnote 35 of the Consultation Document.
- 3.72 As such, Pigeon suggest the Policy is reworded as suggested below to pick up the above concerns:

**Policy LP18 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

1) All development should follow a hierarchy of seeking firstly to; ~~enhance habitats,~~ avoid impacts, mitigate against harmful impacts, or as a last resort compensate for losses that cannot be avoided or mitigated for. Adherence to the hierarchy should be demonstrated.

2c) Conserve, restore and contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity and geological conservation interests including priority habitats and species. Enhancement for biodiversity should be commensurate with the scale of development.

2d) *Where possible, plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of local networks of biodiversity with wildlife corridors that connect areas. Where possible, link to existing green infrastructure networks and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation so that these ecological networks will be more resilient to current and future pressures.*

2e) *Where possible, new development should provide ~~identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains, equivalent of a minimum 10% increase,~~ for biodiversity that are proportionate to the scale and nature of the scheme. Where biodiversity assets cannot be retained or enhanced on site, the Councils will support 'biodiversity offsetting' to deliver a net gain in biodiversity off-site in accordance with adopted protocols.*

~~f) Apply additional measures to assist with the recovery of species listed on S41 of the NERC Act 2006.~~

**LP19 – Landscape  
100 Word Summary**

Pigeon is broadly supportive of a Policy which seeks to protect, and where possible, enhance the local landscape, however, Pigeon does **object** to Policy LP19 as currently worded on the basis it is not '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'. The Policy wording needs to be amended to remove reference to 'landscape value' because the



*protection afforded by the current wording of the Policy is neither justified nor commensurate with national guidance.*

- 3.73 Pigeon is broadly supportive of a Policy which seeks to protect, and where possible, enhance the local landscape, however, Pigeon does **object** to Policy LP19 as currently worded on the basis it is not '**justified**' or '**consistent with national policy**'.
- 3.74 Criterion 'c' of the policy requires development to not only enhance and protect landscape character, but also landscape value.
- 3.75 Paragraph 170 in the NPPF advises that valued landscape should be protected "*in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*". Pigeon strongly considers that having 'value' and being a 'valued landscape' are not one and the same. If the Council is referring to '*valued landscape*' in the context of the NPPF then this should be made clear and be accompanied by a robust evidence base to support the justification. Pigeon is of the view that having some features of value, is not the same as possessing landscape value worthy of the status afforded to valued landscapes under Paragraph 170 of the NPPF.
- 3.76 The Policy wording therefore introduces the requirement of protecting or enhancing landscape value, however such considerations are not reflective of any national guidance. Furthermore, the draft Policy fails to justify or define the elevated 'value' attributed to landscapes. For these reasons, Policy LP19 should be reworded as the protection afforded is neither justified nor commensurate with national guidance.

**Policy LP19 – Landscape**

*1. To protect and enhance landscape character development must:*

*c. ~~take into consideration Enhance and protect landscape character and values and heritage assets such as;~~ locally characteristic landscape features, for example by use of materials which complement the local individual landscape character, archaeological and historic patterns of settlement and land use<sup>37</sup> and designations; being demonstrably informed by local guidance, in particular the Council's Joint Landscape Guidance, the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment.*

**LP20 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

**100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is broadly supportive of a Policy which seeks to conserve and enhance the AONBs within the District, in line with Paragraph 172 of the NPPF. However, Pigeon does raise an **objection** to the Policy as drafted, in that it is not '**justified**'. The Policy as worded does not differentiate between different parts of the AONBs and their visual and landscape quality. Certain parts of the AONBs may be less susceptible to certain types of development than other areas. The wording of the Policy should be amended to enable the visual and landscape quality of the AONB to be considered.*

- 3.77 Pigeon is broadly supportive of a Policy which seeks to conserve and enhance the AONBs within the District, in line with Paragraph 172 of the NPPF.



3.78 However, Pigeon does raise an **objection** to the Policy as drafted, in that it is not **'justified'**. The Policy as worded does not differentiate between different parts of the AONBs and their visual and landscape quality. As an example, taking the AONB around the Orwell Crossing, the qualities of this area were different when it was designated, compared to the present day, given the construction of the bridge in recent decades. As such, this area of the AONB may be less susceptible to certain types of development than other areas. The visual and landscape quality should be considered as part of the Policy. Pigeon would suggest that an objective way of assessing this would be to require planning applications to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, which using a prescribed methodology, will identify an impact on the wider landscape and identify whether parts of the AONBs can accommodate appropriate development, in accordance with the remaining criteria of the Policy. Pigeon also suggests that an additional criterion (f) is inserted at part '1' of the Policy.

***Policy LP20 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty***

***Insert 1:***

***F: Any planning application should be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that identifies the impact of the development on the wider landscape and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.***

**LP23 – Agricultural Land to Residential Land**

3.79 Policy LP23 concerns the change of use of agricultural land to residential garden land. Pigeon raise concerns with the draft Policy as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is considered unnecessarily onerous and therefore not **'justified'** or **'consistent with national policy'**. Pigeon considers that the Policy requirements are not proportionate and as such the Policy should be simplified and include a criteria-based approach to take into account the following key considerations:

- Size and scale;
- The aspect and location of the site;
- The presence of landscape features;
- The extent to which high quality agricultural land would be taken out of productive use.

3.80 Pigeon suggests that the wording to Policy LP23 is amended as follows:

***Policy LP23 – Agricultural Land to Residential Land***

***1. The change in use of agricultural land to residential garden land or land ancillary to a residential dwelling may be permitted subject to:***

***a. The size and scale of the land being no more than 50% of the size of the residential plot to which it relates;***

*b. That the quantum of land to be changed forms part of a larger agricultural use, whose ability to remain productive is still achievable; and*

~~*a. The location, size and scale of the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the landscape characteristics and biodiversity of the locality;*~~

~~*b. The proposal would not result in the irreversible loss of best and most versatile agricultural land;*~~

*c. The site must not intrude into the open countryside, or result in the loss of trees and hedgerows which contribute to the character of the area.*

~~*d. The site must not threaten designated or Priority Habitats Sites or threaten the viability of farm holdings due to the breaking up of agricultural land;*~~

~~*e. The proposal must not be or become unacceptably intrusive through intensification and therefore damaging to the character of the countryside setting or nearby residential setting;*~~

~~*f. There must be no significant adverse impact on public rights of way or the areas of urban/rural transition that provides the setting of settlements in the countryside; and*~~

~~*g. In all cases the Local Planning Authority will consider the possible cumulative impacts of separate individual changes as a material consideration.*~~

## **LP25 – Sustainable Construction and Design**

### **100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is supportive of the JLP and its intention to support proposals for sustainable construction and design. However, Pigeon raise an **objection** to Policy LP25 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is overly prescriptive and therefore not ‘**justified**’ or ‘**consistent with national policy**’. As a broad aim, the Council should be ‘encouraging’ developers to deliver schemes which give rise to minimal environmental impact and in line with Paragraph: 002 of the Planning Practice Guidance. As such, the Policy wording should be amended to reflect this as set out in response to the question below.*

- 3.81 Pigeon is supportive of the JLP and its intention to support proposals for sustainable construction and design. However, Pigeon raise an **objection** to Policy LP25 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is overly prescriptive and therefore not ‘**justified**’ or ‘**consistent with national policy**’.
- 3.82 As a broad aim, the Council should be ‘encouraging’ developers to deliver schemes which give rise to minimal environmental impact and in line with Paragraph: 002 of the Planning Practice Guidance.
- 3.83 In recognition that new Building Regulation compliant buildings will be far more energy efficient than the existing housing stock in any event, the Policy should be more flexible and overall encourage schemes to exceed Building Regulations where practicable, rather than setting specific targets which clearly have the ability to impact on the deliverability of the schemes.

