

Session 3

Respondent number: 1045

Spatial Vision and Strategy II
Secondary Settlements

STATEMENT OF CASE

BARTON WILLMORE
ON BEHALF OF

SUTHERLAND HOMES LIMITED

November 2007

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

This statement refers to one objection.

Policy SS1

Sheringham should be upgraded from a 'Secondary Settlement' to a 'Principal Settlement' due to its size, strong facility base and strong links to neighbouring communities within North Norfolk.

Policy SS1

- 1.1 Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk Policy SS1 states that the majority of new development in North Norfolk will take place in the towns and larger villages, dependent on their local housing needs, their role as employment, retail and service centres and particular environmental and infrastructure constraints. It is stated that Cromer is defined as a 'Principal Settlement' where the majority of new and residential development will take place (approximately 75% of new employment and 50% of new homes). Whilst there needs to be a degree of flexibility with this statement, in the context of Cromer, this aspect of the policy is generally supported. However, the policy also makes reference to 'Secondary Settlements' in which a limited amount of development will be accommodated (approximately 25% of employment land allocations and 20% of new homes).
- 1.2 In terms of environmental constraints, particularly the AONB, they tend to be evident across the District due to the open rural and often coastal nature of the region. Consequently, environmental constraints tend to be present in all settlements, whether Principal or Secondary.
- 1.3 Paragraph 2.4.7 recognises the roles of the urban areas in North Norfolk as follows:
- Larger Service Centre Roles - Cromer, Fakenham, North Walsham
- Complementary Roles - Cromer, Sheringham and Holt
- Smaller Settlements - Hoveton, Stalham, Sheringham and Wells
- 1.4 The question has to be asked why is Cromer a Principal Settlement and not Sheringham? We would urge that criteria for Principal and Secondary Settlements is clarified and outlined in more detail. The Core Strategy fails to mention what the population of a town has to be for it to be considered a Principal Settlement. The same can be said for the type of shops the town would have to include and the activities occurring within the settlement limits. Further to the above, it is clear that Sheringham, whilst being able to support itself as an independent settlement, has clear links with Cromer. This is identified in terms of proximity, shared services and shared employment opportunities.

- 1.5 It should be stressed that this evidence is not purely related to the association between Cromer and Sheringham. For instance, Holt has been defined as a Principal Settlement. Holt has only been allocated 700 dwellings during the plan period. This figure represents only seven more dwellings than allocated within Sheringham.
- 1.6 The 2001 Census indicated that Holt had a population of 3,350, with a projected population of 5,030 in 2021 (assuming a rate of 2.2 persons per dwelling as indicated by Norfolk County Council Obligations Standards Document 2007). Sheringham, however, had a population of 7,143 when the 2001 Census was undertaken. In comparison, Holt has fewer employment opportunities and retail provision than both Cromer and Sheringham. As a town it can be argued that Sheringham has a busier retail area, a larger weekly market and a higher use of public transport, such as the mainline rail route to Norwich City Centre. Holt, however, is characterised by smaller shops and fewer public transport facilities. Whilst we are not asking for Holt to be downgraded to a Secondary Settlement, it is clear that Sheringham has similar characteristics to both Holt and Cromer and should therefore be given the same policy designation.
- 1.7 We do not believe, as quoted in paragraph 2.4.7 that Sheringham is a local centre that simply performs a complementary role within North Norfolk.
- 1.8 It is also worth noting that as part of a Sequential Appraisal recently undertaken (Summer 2007) in support of C2 residential development at Sutherland House, Cromer, all available and deliverable sites in the urban areas of North Norfolk were analysed. This advice was coordinated with North Norfolk District Council. North Norfolk District Council stated that Sheringham is considered to be one of the eight urban areas in the District and consequently we believe it is a Principal Settlement.

Conclusions

- 1.9 The Regional Spatial Strategy says to divide settlements into market towns, thereafter key service centres. Nearly all seven identified Principal Settlements are market towns and the remainder service centres.
- 1.10 All towns have a range of support services and generally have complementary roles with on another.
- 1.11 We do not believe that Sheringham, due to its size, make up and the activities that take place there, should be classified as a Secondary Settlement, and consequently it should

be upgraded to a Principal Settlement. If there is to be a difference, then Sheringham should be added to Principal Settlements.