

SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW OF CORE STRATEGY POLICY CS7 (SIR)

MATTER 4:

THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING

ON BEHALF OF: NEWMARKET HORSEMEN'S GROUP

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1. ISSUE 4.1

1.1 How has the distribution of housing set out in Policy CS7 been arrived at?

1.1.1 The Newmarket Horsemen's Group (the NHG) has consistently raised objection to the rejection through the SA process of RAF Mildenhall and Brandon as reasonable alternatives for housing distribution. It does not believe that it is reasonable to reject either location without further evidence.

1.1.2 Furthermore, the consequences of RAF Mildenhall on both the local economy and the housing market have not been adequately factored into the plan and are not planned for. The closure of RAF Mildenhall is confirmed for 2023 (during the lifetime of the Plan) and the US Department of Defence has announced that it will result in a net reduction of 2,000 US military personnel.

1.1.3 The MoD has confirmed its intention to dispose of the land for housing development.

1.1.4 In response, the Council is involved in a Working Group to consider the issues arising from the closure (see http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/RAF_Lakenheath_and_Mildenhall/index.cfm for details). The website includes reference to a study about the impact of the closure on the housing market and a consultation on the future of the site where the potential for 2,000 homes was considered. Despite this level of activity and work, none of this information is reflected in the SIR or the evidence base.

1.1.5 Work prepared by the Council indicates that as of August 2015, over 5,000 US military personnel lived off base¹. They occupy existing residential properties and contribute to the local economy. The loss of US military personnel in this area will return existing housing to the housing market. The extent to which US military personnel influences the housing market is briefly covered at paragraph 4.8 of evidence base document C25.

1

http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/RAF_Lakenheath_and_Mildenhall/upload/HousingPositionStatement150909.pdf

- 1.1.6 The NHG has raised concerns previously that the SIR has neglected to consider the impact of the closure of this site on either the local housing market or the availability of this site for housing development to meet future housing needs.
- 1.1.7 It is noted that similar RAF sites have played and are playing a role in meeting housing need in other authorities. RAF Alconbury in Hunts DC is a good example of this. This site has planning permission for up to 5,000 homes and is a proposed allocation for 6,680 homes (which includes the permitted scheme). Another example of this is Waterbeach Barracks in South Cambridgeshire DC. The Council here has included this site as an allocation in its draft Local Plan and a planning application has now come forward at the site. It is expected to deliver up to 9,000 new homes as part of a new town.
- 1.1.8 The reasonable alternative offered by RAF Mildenhall for the location of housing has been rejected without adequate justification and in spite of ongoing work elsewhere by the Council. Furthermore, the impact of the closure of RAF Mildenhall and consequences for the need for additional housing have not been adequately investigated or addressed in the SIR. This is especially significant given the constraints that exist at Newmarket and the threat that further development there presents to the HRI.
- 1.1.9 As such, the Plan is considered to be unsound as it has not been adequately justified.

2. ISSUE 4.2

2.1 Is the broad distribution of housing set out in Policy CS7 consistent with the Core Strategy's vision for the district, its settlement specific visions, spatial objectives and settlement hierarchy?

- 2.1.1 In the context of Newmarket, the NHG believes that the Council has sought to achieve the three dimensions of sustainable development set out at paragraph 7 of the NPPF. Despite the concerns that the NHG has raised on other matters, the answer to this question is yes.

3. Issue 4.3

3.1 Justification for housing distribution

3.1.1 The NHG considers that the level of development at Newmarket should be set as a maximum to ensure that the special character and sensitivities of the Town can be protected. Newmarket is the largest town in the district but is also home to the horse-racing industry, which is a significant contributor to the local and national economy.

3.1.2 The NHG considers that the significance of the horse-racing industry to the economic success of both Newmarket, the district and the wider area is of such importance that any development that threatens this should be carefully considered. The contribution of the horse-racing industry to the economy has been confirmed in two reports that the Council has commissioned and that are part of the Examination Library. These are documents B37 and B51. Both documents confirm the need to plan development that does not conflict with this industry and at the same time encourage development that will allow for this industry to flourish and grow.

3.1.3 Since then an update report has been prepared by SQW but does not appear to have been included in the examination library². It is requested that this report is added.

3.1.4 This report advises that direct employment in this industry has increased by 9.5% to just under 4,000 jobs and economic contribution has increased by 16.3% to £241.9m since the 2012 report.

3.1.5 It is clear from the Council's own evidence that the horse-racing industry is of major importance to the existing and future economic success of the area and should therefore be encouraged and protected.

3.1.6 The NHG believes that increased development will undermine this as it will be in direct conflict with the industry through increased traffic movements in the town and/or loss of land in horse-racing use.

