

**MID SUFFOLK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
CORE STRATEGY FOCUSED REVIEW
EXAMINATION
MATTER 1 – LEGAL COMPLIANCE
WRITTEN STATEMENT BY
CONSTRUCT REASON LTD/E. W. DURRANT & SON**

1. Does the CSFR comply with the policies of the Framework and does the CSFR adequately address the national presumption in favour of sustainable development?

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.1 It is considered that the Core Strategy Focused Review does comply with the Framework and it does address the presumption in favour of sustainable development in relation to the locations of growth identified and the level of housing provision. Policy FC1 specifically defines sustainable development and how proposals are to be measured against this objective.
- 1.2 The main thread running through the Core Strategy Focused Review is to concentrate development within the main District town of Stowmarket which is considered to be the most sustainable form of growth in accordance with the Framework. The Framework states that planning should “*actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.*”
- 1.3 Stowmarket is the main settlement in Mid Suffolk and, given the level of employment opportunities/services located there; it represents a settlement where sustainable development can be achieved. The Inspector who examined the Core Strategy noted at paragraph 4.32 of his report that there is clear guidance at Policy SS4 of the EEP to the effect that development should be steered towards the larger settlements. At paragraph 4.35 of his report, the Inspector noted that he supported the approach of the Core Strategy which seeks to direct the majority of new development to the towns and key service centres.
- 1.4 The Core Planning Principles outlined in the Framework provide a significant emphasis on growth and that a proactive response is needed to stimulate the economy. The Framework states that planning should “*proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area; taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities.*”

- 1.5 It is considered that the Core Strategy Focused Review provides a positive and proactive response to the economic growth and housing provision in order to stimulate the economy in the District.

Sustainable Development

- 1.6 We submitted comments in relation the Regulation 25 draft policy FC1 regarding the prescriptive bullet points which were included within the draft policy. The removal of the bullet points in the Regulation 27 draft ensures that a more equitable review of development proposals will be undertaken. Our comment at that stage was that the aspiration inherent in Policy FC1 would be underlined if it contained a reference to the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is at the heart of the then Draft Framework.
- 1.7 Therefore we would welcome the modification of Policy FC1 to include the model sustainability policy as that would assist in the clarification and definition of sustainable development and how this is to be interpreted by the Core Strategy Focused Review.
- 1.8 The plan period set out in the Core Strategy Focused Review is clear and Policy FC2 sets out the phasing of housing development in accordance with the plan period.