- 3.84 Furthermore, conflicts between different parts of the policy need to be addressed in order to make this Policy effective. This relates to Part 3(a) and 6, where there are different references to the litres of water per person per day that should be achieved in new residential development.
- 3.85 Pigeon suggest the following amendments to Parts '3' and '6' the Policy in order to make it sound:

***Policy LP25 – Sustainable Construction and Design***

*3. All new residential development of more than 10 dwellings should achieve current Building Regulations in respect of:*

- Reduction in CO2 emission;*
- Water efficiency standards; and,*
- Energy efficiency standards.*

*Where Building Regulations are exceeded, this will be supported.*

*4. All new residential development is required to:*

~~*a. Achieve reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 19% below for the Target Emissions Rate of*~~

~~*the 2013 Edition of 2010 Building Regulations (Part L) or any subsequent more recent*~~

~~*legislation or council policy which would lead to a greater reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions';*~~

~~*b. Meet the higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in building regulations part G2 (or any subsequent more recent legislation);*~~

~~*a. e. Demonstrate climate change adaptation and mitigation measures by adopting effective*~~ *considering the following* design principles (including shading, landscaping, site layout and building orientation);

*b. be designed to minimise the energy demand of the building through maximising natural sunlight and ventilation, effectively utilising solar gains and to help buildings respond to winter and summer temperatures and incorporate flood mitigation measures, such as sustainable urban drainage systems;*

~~*d. Energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, air tightness and efficient building services), with a proactive approach to improving on the minimum standards specified in the Building Regulations;*~~

*c. e. On-site renewable and other low carbon energy generation (NB: the energy statement should investigate the technical feasibility and financial viability of the options available and the CO<sub>2</sub> savings achieved with each to allow the greatest CO<sub>2</sub> reduction is selected);*

*d. ~~f.~~ Development that incorporates a high level of building materials with low embodied carbon will be encouraged; and*

*e. ~~g.~~ That the risks associated with future climate change have been planned for as part of the layout of the scheme and design of its buildings to ensure its longer-term resilience.*

*5. ~~4.~~ In meeting the above, all major developments<sup>42</sup> are required to submit a Sustainability Design and Construction Statement that demonstrates how the principles set out in 3c)-3g) will be incorporated into the design of the development.*

*6. ~~5.~~ Non-residential development of 1,000sqm and above must achieve a minimum of BREEAM 'Very Good' standard or equivalent. Developers will be expected to provide certification evidence of the levels for BREEAM at design stage and on completion of development. All new developments will also be expected to meet the higher water efficiency standards as set out in 2b).*

*~~6. All residential developments are encouraged to achieve 100 litres per person per day. This is in addition to criterion 3.b in accordance with recommendation from Anglian Water. Water reuse and recycling and rainwater and stormwater harvesting and other suitable measures should be incorporated wherever feasible to reduce demand on mains water supply.'~~*

## **LP26 – Design and Residential Amenity**

### **100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon supports a Policy which seeks to secure development designed to a high standard. However, Pigeon raises an **objection** with the current wording of the Policy LP26 on the basis that it is not '**justified**' insofar as it sets out a one size fits all approach to design and that the wording of the Policy stifles innovative design. Pigeon is concerned that the Policy as it currently stands is disproportionate and that each scheme should be taken on its own merits and considered using the Policy requirements rather than a standardised approach to design.*

- 3.86 Pigeon supports a Policy which seeks to secure development designed to a high standard. However, Pigeon has concerns with Policy LP26 insofar as it sets out a one size fits all approach to design and that the wording of the Policy stifles innovative design.
- 3.87 Pigeon is concerned that the Policy as it currently stands is disproportionate and that each scheme should be taken on its own merits and considered using the Policy requirements rather than a standardised approach to design. Point 1 (a) requires new development proposals to respond to and safeguard existing character/context. There is no reference to enhancing the existing character and context.
- 3.88 Criterion 1(f) sets out that '*where relevant and necessary, schemes should accommodate M4(2) standards*'. This repeats policy requirements elsewhere within the Local Plan and by not quantifying in this policy, what is deemed to be relevant and necessary is only creating ambiguity over the application of this policy. This criterion should be removed.

- 3.89 At criterion 2(e), the policy refers to schemes of exceptional design and/or development within a sensitive area/landscape as needing to undertake a design review and adhere to the Building for Life Criteria. The terms ‘exceptional design’ and ‘sensitive area/landscape’ need to be defined within the emerging Local Plan, so that it can be applied correctly. Furthermore, the wording appears to require a scheme of any size to undertake this review if of exceptional design and/or it is located in a sensitive area/landscape. The requirement to undertake a design review and adherence to the Building for Life Criteria is therefore considered onerous. There are no indication of costs and the implications for the viability of development by including such requirements. Therefore, Pigeon raises an **objection** with the current wording of the Policy LP26 on the basis that it is not ‘**justified**’.
- 3.90 Pigeon is concerned that the imposition of such standards as set out in Policy LP26 will have an impact upon the delivery of housing developments. The Policy requirements are considered to be overly prescriptive and the need for such standards does not appear to be robustly justified by evidence.

### **LP27 – Energy Sources, Storage and Distribution**

- 3.91 Pigeon is supportive of a Policy which encourages and facilitates the development of renewable energy in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts which is in line with national policy. However, Pigeon raise an **objection** with the current wording of the Policy, on the basis that it is not ‘**justified**’. Part ‘2’ requires sites for energy development schemes to be restored when energy generation ceases or becomes non-functioning for a period of six months. Pigeon consider that this requirement is not ‘justified’ as it applies a blanket approach to all sites. Pigeon is of the view that each site should be subject to their individual site specific circumstances which should have been addressed via conditions attached to the original consent. Pigeon therefore suggests a rewording of the Policy to remove part ‘2’ of the Policy as set out below:

#### ***Policy LP27 – Energy Sources, Storage and Distribution***

~~*2. The local planning authority will use planning obligations attached to planning consents for energy development schemes to ensure the site is restored when energy generation ceases or becomes non-functioning for a period of six months.*~~

### **LP28 – Water Resource and Infrastructure**

#### **100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon supports a Policy which encourages the construction of infrastructure that leads to a reduction in the amount of water released to the sewer system. However, Pigeon **object** to Policy LP28 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is not ‘**justified**’. Pigeon consider the requirements of Policy LP28 are overly prescriptive and therefore a degree of flexibility is required. Pigeon suggests that the wording to Policy LP28 is amended in order to accommodate this flexibility.*

- 3.92 Pigeon supports a Policy which encourages the construction of infrastructure that leads to a reduction in the amount of water released to the sewer system. However, Pigeon **object** to Policy LP28 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is not ‘**justified**’.

- 3.93 Part '1' refers to 'holistic water management'. Pigeon is aware that this is a pioneering way of water management to develop new ways of delivering better flood alleviation, more reliable, higher quality public water resources and improved water based ecosystems. As such, whilst the new ways will be beneficial in the future there are many practical and regulatory obstacles to overcome, and success will require a shared investment in water resources by all parties.
- 3.94 Part '7' refers to all proposals demonstrating environmental policy measures. This is ambiguous as it does not identify if these are environmental policies within the Local Plan or under other legislation. If it is the latter, then it does not need to be set out in this Policy as it will be addressed via other regulatory measures. Furthermore, part '7' sets out that a CEMP will be required prior to commencement. If a CEMP is required prior to commencement, then this will be considered as part of a formal planning application and if needed can be conditioned providing that the imposition of a condition meets the tests set out in Paragraph 55 of the NPPF.
- 3.95 Pigeon consider the requirements of Policy LP28 are overly prescriptive and therefore a degree of flexibility is required.
- 3.96 For the reasons set out above, Pigeon objects to Policy LP28 on the basis that it is not justified. To be considered sound, it is suggested that the Policy is re-worded as follows:

***Policy LP28 – Water Resource and Infrastructure***

*Development will be supported where it:*

*1. ~~Takes into consideration~~ ~~Conforms to~~ the principle of Holistic Water Management including the use of appropriate water efficiency and re-use measures, together with surface water drainage which provides community and environmental benefits;*

*~~7. All proposals must demonstrate Environmental Policies measures and will require a CEMP to be agreed prior commencement.~~*

***LP29 – Flood Risk and Vulnerability***

***100 Word Summary***

*Pigeon supports a Policy which seeks to ensure that new development is appropriately located with respect to Flood Risk and minimise the risk of development being adversely affected by drainage issues. However, Pigeon **object** to Policy LP29 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is not '**justified**'. The Policy needs to be re-drafted in such a way that the requirements are proportionate to the scale of development and can be met by future applicants on land within their legal control and to the adopted standards of statutory undertakers.*

- 3.97 Pigeon supports a Policy which seeks to ensure that new development is appropriately located with respect to Flood Risk and minimise the risk of development being adversely affected by drainage issues. However, Pigeon **object** to Policy LP29 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is not '**justified**'.