²

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/upload/NewmarketUpdateReport2017.pdf>

3.1.7 Newmarket is subject to numerous constraints including heritage, wider traffic matters, the declaration of an AQMA in the town centre the presence of SSSIs and SACs near to the town and the risk of coalescence with Exning³. The horse-racing industry is just one constraint to delivering higher numbers at Newmarket (as identified by the Council in its response to previous question). The NHG considers that it is a factor of significant importance that must be recognised in the Plan. A maximum housing target for Newmarket is required to provide this and without it the NHG considers that the Plan gives rise to unintended economic impacts that would undermine the ability of the Plan to secure sustainable development.

3.1.8 The NHG has previously raised concerns about the absence of higher numbers at Mildenhall (through the redevelopment of RAF Mildenhall) and Brandon. This is covered by the response to Issue 4.1 and so is not repeated here except to say that the failure to consider reasonable alternatives means that the Plan is not justified.

4. Issue 4.4

4.1 Justification for housing numbers at Newmarket and impact on the horse-racing industry

4.1.1 In responding to this issue it is important to review the NHG responses to issues 4.1 and 4.3. These are not repeated here save to repeat again that – as acknowledged by the Council - the horse-racing industry is just one constraint on housing numbers in Newmarket.

4.1.2 It is important that the Inspectors understand the unique characteristics of Newmarket. It is a town steeped in the history of horse-racing with the greatest concentration of horse-racing activities compared to anywhere else in the UK. The economic significance of the industry to the town is summarised in response to Issue 4.3 but is also relevant to responding to this Issue.

4.1.3 The horse-racing industry is not just about the racecourses in Newmarket. There are activities across the town and outside of the town that are linked to the industry. A plan of these uses is attached for the benefit of the Inspectors. This is an important point to understand as it demonstrates how the entire

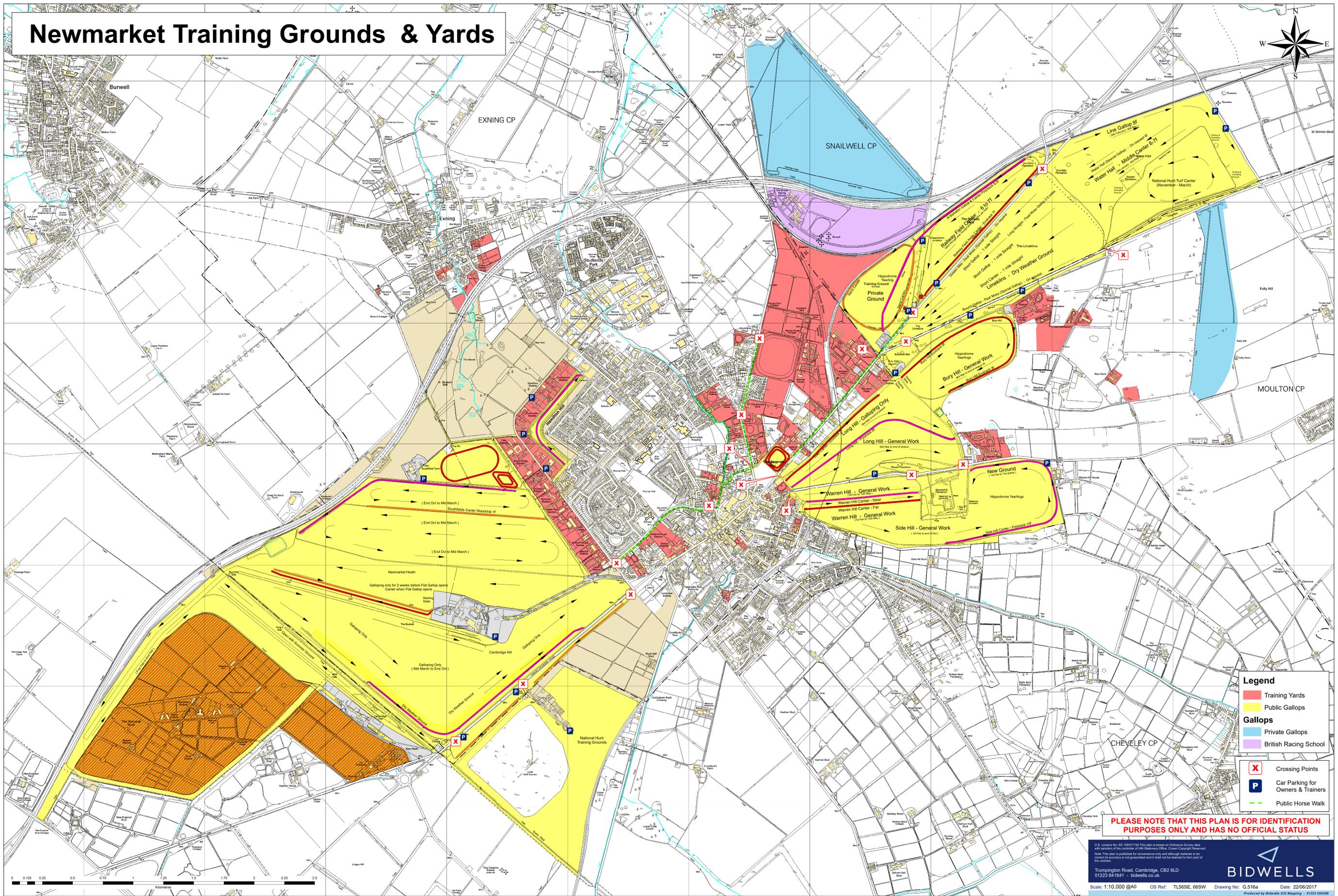
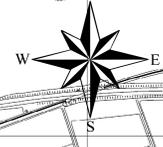
³ This is explained at para 5.6.11 of submission document C8 (Site Allocations DPD)