- 3.98 Part '4' needs to emphasise that this requirement is only where possible. It should be recognised that a new development may be adapting existing drainage systems and therefore, these cannot necessarily be brought above ground. Equally, as part of new developments, the type of SuDS system is determined in conjunction with the Lead Local Flood Authority who will specify appropriate features on a site by site basis.
- 3.99 Part '5' of the Policy requires new development proposals to detail how on-site surface water drainage will be managed so that it does not increase flooding elsewhere. This is in accordance with the NPPF. It goes on to specify that this includes the cumulative impact of minor developments. As this part of the policy requires all new development to detail on-site surface water drainage, it applies to minor developments too. Therefore, there should not be a requirement on developers of other schemes to pick up the requirements of other minor schemes. As such, to make this policy sound, this requirement should be removed from the wording of the Policy.
- 3.100 Part '8' requires details of the maintenance and adoption of the features as part of a planning application. This is not reasonable and should not be required at the application stage. The environment around adoption of assets is constantly evolving and addressed by other Acts and legislation which are best placed to determine this type of information. As such, to make this policy sound, this requirement should be removed from the wording of the Policy:

**Policy LP29 – Flood Risk and Vulnerability**

*4. ~~Wherever possible, above ground, appropriate SuDS will be~~ ~~are~~ ~~incorporated within new developments in discussion with the relevant drainage authority. The SuDS features will wherever possible, and take opportunities to provide multifunctional benefits, including biodiversity, landscape, amenity and water quality enhancement.~~*

*5. ~~Proposals are submitted appropriate to the scale of development detailing how on-site surface water drainage will be managed so as to not cause, or increase flooding elsewhere. This includes the cumulative impact of minor developments.~~*

*8. ~~Further details of maintenance and adoption by an appropriate body are provided at application stage.~~*

**LP30 – Designated Open Spaces  
100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon support Policy LP30 which seeks to provide access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. However, Pigeon **object** to Policy LP30 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is not '**consistent with national policy**'. Pigeon consider that whilst new developments have a role to play in meeting wider needs it is not consistent with national policy to require new development to address these wider deficits and these should be addressed through the Open Space Strategy within wider projects or within the Green Infrastructure Strategy.*



- 3.101 Pigeon support a Policy which seeks to provide access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation and recognise the importance the contribution open spaces can play in the health and wellbeing of communities. However, Pigeon **object** to Policy LP30 as currently worded on the basis that the Policy is not **‘consistent with national policy’**.
- 3.102 Whilst Pigeon support the provision of open space as part of residential development, Pigeon specifically have concerns with regard to part ‘2’ of Policy LP30 which requires new developments over 1ha to address existing open space deficits. Pigeon consider that whilst new developments have a role to play in meeting wider needs it is not consistent with national policy to require new development to address these wider deficits and these should be addressed through the Open Space Strategy within wider projects or within the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Pigeon therefore suggests a rewording of the Policy to remove part ‘2’ of the Policy as set out below:

**Policy LP30 – Designated Open Spaces**

~~2. Developments in excess of 1 hectare will be required to provide on-site open space provision to meet identified needs/deficits, unless there is a Council preference to make improvements to existing open space within the locality in an equally or more accessible location than the proposed development.~~

**LP31 – Services and Facilities within the Community**

- 3.103 In principle Pigeon support the aim of Policy LP31 to support and safeguard key services and facilities within the Districts, but would raise concerns in respect of criterion 2(b) of the Policy which states *“The applicant can sufficiently demonstrate that the service or facility is not viable or valued by the community, either in its current or future form and is not needed for an alternative community use.”* Paragraph 16 (d) of the NPPF specifies that there is a requirement for Plans to *“contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals.”* As such, Pigeon request that criterion 2(b) is reworded to remove the reference to ‘valued’ which is considered ambiguous and instead replaced with *“not needed or required”* as follows:

**Policy LP31 – Services and Facilities within the Community**

*(2b) “The applicant can sufficiently demonstrate that the service or facility is not viable, **needed or required** ~~valued~~ by the community, either in its current or future form and is not needed for an alternative community use.”*

**LP32 – Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport**

**100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is supportive of a Policy which aims to ensure accessibility for all and to deliver sustainable development. However, Pigeon raise an **‘objection’** to the wording of the Policy as drafted. Certain aspects of the Policy are unduly onerous and are not **‘justified’** or **‘consistent with national policy’**. As such, Pigeon request that the Policy is reworded to refer to development putting in place measures to actively encourage and promote all active modes of sustainable transport and that the Policy identifies what constitutes a **‘significant increase in transport movements’**.*



- 3.104 Pigeon is supportive of a Policy which aims to ensure accessibility for all and to deliver sustainable development. However, Pigeon raise an **'objection'** to the wording of the Policy as drafted. Certain aspects of the Policy are unduly onerous and are not **'justified'** or **'consistent with national policy'**.
- 3.105 Part 1 of the Policy states "Development proposals that are expected to, or likely to cause a significant increase in transport movements" will need to fulfil certain criteria. Whilst this is in line with Paragraph 111 of the NPPF, the policy should identify what will constitute a 'significant increase' so that it is transparent to future users of this policy and will remove any ambiguity, in accordance with Paragraph 16 (d) of the NPPF.
- 3.106 Part 2 of the Policy requires "All developments to maximise the uptake in sustainable and active transport..." Whilst Pigeon support this approach they consider that developments can only make appropriate provision to facilitate the use of sustainable transport. It cannot control how the transport modes are subsequently used, that is outside of their remit. As such, Pigeon request that the Policy is reworded to refer to development putting in place measures to actively encourage and promote all active modes of sustainable transport as set out below:

***Policy LP32 – Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport***

*All developments are expected to actively encourage and promote to future occupants opportunities to use to maximise the uptake in sustainable and active transport in accordance with the transport hierarchy. This will prioritise the following modes of transport in order – walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. Where possible, active travel to be tied in with the green infrastructure network thereby providing additional positive effects for access to green spaces and wildlife habitats.*

**LP33 – Managing Infrastructure Provision**

**100 Word Summary**

*Pigeon is supportive of a Policy which requires new development to be supported by necessary infrastructure. However, Pigeon raise an **'objection'** to the wording of certain aspects of the Policy which are unduly onerous, and that as currently drafted the Policy is not **'justified'** or **'consistent with national policy'**. Pigeon specifically questions the requirement for cumulative impacts in the context of strategic infrastructure provision. However, Pigeon consider that cumulative impacts should ultimately be considered as part of the Local Plan in its associated Sustainability Appraisal and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.*

- 3.107 Policy LP33 requires that new development must be supported by necessary infrastructure. Pigeon fully supports this objective and are involved in numerous schemes across Suffolk that will deliver a range of community benefits. However, Pigeon raise an **'objection'** to the wording of certain aspects of the Policy which are unduly onerous, and that as currently drafted the Policy is not **'justified'** or **'consistent with national policy'**.
- 3.108 Pigeon is concerned with Part '2' of the Policy which states "Development proposals must consider all of the infrastructure implications of a scheme including existing

*commitments to infrastructure provision and cumulative impacts if the proposal forms one of a number of growth projects in a locality or infrastructure catchment area.”* Pigeon specifically questions the requirement for cumulative impacts in the context of strategic infrastructure provision. Pigeon appreciate the importance of good infrastructure and are committed to providing well-connected schemes. However, they believe that cumulative impacts should ultimately be considered as part of the Local Plan in its associated Sustainability Appraisal and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- 3.109 It would be unreasonable to expect individual developers to consider this requirement on the basis that the cumulative impact should have informed the Local Plan from the outset. It is frequently the case that much of the infrastructure is not in place in the early phases of a development. The possibility that planning permission for new homes will not be approved until the infrastructure is in place represents a significant risk to the delivery of the housing targets. In light of this, Pigeon therefore suggests a rewording of the Policy to remove the reference requiring development to consider cumulative impacts on the basis that it is not ‘justified’.

***Policy LP33 – Managing Infrastructure Provision***

~~*2. Development proposals must consider all of the infrastructure implications of a scheme including existing commitments to infrastructure provision and cumulative impacts if the proposal forms one of a number of growth projects in a locality or infrastructure catchment area.*~~

*Development proposals must be brought forward in accordance with site specific infrastructure requirements as identified and set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.*

**LP34 – Health and Education Provision**

**100 Word Summary**

*Policy LP34 requires new development to provide for the educational needs and healthcare provision of new residents. Pigeon supports a Policy for delivery of health and education provision. However, Pigeon raise an ‘objection’ to the current wording. It states that the Council will apply the presumption in favour of development and that they will engage in pre-application discussions with promoters. As currently drafted the Policy is not ‘justified’ or ‘consistent with national policy’. Pigeon is of the opinion that the references to ‘pre-application discussions’ and the ‘NPPF presumption’ are unnecessary and do not accord with the NPPF.*

- 3.110 Policy LP34 requires that new development must provide for the educational needs and healthcare provision of new residents. Pigeon is supportive of a Policy supporting health and education provision. However, Pigeon raise an ‘objection’ to the current wording particular Part ‘3’ which makes reference to the fact that the Council will apply the presumption in favour of development and that they will engage in pre-application discussions with promoters to develop a collaborative approach to suitable applications. As currently drafted the Policy is not ‘justified’ or ‘consistent with national policy’.
- 3.111 Pigeon is of the opinion that the references to ‘pre-application discussions’ and the ‘NPPF presumption’ are unnecessary. It is highly likely that provision for education and

healthcare facilities will form part of major schemes and will be delivered as part of larger scale developments. As such, as part of the application process developers will engage in pre-application discussions with the Council regarding such developments. In terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, this is an intrinsic part of the NPPF and therefore does not need to be repeated in this policy.

3.112 Pigeon suggests a re-wording of Part '3' of Policy LP34 to read:

**Policy LP34 – Health and Education Provision**

*3. The Councils will respond positively to and support appropriate and well-designed applications regarding the creation of new health and/or education facilities, and extensions to existing facilities. The Council will be supportive of proposals that enable dual use of new facilities within school grounds which can also be used by the community and agreed under a Community Use Agreement. As expressed in the NPPF, the Council will apply the presumption in favour of the development. ~~The Councils will engage in pre-application discussions with promoters to develop a collaborative approach to suitable applications, and ensure that early years settings and schools are placed in the best possible location to promote sustainable modes of travel and enable good access. Where necessary, the Councils will utilise planning obligations to help to mitigate any adverse impacts of an educational development and assist in delivering development that has a positive impact on the community.~~*

**LP35 – Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations**

**100 Word Summary**

*The objective of Policy LP35 is to provide a policy framework for securing an appropriate level of infrastructure, including developer contributions and obligations. Although Pigeon welcome a Policy concerning developer contributions and obligations, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the current wording of the Policy on the basis that the Policy is not '**justified**'. Pigeon request that reference to Developer Contributions are removed from the Policy wording and that it makes clear refer to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.*

3.113 The objective of Policy LP35 is to provide a policy framework for securing an appropriate level of infrastructure, including developer contributions and obligations. Although Pigeon welcome a Policy concerning developer contributions and obligations, Pigeon raise an **objection** to the current wording of the Policy on the basis that the Policy is not '**justified**'.

3.114 The Policy specifically refers to Developer Contributions as well as Planning Obligations, Pigeon is of the view that these are the same thing and therefore there is no need to refer to both within the Policy.

3.115 In addition, Pigeon request further clarity regarding the updated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging approach and the relationship between S106 contributions in the context of the updated CIL Regulations which came into force 1 September 2019. The Planning Practice Guidance states "*In accordance with the CIL Regulations any authority that receives a contribution from development through the levy or section 106 planning obligations must prepare an infrastructure funding*

*statement*". (Paragraph: 173 Reference ID: 25-173-20190901). In the light of the updated Regulations, Pigeon request that the Councils provide further updated policy guidance on how these Regulations will be taken into consideration. This will need to be consistent with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- 3.116 Pigeon request that the Policy is revised to remove the reference to 'Developer Contributions' and revised to take into account the updated CIL Regulations and the Policy should set out more clearly the infrastructure required to support the Plan with reference to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### **Policy LP35 - Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations**

1. The required infrastructure will be provided through a combination of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Planning Obligations, ~~Developer Contributions~~.
2. When making planning decisions, regard will be given to **site specific infrastructure as set out in** the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the consultation responses received from infrastructure providers and the associated Plan evidence base. Applicants are required to mitigate the additional impacts their development will place on infrastructure through Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.
3. The delivery of planned growth set out in The Plan is dependent upon the availability of infrastructure to support it. The required infrastructure will be provided through a combination of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Planning Obligations, ~~Developer Contributions~~ and where appropriate funding assistance from the Councils / other provider organisations. Planning applications will be expected to include appropriate infrastructure provision.
4. Applicants shall adhere to the relevant documents endorsed by the Council detailing the types and priorities of infrastructure provision required for the districts.

## Appendix 1: Pigeon's Land Interests within Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts

Site	Draft Allocation Reference	Status	Proposed Development
Land North of Springlands Way, Sudbury;	-	Over half of the Site forms part of the land allocated under Policy CS4 of the Babergh Core Strategy (2014), known as Chilton Woods, which has outline planning permission (ref: B/15/01718).	Around 150 new homes, delivery of employment land for B2, B8 and E Use Classes, including retail and Food and Drink uses, land for the Town Wide Waste Recycling Centre and public open space and green infrastructure provision throughout the scheme.
Land at Tye Farm, Great Cornard;	LA042	Draft allocation for approximately 500 homes, highway improvements, land for a pre-school and public open space with improved linkages into the countryside.	A highly sustainable northern gateway Community Hub comprising complementary land uses including a pre-school, approximately 700 new homes, extensive areas of public open space, the retention and enhancement of green infrastructure and new recreational footpaths with links to existing Public Rights of Way.
Land North East of Heath Road, Woolpit;	-	An outline planning application is pending determination on this Site. It is due to be taken to Mid Suffolk Planning Committee in early 2021 with an officer	In line with outline planning permission, 49 new homes, 0.7 ha of land for an extension to Woolpit Primary Academy School to accommodate future growth in the village and public open space

		recommendation of approval.	with improved linkages into the countryside.
Land at Turkey Hall Lane, Bacton;	LA047	Outline planning permission (ref: DC/18/00723) was granted in July 2018 for 51 new homes (including affordable housing) together with public open space and associated highway improvements.	In line with the approved planning consent.
Garage Field, Land to west of the A137, Wherstead;		Site benefits from full planning permission for roadside services and drive thru restaurant (ref: DC/19/02798).  Outline planning permission has been granted for commercial development for flexible employment uses within the former B1c, B2 and B8 uses (ref: DC/19/05093).	In line with the approved planning consents.
Walled Garden and Clock Paddock, Wherstead;	-	Submitted to Call for Sites and Regulation 18 Consultations.	E Class employment provision, community uses and approximately 5 new homes.
Suffolk Leisure Park, Wherstead;	-	-	Around 50 new homes with provision of new public open space.
Stevens' Site, Wherstead;	-	-	Employment scheme for Class B2/B8 and Class E employment provision in line with the Council's draft

			Local Development Order to encourage businesses in the Orwell Food Enterprise Zone.
Land north of Burstall Lane and west of B113, Sproughton; and	WS459 & WS617	The Site also benefits from a Resolution to Grant Planning Permission subject to S106 and conditions made by Babergh District Council on 7th October 2020 (ref: 19/00567).	In line with hybrid planning application for retention and expansion to allotments, land for community/shop/office use, highway improvements, around 105 new homes and significant areas of informal recreation space including enhanced links to existing public rights of way and the village centre.
Land East of Norwich Road, Barham and Land North of Church Lane, Barham.	LA001 and LA002	An outline planning application is pending on site LA002. It is due to be taken to Mid Suffolk Planning Committee in early 2021.	Across the two sites and building on the contents of the outline planning application for LA002, provision of around 595 homes, a Community Hub with uses such as retail, health provision, village hall, small employment uses, extension to the Church, land reserved for pre-school and 2FE Primary School and package of highway improvements.

## **Appendix 2: Pegasus Review of Housing Needs**



# **BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK JOINT LOCAL PLAN (REGULATION 19) CONSULTATION**

## **REVIEW OF HOUSING NEED AND SUPPLY ON BEHALF OF PIGEON INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT LTD**

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## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 The standard method provides the minimum local housing need which should be exceeded to take account of economic circumstances, demographic factors, unmet needs and recent assessments of need.

1.2 The standard method across the plan period produces a minimum need for 19,175 new homes comprising 8,047 in Babergh and 11,128 in Mid Suffolk rather than the 18,069 identified in the draft Joint Local Plan. However, in Babergh and Mid Suffolk the minimum housing need figure should be exceeded and the housing requirement in the JLP should be increased accordingly for the following reasons:

- There is a recent assessment of need which identifies a minimum figure of 19,247 new homes comprising 8,132 in Babergh and 11,115 in Mid Suffolk;
- The recent assessment of need also indicates that the proposed housing requirement will not meet the need for market housing by a significant margin and it will not meet the need for affordable housing;
- There would be a need for 21,933 new homes even to support the planned slowdown in economic growth comprising 8,284 in Babergh and 13,649 in Mid Suffolk;
- It will compound the disparity between the number of jobs and the labour supply such that it will be reliant upon a greater number of workers commuting greater distances to support the planned slowdown of economic growth;
- It is expected that there will be an unmet housing need which arises from Ipswich Borough as a result of the ongoing Local Plan Examination which will need to be determined and distributed under the duty to cooperate, but this is likely to result in an additional need to deliver circa 300 homes across the plan period, or a total of 22,233 new homes;
- The figure which arises from the standard method is subject to frequent changes and so it is necessary to prepare the JLP with sufficient contingency to ensure that a sufficient number of sites are identified to

meet the housing need taking account of the standard method which exists at the base-date;

- In accordance with the findings of numerous Inspectors it is necessary for the plan to identify a sufficient supply to provide for circa 5% in excess of the identified minimum housing need to provide the necessary flexibility. This would produce a need to plan for at least 23,345 homes to respond to the need for 22,233 new homes.