- town is influenced by the industry in some way and why the NHG is so concerned about the impact of future development.
- 4.1.4 It is a fact that race horses move through the town every day of the year and in doing so come into contact with human activity. The greatest impact of human activity on the horse-racing industry is that caused by traffic. The greatest conflict potential arises at the horse crossing points but there are also risks along the horse walks that cross the town.
- 4.1.5 The traffic impact concern is not just in terms of the volume of traffic but also the nature of the traffic, the existence of traffic in the town and driver behaviour. All aspects combine to create a risk to horses and the NHG has consistently argued that the Council has not adequately investigated this matter beyond the standard approach of quantifying traffic impact. Furthermore, there is an absence of evidence to demonstrate that the risks raised by the NHG are unfounded such that greater development can be justified.
- 4.1.6 To assist the Inspectors in understanding this concern, a report prepared by COTTEE Transport Planning is attached to this Statement.
- 4.1.7 The Council's own response to the previous questions of the Inspectors confirm that the highways study recommended in the report at B37 of the Evidence Library has not be carried out. The NHG considers that this is a significant omission of the plan-making exercise that only goes to confirm its concerns that such impacts cannot and have not been properly assessed when preparing the SIR.
- 4.1.8 The NHG has submitted detailed evidence to the Hatchfield Farm inquiry (as referred to in B19 of the Examination Library) about the interaction of thoroughbred horses with traffic and the implications of this for the industry as a whole. The Secretary of State agreed that the threat to the horse-racing industry was a relevant matter for consideration and the Courts did not disagree with this despite quashing the decision on other matters. The NHG considers that this justifies a precautionary approach towards the horse-racing industry when deciding where to distribute development. Indeed, the High Court specifically rejected the Claimants' challenge to the Secretary of State's interpretation of the Joint Development Management Policies Document Policy DM48 as being a precautionary policy.

- 4.1.9 The NHG has submitted representations to this plan-making process to confirm that the threats raised to the horse-racing industry with regard to development stem primarily from the impact on the movement of horses around Newmarket and the consequential risk to the safety of thoroughbred horses. The concern is that this safety risk will create a negative perception of Newmarket amongst trainers and owners, resulting in a relocation of activities away from Newmarket, with significant adverse economic and reputational consequences for the horseracing industry in Newmarket. A secondary risk also exists to the ability of other aspects of the industry to move across town (e.g. vets and trainers) who may be needed to attend locations urgently and yet struggle to do so in a timely manner. This would be another reason to encourage elements of the industry to move away from Newmarket.
- 4.1.10 A further threat comes from the loss of land that is currently in horse-racing use although the Council's development management policies have addressed this point. In the context of the SIR, the NHG considers that the main threat is the impact of traffic on horse movements and that this is a legitimate issue to take into account when planning the future growth of Newmarket.
- 4.1.11 The NHG has submitted representations requesting that further evidence is produced by the Council about traffic impacts on horse movements and the potential to mitigate such measures. Such evidence has not been prepared
- 4.1.12 As currently prepared, the Plan is not supported by sufficient evidence to (see in particular the comments made by the NHG to the IDP and the SA) and as such cannot be said to be justified.