1.3 It is therefore considered that in order for the JLP to be found sound it will be necessary to set a minimum housing requirement for at least 23,345 new homes.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 Pegasus Group has been instructed by Pigeon Investment Management Ltd (Pigeon) to review the emerging housing need and supply of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (JLP) and the supporting evidence base.

### 3. Review of the housing need

#### The plan period

- 3.1 Since the Regulation 18 consultation the proposed plan period has been extended by a year to cover the period 2018 to 2037. Accordingly, the analysis contained in Pigeon's previous representations needs to be updated to reflect the currently proposed plan period.

#### The standard method

- 3.2 Paragraph 60 of the NPPF identifies that the minimum number of homes needed should be determined using the standard method in national planning guidance, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. In addition, paragraph 60 indicates that the unmet needs of neighbouring areas should also be taken into account.
- 3.3 The PPG (2a-013) identifies that where strategic policies are being prepared jointly, as they are in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, the minimum housing need should be calculated from the sum of the standard method for each LPA. The distribution of this housing need can then be met in the most sustainable distribution across the plan area rather than the needs of each LPA necessarily being met within that LPA.
- 3.4 Paragraph 12 of the Housing Delivery Test: Measurement Rule Book identifies that the figure which arises from the standard method has a base-date of 1<sup>st</sup> April each year.
- 3.5 The JLP has a base-date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and so it is necessary to either calculate the standard method that existed at that time and apply this over the plan period from 2018 onwards; or to calculate the current standard method with a base-date of 2020 and apply this over the remainder of the plan period from 2020 onwards in addition to the number of completions from 2018-20.
- 3.6 The former method (i.e. calculating the standard method with a base-date of 2018) enables the housing need to be set early on in the plan-making stage but does not necessarily take account of subsequent changes to the need. If this approach is adopted, any significant changes to the figure which arises from the standard method will need to be monitored and addressed for the JLP to be effective.

- 3.7 The latter method (i.e. calculating the standard method which applies currently) ensures that the JLP responds to the latest assessment of need but this will be subject to changes throughout the plan-making process and will need to be responded to as appropriate. Prior to submission, the figure which arises from the standard method will change as a result of the release of updated affordability information, and the change of the consecutive 10-year period.
- 3.8 In the absence of clear guidance on which approach is to be preferred, and without this having been tested through a Local Plan examination in the experience of Pegasus Group, it is recommended that the standard method is calculated at the base-date of the Local Plan and only reviewed if subsequent calculations indicate that the need has significantly changed. This allows the plan-making process to proceed on a fixed basis, but also allows for any significant changes to be addressed if these arise.
- 3.9 The resulting minimum housing need which arises from either approach is calculated below.

2018 base date

- 3.10 The 2014 based household projections identify an annual average growth of 298<sup>1</sup> households in Babergh over the period 2018-28 and 422 households in Mid Suffolk.
- 3.11 The median workplace-based affordability ratio for 2017 was 10.74 for Babergh and 10.2 for Mid Suffolk. Once these figures are input into the affordability adjustment formula of the PPG (2a-004), this produces an affordability adjustment of 1.42 and 1.39 respectively.
- 3.12 This produces an uncapped minimum local housing need for 424 homes per annum in Babergh and 586 homes per annum in Mid Suffolk, or 1,009 homes per annum across the plan area.
- 3.13 The PPG (2a-004) indicates that where, as is the case in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, the adopted housing requirements are more than five-years old, the standard method should be capped at 40% above the higher of the household growth or the most recently adopted housing requirement.

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<sup>1</sup> Many figures in these calculations are presented rounded to the nearest integer, but the calculations use the unrounded figures

- 3.14 In Babergh, the adopted housing requirement is for 325 homes per annum. Therefore, if a cap is applicable, this would be at 455 new homes per annum (=325x1.4). However, given that the uncapped figure is only for 424.1, no cap is applicable.
- 3.15 In Mid Suffolk, as the affordability adjustment is less than 40% (at 1.39), no such cap is applicable.
- 3.16 Therefore, the minimum local housing need identified by the standard method at the base-date of the Local Plan in 2018, was for 1,009 homes per annum or **19,175 new homes** comprising 8,047 in Babergh and 11,128 in Mid Suffolk over the plan period. This is the minimum local housing need which applies over the plan period and which should be used unless the more recent results of the standard method indicate that the minimum local housing need is significantly greater.

Current base date

- 3.17 The 2014 based household projections identify an annual average growth of 290<sup>2</sup> households in Babergh over the period 2020-30 and 408 households in Mid Suffolk.
- 3.18 The current 2019 based median workplace-based affordability ratios are 10.95 for Babergh and 8.99 for Mid Suffolk. Once these figures are input into the affordability adjustment formula of the PPG (2a-004), this produces an affordability adjustment of 1.43 and 1.31 respectively.
- 3.19 This produces an uncapped minimum local housing need for 416 homes per annum in Babergh and 535 homes per annum in Mid Suffolk, or 951 homes per annum across the plan area over the remainder of the plan period 2020-2037.
- 3.20 As above, no cap is applicable to either of these figures.
- 3.21 Therefore, the minimum local housing need identified by the standard method in 2020, was for 951 homes per annum or 16,173 homes, comprising 7,071 in Babergh and 9,101 in Mid Suffolk, over the remaining 17 years of the plan period from 2020-37. Over the entire plan period, this would produce a minimum local

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<sup>2</sup> Many figures in these calculations are presented rounded to the nearest integer, but the calculations use the unrounded figures



housing need for **18,186 homes** comprising 7,943 in Babergh and 10,242 in Mid Suffolk, once the 2,013 completions from 2018-20 are taken into account.

- 3.22 As described previously, this figure will change regularly prior to submission and it will be necessary to take account of these changes to ensure that the JLP meets at least the minimum housing need identified by the standard method.

The approach in the JLP

- 3.23 The preceding calculations identify that across the plan period, depending upon the approach taken, there is a minimum need for at least **19,175 or 18,186<sup>3</sup> new homes** in the Plan period to 2037 according to the standard method comprising between 7,943 and 8,047 new homes in Babergh and between 10,242 and 11,128 in Mid Suffolk. In light of the need to significantly boost the supply of housing in response to the current housing crisis as required by the NPPF and to provide for positive planning, it is recommended that the former approach should be adopted.
- 3.24 The JLP however identifies in the table following paragraph 6.03, a minimum housing need for only 18,069 new homes comprising 7,904 new homes in Babergh and 10,165 in Mid Suffolk. This does not meet the minimum local housing need identified by the standard method and so does not accord with the NPPF.
- 3.25 This error appears to arise from two factors. Firstly, the Councils have calculated the standard method of 951 homes per annum for the period 2020-37 and then retrospectively applied this to the period 2018-37. As set out in the PPG (2a-002) and (68-031) the standard method takes account of past rates of delivery. Therefore, the standard method can only be used as a forward looking assessment of local housing need and cannot be retrospectively applied. To do so would double count the over or under delivery in the period 2018-20. Secondly, the Council has used the rounded result of the standard method of 951 homes per annum, rather than the actual minimum housing need for 951.3 homes per annum. Whilst this latter point may not make a significant difference, it still contributes to the JLP identifying a figure below the minimum that arises from the standard method.

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<sup>3</sup> This latter figure will change on an ongoing basis prior to submission

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Exceeding the standard method

- 3.26 The PPG (2a-004) confirms that the standard method provides only a minimum.
- 3.27 The PPG (2a-010) indicates a non-exhaustive list of examples where it may be appropriate to exceed the minimum housing requirement provided by the standard method, including where a previous assessment of housing need identifies that needs are greater than the standard method.

Latest assessment of needs

- 3.28 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been prepared for Ipswich Housing Market Area. The latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment Partial Part 2 Update, January 2019 identifies a minimum local housing need for 428 homes per annum in Babergh and 585 in Mid Suffolk from 2018 onwards. This equates to a minimum need for 1,013 homes per annum across the plan area, which in turn produces a minimum need across the 19 year plan period for **19,247 homes** comprising 8,132 in Babergh and 11,115 in Mid Suffolk, in excess of the 18,069 proposed in the JLP comprising 7,904 in Babergh and 10,165 in Mid Suffolk. This minimum housing need of the SHMA is broadly consistent with that generated by the standard method.
- 3.29 The Council's own evidence base therefore demonstrates that there is a need for over 1,000 more homes than provided for by the proposed housing requirement of the JLP. This local evidence demonstrates that the JLP does not meet housing needs and so it does not accord with paragraph 35a of the NPPF and is therefore unsound.

Need by tenure

- 3.30 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Partial Part 2 Update, January 2019 assesses the need for affordable housing in the context of the standard method.
- 3.31 In Figure 7.1 it identifies that there is a need for 73.2% of new housing in Babergh to be in the market sector, with the remaining 26.8% in the affordable sector. Figure 7.3 identifies the corresponding figures for Mid Suffolk and identifies a need for 77.3% to be in the market sector and the remaining 22.7% in the affordable sector.
- 3.32 These figures have been generated from the minimum need identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Partial Part 2 Update, January 2019,

namely 428 homes per annum in Babergh and 585 homes per annum in Mid Suffolk.

- 3.33 Therefore, it can be calculated that the evidence actually identifies a need for 313<sup>4</sup> and 452<sup>5</sup> new market homes per annum in Babergh and Mid Suffolk respectively or a total of 766 new market homes per annum across the plan area; and a need for 115<sup>6</sup> and 133<sup>7</sup> new affordable homes per annum respectively, or a total of 247 across the plan area.
- 3.34 The Council's evidence therefore identifies a need for 2,179 affordable homes in Babergh and 2,523 in Mid Suffolk, and a need for 5,953 market homes in Babergh and 8,592 in Mid Suffolk. Policy SP02 indicates that 4,524 affordable homes will be delivered in the period to 2037 comprising 2,096 in Babergh and 2,428 in Mid Suffolk. It is therefore apparent that the JLP does not plan to address the affordable housing needs in either area in full.
- 3.35 The proposed delivery of 2,096 affordable homes in Babergh of the total proposed housing requirement of 7,904 new homes indicates that 5,725 market homes will be provided in Babergh as compared to the need for 5,953. Similarly, the proposed delivery of 2,428 affordable homes in Mid Suffolk of the total proposed housing requirement of 10,165 new homes indicates that 7,642 market homes will be provided in Mid Suffolk as compared to the need for 8,592. It is therefore also apparent that the JLP does not plan to address the need for market housing by a considerable margin particularly in Mid Suffolk. The combination of Policy SP02 and the proposed housing requirement therefore facilitates an under-delivery of affordable housing and a significant under-delivery of the required level of market housing identified by the evidence base.
- 3.36 The evidence base therefore demonstrates that there is a particular need for additional market housing, which if addressed would inevitably also address the shortfall in affordable housing supply. As a result of the proposed unjustified constraint on market housing, there will be fewer opportunities for those capable of accessing such housing to do so, and this is likely to have an adverse effect on affordability. The likely consequence of this is that it will increase the number of households falling into affordable need as they are unable to access the constrained supply of market accommodation. This is wholly unsustainable.

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<sup>4</sup> = 73.2% of 428

<sup>5</sup> = 77.3% of 585

<sup>6</sup> = 26.8% of 428

<sup>7</sup> = 22.7% of 585

3.37 Accordingly, the minimum housing need for the two authorities should be for at least **19,247 new homes** comprising 8,132 in Babergh and 11,115 in Mid Suffolk as identified by the Council's own evidence base.

Economic considerations – planned job growth

3.38 The PPG (2a-010) also notes that the standard method does not take account of changing economic circumstances, the consideration of which may indicate that it is appropriate to exceed the standard method.

3.39 The JLP identifies under Key Economic Issues that there is expected to be a 9.3% increase in jobs in Babergh and a 14.7% increase in Mid Suffolk over the period 2014-36 and that this represents a slowdown in growth when compared to past trends. Such an approach does not provide for a positive plan as it does not facilitate the potential to maintain or increase economic growth, contrary to paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The employment land requirement which has been calculated on this basis is not therefore considered to be sound.

3.40 These percentage growth figures arise from EEFM (as set out in Table 3.1 of the Ipswich Economic Area Sector Needs Assessment, September 2017) and equate to an increase of 3,640 and 6,450 jobs respectively over the period 2014-36.

3.41 Table 7.4 of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Part 1, May 2017 identifies that the EEFM considers that this slowdown will still require an increase of 10,471 and 21,649 persons respectively. The SHMA seeks to calculate the number of homes required to accommodate this population, but the assumptions are not set out and so cannot be considered to be justified.

3.42 Table 5.1 of the SHMA identifies that the population in 2014 was 88,845 in Babergh and 99,121 in Mid Suffolk. With the additional population necessary to support the planned economic growth, there would need to be a population of at least 99,316 people in Babergh and 120,770 in Mid Suffolk by 2036.

3.43 The Household Representative Rates of the 2014 based household projections, upon which the SHMA rely, equate to an average of 2.12 persons per household in Babergh and 2.17 persons per household in Mid Suffolk in 2036. Therefore, in order to accommodate the planned economic growth, it would be necessary to accommodate 46,877 households in Babergh and 55,764 households in Mid Suffolk by 2036.

- 3.44 It can be calculated from Table 7.4 of the SHMA that a vacancy rate of 3.8% is assumed in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This would require that there were 48,743 homes in Babergh and 57,993 homes in Mid Suffolk in 2036 to accommodate the number of households required to fulfil even the planned economic slowdown. This would require the delivery of 8,734 new homes in Babergh and 14,382 new homes in Mid Suffolk over the period 2014-36, providing a total of 23,116 new homes.
- 3.45 In the period 2014-18, there were a total of 886 completions in Babergh and 1,451 in Mid Suffolk, leaving a residual need for 7,848 new homes over the period 2018-36 in Babergh (or 436 per annum) and 12,931 in Mid Suffolk (or 718 per annum). Assuming that this annual need is maintained in 2036/37 this would require **21,933** new homes to be delivered even to support the planned economic slowdown, comprising 8,284 in Babergh and 13,649 in Mid Suffolk.

Economic considerations – the balance of jobs and homes

- 3.46 Babergh and Mid Suffolk accommodate a significant proportion of the workers necessary to support the economy of Ipswich. Ipswich has seen significant levels of job growth over the period 2012-18, with an additional 10,000 jobs, but the labour supply of Ipswich has actually reduced in the same period, such that the economy of Ipswich will have become even more dependent upon workers within Babergh, Mid Suffolk and beyond. This is evident from traffic flow data which indicates that the vehicle miles travelled in Suffolk has increased by 17% since 2012. This in turn will reduce the proportion of the working residents in Babergh and Mid Suffolk that support the economies of these LPAs and it will therefore be necessary to ensure that additional workers can be accommodated to meet the economic needs of the plan area.
- 3.47 There has however been a startling imbalance between the number of homes provided and the job growth across these districts since 2012, which indicates that the economy of the area is increasingly dependent upon commuters from further afield (outside of these LPAs). This increase in longer-distance commuting flows should not be perpetuated through planning for a greater number of jobs than workers, as is the case in the JLP as set out above. Such an approach would be contrary to paragraph 103 of the NPPF and is unsound.
- 3.48 Furthermore, the under-provision of housing in an area which has seen significant job growth will have placed greater demand on the housing which exists. This will

have detrimental impacts on the affordability and accessibility of the housing market for all households.

- 3.49 Indeed, as set out in Appendix 1 to this representation, in order to restore the balance between jobs and homes that was experienced in 2012, it would be necessary to provide 1,726 new homes in Babergh and Mid Suffolk to address the past shortfalls in addition to the newly arising needs. These additional 1,726 homes are likely to partially double count the need for 21,933 homes to support the economic growth, but they are entirely additional to the minimum need identified by the standard method. If the increasing imbalance between jobs and homes is not addressed in the JLP, then the increasing levels of in-commuting from outside of the FEMA will be maintained and this could act as a constraint on economic growth contrary to paragraphs 80 and 103 of the NPPF. If however, positive steps were taken to address this issue, the minimum local housing need identified by the standard method would increase by at least 1,726 homes to **20,901 new homes**.

#### Summary

- 3.50 The preceding analysis indicates that not only has the standard method been miscalculated in the JLP, there are also very strong grounds for exceeding the minimum housing need identified by the standard method, particularly the need to prevent a constraint on economic growth, to limit unsustainable commuting flows, to meet the need for both market and affordable housing and to prevent a worsening of the affordability and the resultant accessibility of the housing market.

#### Unmet need

- 3.51 Paragraph 60 of the NPPF and the PPG (2a-010) also identify that the minimum housing need identified by the standard method should be exceeded to ensure that any unmet needs from neighbouring areas can be accommodated.
- 3.52 The SHMA identifies that the 2014 based household projections for Ipswich were incorrect and adjusts these accordingly to identify an objectively assessed need for 11,420 new homes in the period 2014-36. The 2014 based household projections are those used in the standard method which applies for the purposes of the examination of both the Ipswich Local Plan Review. Accordingly, the errors in the 2014 based household projections need to be adjusted for before applying

the standard method in Ipswich, such that there is a need for at least 11,420 new homes in Ipswich Borough over the period 2014-36<sup>8</sup>.

- 3.53 In the period 2014-18, 1,363 homes and 13 bedspaces were constructed in Ipswich which equates to a total of 1,370 homes based on the conversion factor of the PPG (63-016a). In order to meet the minimum local housing need of Ipswich, there therefore remains a residual need for at least 10,050 new homes over the period 2018-36.
- 3.54 Ipswich Borough Council has previously confirmed to Babergh and Mid Suffolk that there will be no unmet housing needs that would need to be addressed in neighbouring authorities under the Duty to Cooperate. However, in the Position Statement of Ipswich Borough Council in relation to Matter 3 of the examination of the Ipswich Local Plan Review, it is identified that there is a supply of 9,426 new homes over the period 2018-36. The examining Inspectors indicated that the evidence in support of this figure was lacking and have requested that additional evidence is provided. Therefore, at present, the evidence demonstrates that the supply is likely to be less, and potentially significantly less than 9,426 new homes.
- 3.55 As a result, it is expected that the Inspectors for the Ipswich Local Plan Examination are likely to conclude that there is an unmet need of at least 624 homes and potentially significantly more which will need to be met within neighbouring authorities including Babergh and Mid Suffolk to accord with paragraph 60 of the NPPF.
- 3.56 Some 48% of the workforce of Ipswich that travelled in from the remainder of the Housing Market Area travelled from either Babergh or Mid Suffolk. Using this as a broad proxy for the distribution of the unmet need would result in a need for at least 300 additional homes across the period 2018-36 to address the unmet needs arising from Ipswich Borough.
- 3.57 The distribution of how any such unmet need will be met will need to be determined under the duty to cooperate, and an appropriate strategy agreed to address the unmet need. Nevertheless, on this indicative basis it may be appropriate to increase the housing requirement for Babergh and Mid Suffolk within the JLP by at least 300 homes and potentially significantly more.

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<sup>8</sup> Representations have been made to the Ipswich Local Plan Review examination to this effect.

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Flexibility to respond to rapid change

3.58 The minimum need figure identified by the standard method changes on a regular basis, including when:

- New median workplace-based affordability ratios are published in March annually as set out in the PPG (2a-009);
- Annually, as the 10 consecutive years over which the annual household growth is to be considered changes as set out in the PPG (2a-004); and
- The adopted housing requirement becomes more than five-years old, which alters the calculation of the cap according to the PPG (2a-004).

3.59 The PPG (2a-008) identifies that the minimum housing need identified by the standard method that will apply for the purposes of examining a Local Plan will be that which exists at the point of submission.

3.60 Therefore, the JLP should be prepared with sufficient flexibility as required by paragraph 11a of the NPPF to ensure that it provides for a housing requirement which at least meets (and based on the preceding considerations, exceeds) the unknown minimum housing need which will exist at the point of submission if this proves to be significantly different from the need for 19,175 new homes which existed at the base-date of the plan period. Without such planning, the JLP may not even meet the minimum need required by national policy, and additional rounds of consultation would then be required to address this issue.

Flexibility to meet the housing need

3.61 Paragraph 11a of the NPPF requires that plans should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change. In order to fulfil this, it is necessary for Local Plans to provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that the housing need will be delivered with an appropriate allowance for the non-delivery or delays to the delivery of sites and/or to provide sufficient scope to respond to newly arising needs.

3.62 Local Plan Inspectors, including in the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy and the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan examinations have required that the supply identified in the Local Plan exceeds the housing need by 5% and 5.2% respectively to provide the required flexibility.



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#### **4. Review of the housing supply**

- 4.1 Housing trajectories are provided in Appendix 1 of the JLP. The figures in these trajectories do not align with those in the Councils' latest Five Year Housing Land Supply Statements (EM04 and EM05) which were published in October 2020.
- 4.2 The trajectories within the JLP are therefore not supported by the necessary evidence and are currently not justified. It will be necessary to publish the necessary evidence prior to examination and Pegasus Group reserve the right to respond once this is available.
- 4.3 Nevertheless, the trajectories suggest that there is a supply of 22,228 homes across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, which may be just about sufficient to meet the housing needs but provides no flexibility as required by paragraph 11a of the NPPF to accommodate the inevitable slippages on sites and as required by numerous other Local Plan Inspectors.

## 5. Conclusions

5.1 The preceding analysis demonstrates that:

- the standard method has been miscalculated and misapplied in the JLP, such that the JLP does not even provide for the minimum necessary to accord with national policy. The figure which arose from the standard method at the base-date of the plan period produces a minimum need for **19,175 new homes** comprising 8,047 in Babergh and 11,128 in Mid Suffolk;
- the JLP does not provide for a housing need that is consistent with the most recent assessment of the Councils namely **19,247 new homes** comprising 8,132 in Babergh and 11,115 in Mid Suffolk;
- the JLP does not provide for the necessary levels of market or affordable housing to meet the two districts' needs identified by the evidence base;
- the JLP plans for a slowdown in economic growth contrary to national policy;
- there has been a startling imbalance between the jobs growth and the number of homes delivered across the wider area in recent years, which if perpetuated as planned by the JLP, will result in an increase in unsustainable longer-distance commuting flows and compound the housing crisis locally. If positive action is taken to address this it would result in a need for at least **20,901 new homes** even without any additional jobs being provided during the plan period;
- the JLP does not even provide for a sufficient level of housing to support the planned slowdown in economic growth, which will act as a further constraint on the economy. To support the planned slowdown would require **21,933 new homes** across the plan period comprising 8,284 in Babergh and 13,649 in Mid Suffolk;
- the JLP will need to take account of the unmet needs of Ipswich Borough established as part of the Ipswich Local Plan Examination which will need to be addressed across the Housing Market Area under the duty to cooperate. As a broad proxy it is considered that this is likely to increase the need in Babergh and Mid Suffolk by at least 300 homes across the plan period to **22,233 new homes**;

- the JLP does not provide any contingency to provide for the inevitable changes to the minimum housing need which will occur prior to submission; and
- the JLP does not provide any flexibility to ensure that the minimum housing need is met, or to adapt to rapid changes in need, contrary to paragraph 11a of the NPPF. In accordance with the findings of other Inspectors it would be necessary to set a housing requirement 5% greater than the identified need namely **23,345 new homes** to ensure that the housing need is met in full.

5.2 The JLP has identified a supply which could just about address the housing need if and only if all of the supply is delivered. This provides no flexibility to respond to rapid change as required by paragraph 11a of the NPPF, such as the inevitable delays and slippages to the delivery of sites. In the absence of a sufficient supply to provide the flexibility required by the NPPF, the JLP is not effective, positive or consistent with national policy and is therefore unsound.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF HOUSING NEED**

## 1. BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK JOINT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

- 1.1 This appendix assesses housing need in Babergh and Mid Suffolk based on economic need and conditions across the economic geography of which the two districts are a part. That economic geography centres on Ipswich as the area's largest regional employment centre and labour market.
- 1.2 The appendix focuses on two key issues:
- The importance of understanding – and addressing – housing need across **Economic Areas** and **Travel to Work Areas**.
  - The effect of local labour market growth and change on housing demand.

### IPSWICH TRAVEL TO WORK AREA AND FUNCTIONAL ECONOMIC AREA

- 1.3 A Travel to Work Area (TTWA) is the area within which at least 75% of resident workers work, and where at least 75% of an area's workforce also lives. That is to say that the interaction between people's places of work and places of residence take place within the defined area. This is the interaction that drives and influences housing markets overall.
- 1.4 The Ipswich Travel to Work Area, defined by the Office for National Statistics on the basis of 2011 Census commuting data, includes Ipswich and almost all of Babergh, Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk districts. The area is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Ipswich TTWA. Source: ONS, 2011 Census

- 1.5 These four districts have been amalgamated for local planning purposes into the Functional Economic Market Area or FEMA, in accordance with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, May 2017.

- 1.6 Analysis of census commuting data is vital for understanding the interdependencies between the housing and labour markets in the FEMA. Analysis shows that Ipswich's three neighbouring authorities of Suffolk Coastal, Babergh and Mid Suffolk supplied over a third (34.3%) of Ipswich's workforce<sup>9</sup>. In Babergh and Mid Suffolk alone, this equates to over 10,200 workers and highlights the extent to which the Ipswich labour market is reliant on its neighbouring authorities for labour supply.
- 1.7 Census data is increasingly out of date, so it is important to note changes that have occurred since 2011 to understand if Ipswich remains as reliant on other LPAs for labour supply. Labour demand in most of the districts within the FEMA has grown, but most substantially in Ipswich by almost 14%<sup>10</sup> between 2012 and 2018, equivalent to 10,000 jobs. This is over twice the growth rate of East Suffolk (6.5%).
- 1.8 For the balance of labour demand and supply to remain similar to those observed in the 2011 Census, the housing stock would need to have grown sufficiently to accommodate the necessary labour supply in order to meet this increased demand for labour.
- 1.9 Using occupancy and economic activity rates it is possible to estimate the amount of labour supply that is likely to have been created for a given amount of housing growth.
- 1.10 Housing stock growth has been minimal across all the FEMA districts, but most notably in Babergh and in Ipswich itself. In Ipswich, on average, just 264 homes a year were built between 2012 and 2018, growing housing stock by just 2.7%. Similarly, in the same period, Babergh housing stock grew by just 3.6% or 282 homes a year on average<sup>11</sup>.
- 1.11 Overall, in Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Babergh, the housing stock grew by 12,075 between 2012 and 2018. In Ipswich, the stock grew by 1,849, contributing 15% to the FEMA area total.
- 1.12 Based on the known occupancy and economic activity rates, these additional dwellings are likely to have increased the number of economically active residents by 14,112 across the FEMA as compared to a job growth of 18,000. It is therefore apparent that across the FEMA, there will have been circa 4,000 additional net in-commuters since 2011 owing to the shortfall in housing supply.
- 1.13 Some 10,000 of the additional 18,000 additional jobs were created in Ipswich, contributing 55% to the FEMA area total. It is therefore apparent that as Ipswich has contributed only 15% of the additional dwellings but accommodated 55% of the additional jobs, it will be increasingly dependent upon net in-commuting even within a FEMA which in totality is increasingly dependent upon net in-commuting.
- 1.14 This data reveals how, just in the period since the last Census, the balance between homes and jobs has not been maintained, with labour demand outstripping labour supply, due to strong economic growth and a corresponding shortfall in housebuilding. In Ipswich in particular, a startling imbalance is evident, where 10,000 jobs have been created but only enough new housing for 2,300 economically active residents.

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<sup>9</sup> Ipswich Core Strategy Census Data Trends and Analysis; WSP for Ipswich Borough Council, February 2016

<sup>10</sup> ONS Total jobs, Change 2012-2018: Ipswich +13.7% East Suffolk Coastal +6.5%

<sup>11</sup> Homes data from MHCLG Table LT125, Dwelling Stock Estimates.

- 1.15 It should also be noted that the economically active residents within new housing may not be new to the labour supply as some residents will already be from the area, and some of the existing labour supply may move elsewhere regardless of housing supply.
- 1.16 Overall labour supply can be identified from the number of economically active residents as recorded by the ONS Annual Population Survey. This shows that in Ipswich, labour supply has completely stagnated and at times declined since 2012, demonstrating how the amount of new housing has not been sufficient to maintain or increase the overall labour supply. The ONS data shows 73,000 economically active residents in 2012 and 70,600 by the end of 2018. The picture in East Suffolk and Babergh is little different, each showing marginal reductions or increases in the number of economically active residents between 2012 and 2018. Only Mid Suffolk has shown a notable increase of 3,600<sup>12</sup>.
- 1.17 This demonstrates the extent to which the lack of local labour supply growth in the FEMA area has meant that economic growth has had to be supported by labour imported from around the region and possibly beyond. This will have had implications for transport networks and the overall sustainability of the area with the less sustainable travel patterns.

#### LABOUR MARKET AND HOUSING MARKET IMBALANCE

- 1.18 In tight labour markets where there are limited spare workers to fill new jobs, workers must be imported from further afield in the region. This adds pressure to the local housing market as workers inevitably seek housing closer to their workplace. As the post 2011 Census data shows (together with house price inflation of 41% in the Housing Market Area), Ipswich has generated substantial housing need as a result of labour market growth far outstripping housing growth, including when taking account of housing growth in its neighbouring authorities.
- 1.19 It is clear therefore that Ipswich's labour supply and housing need is already supported by its neighbouring authorities, as evidenced by the TTWA data showing over a third of Ipswich workers residing in Babergh, Mid Suffolk or Suffolk Coastal districts. This is also evident in the post Census labour supply and demand data as analysed above.
- 1.20 It is possible to consider the effect on housing demand that the aforementioned changes to the balance of labour demand and supply have had since the Census by considering house prices as a key determinant of demand. The graph at figure 2 shows house prices (blue line) have grown rapidly with the economic growth represented by job numbers (orange bars) and wages (grey line), while dwelling stock remains almost static by comparison.

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<sup>12</sup> ONS Annual Population Survey Data, All Economically Active People Jan-Dec 2012 to Jan-Dec 2018.



Figure 2: Dwellings-Jobs-House Prices-Earnings Change 2012-2017

- 1.21 The bars in the graph show the extent to which labour market growth has begun to pull away from housing growth as the red bars extend increasingly above the amber bars.
- 1.22 Another key factor is wage growth that has been driven by a marked increase in the quality and seniority of jobs in the area. In Mid Suffolk for example, the proportion of workers employed in the top 3 occupational classifications reached over 50% last year, having been below 38% in 2012<sup>13</sup>. As such, while it is well known that wages themselves have not increased substantially in recent years, the net effect of a significant change in labour market structure as described, is that the earning power of the local labour market in aggregate can still increase substantially, even without job-for-job wage growth.
- 1.23 Inevitably therefore, this growth and the structural changes in the labour market have driven house prices and demand, as shown by the blue line in the graph. This amounts to a 41% increase in prices between 2012 and 2017.
- 1.24 Furthermore, a notable pickup in employment growth is evident in Mid Suffolk itself, with growth of 7% or 3,000 new jobs since 2012, more than matching Mid Suffolk's higher increase in housing stock - relative to Ipswich and Babergh - of 1,870 homes. So, while the district has been fulfilling its role of housing a large proportion of the Ipswich workforce, there is also a growing local labour market to account for.
- 1.25 Overall, the Ipswich HMA has seen growth of 18,000 jobs between 2012 and 2018 whereas the dwelling stock increased by just 7,986 homes. This brings the

<sup>13</sup> ONS Annual Population Survey data, SOC 2010 Classifications



total jobs and dwelling stock to 232,000 and 207,746 respectively. The changes in numbers of jobs and dwellings is set out in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Ipswich FEMA Area - Change in Jobs vs Dwelling Stock 2012-2018**

YEAR	TOTAL JOBS	DWELLING STOCK	HOMES per 100 JOBS
2012	214,000	199,760	93
2013	213,000	200,700	94
2014	217,000	201,930	93
2015	221,000	203,410	92
2016	225,000	204,930	91
2017	228,000	206,260	90
2018	232,000	207,746	89

- 1.26 Using the ratio of homes to jobs, it is straightforward to calculate the level of housebuilding that would be needed in 2018 to maintain the balance between homes and jobs that existed in 2012, when house prices were 40% lower.
- 1.27 The number of homes needed to maintain the balance with jobs in 2012 would be 216,562. This is 8,816 more than had been built by 2018. Using the existing distribution of the housing stock between the four districts of the FEMA, this would amount to a need for at least 1,726 homes in Babergh and Mid Suffolk just to restore the balance of jobs and homes of 2016 in addition to any newly arising need.
- 1.28 There can be no doubt that both Babergh and Mid Suffolk will remain key residential destinations in the Ipswich travel to work area, due to their proximity and accessibility to the town and its burgeoning labour market.
- 1.29 Furthermore, ambitious business growth plans for Ipswich, Felixstowe and the wider region indicate further substantial job growth can be expected throughout the HMA that will need to be supported with far greater local labour supply than has been provided to date.
- 1.30 The Local Enterprise Partnership has targeted job growth of 88,000 by 2036. If we assume half of this occurred in Suffolk, 44,000 new jobs in Suffolk would represent a 12% growth in job numbers.
- 1.31 If housing growth remains as limited as it has done since the last census however, we can expect one of two outcomes. First, these growth targets will simply be unattainable and the extensive economic development plans associated with them will not be realised. Alternatively, further rapid house price inflation will occur, adding both extreme affordability pressures and increased commuting and sustainability pressures caused by the continued importing of labour from further afield in the region. Government data shows that vehicle miles travelled in Suffolk between the 2012-2017 growth period analysed in this report, increased by 17%<sup>14</sup>. This is equivalent to more than 600,000 additional miles travelled on the county's roads in just five years. This further underlines the extent of the imported labour as described here and the resulting sustainability issues that will be further exacerbated without sustained effort to grow local labour supply.

<sup>14</sup> DFT Traffic Count Data for Suffolk, via <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/local-authorities/126>



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