Appendix 1: Map of Horse-racing Activities Across Newmarket

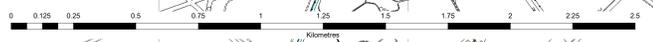
Newmarket Training Grounds & Yards



Legend

- Training Yards
- Public Gallops
- Private Gallops
- British Racing School
- Crossing Points
- Car Parking for Owners & Trainers
- Public Horse Walk

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS PLAN IS FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES ONLY AND HAS NO OFFICIAL STATUS



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Appendix 2: Report by COTTEE Transport Planning

SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW OF CORE STRATEGY POLICY CS7 (SIR)

MATTER 4: THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING

ON BEHALF OF: NEWMARKET HORSEMEN'S GROUP (NHG) – September 2017

Introduction

COTTEE Transport Planning (CTP) are instructed by NHG to make representations on Transport related Matters and Issues for the Examination. This document focuses on Matter 4, in particular paragraph 4.4, as set out below. Reference is made to two new Aecom documents unavailable at the time of the previous representations namely: Forest Heath SAP Cumulative Impact Study (Transport) August 2016 (**B18**) and Forest Heath SAP Cumulative Impact Study (Transport) – Addendum October 2016 (**B17**). The red text below is a summary of the concerns which are expanded upon in the main text.

4.4 Housing growth at both Newmarket and Brandon is quite low relative to other settlements. Both are Market Towns, in the 'top tier' of the settlement hierarchy. Newmarket is the district's largest settlement with a wide range of services and facilities, and is recognised as one of its most sustainable settlements, if not the most.

c) What specifically would be the impacts of greater housing growth on the horse racing industry? There are a number of impacts – the specific Transport related concern is the increase in traffic on local roads leading to an increase in conflict between vehicles and horses with the associated safety risks to high value thoroughbred horses. Increased congestion inhibiting the movement of HRI personnel e.g. vets and trainers attending emergency HRI business.

d) What evidence is there to demonstrate that greater housing growth in Newmarket would lead to more traffic in the town than the proposed distribution of new housing? It is for the Council to answer the question with supporting evidence but greater housing growth in Newmarket would focus traffic on Newmarket roads. Traffic Housing growth elsewhere would distribute traffic around the district – some of which would visit Newmarket but not be focused entirely on it.

e) Could the impacts of increased traffic on the horse racing industry be addressed, for example through the provision of new or enhanced horse walks? The principal concerns relate to horse crossings and road congestion (as indicated in c above). Some horse walks could benefit from improvement but the other two issues are of higher priority.

1. It is important for this examination to be aware of the previous concerns raised by the NHG about traffic in Newmarket. CTP were instructed by NHG to provide evidence at the 2015 Hatchfield Farm Public Inquiry together with horse behavioural expert Professor Natalie Waran (Jeanne Marchig Professor of Animal Welfare Education at the University of Edinburgh) to explain how thoroughbred horses react to crossing the highway. No such evidence has been prepared by the Council to support the documents that are the subject of this examination.

Previously at the 2012 Hatchfield Farm Public Inquiry safety had been considered primarily from the perspective of traffic capacity and accident data and had not engaged at all with any equine expert to assess safety issues. The surveys undertaken previously were relatively distant from the crossings compared with those undertaken by CTP for the 2015 Inquiry, which examined carefully and precisely the issues which arise. The lack of engagement previously with a recognised issue was of major concern to NHG. Although this examination is not to consider the Hatchfield Farm evidence it is of relevance to the question that has been asked.

The NHG remains concerned that the Council's approach to assessing the impact of traffic in Newmarket on the HRI is overly-reliant on a capacity exercise. The NHG considers that the uniqueness of Newmarket and the interaction of the HRI means that an alternative assessment is warranted. It is important to note that the evidence presented by the NHG to the Hatchfield Inquiry demonstrated that more than 1000 horses cross Fordham Road in an 8 hour period each day; and with more than 230 horses in the peak hour 0800-0900 crossing around 1000 passing vehicles.

2. Turning to the most recent evidence provided by Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) on Transport matters in the form of two Aecom reports one with and one without the 400 houses at Hatchfield Farm (the subject of the above mentioned Inquiry in 2015).

Aecom report dated August 2016 entitled: FHDC SAP Cumulative Impact Study (B18 in the evidence library) including 400 units at Hatchfield Farm. The main points concerning NHG are as follows:

- Paragraph 4.8.11 refers to **Fordham Road** being highly likely to experience accidents; and Paragraph 4.8.12 confirms **that accidents occurring along Fordham Road are more likely to result in a death or serious injury.....**
- Paragraph 4.8.14 concludes that **any development which is located nearby should review accident data carefully to ensure that any increase in traffic or development proposals do not exacerbate an existing issue.**

- **Table 5.1 - Aecom Trip Rates** are significantly lower than those used by WSP for the Hatchfield Farm scheme. **The Aecom analysis is therefore flawed because it should consider PM peak hour flows 50% higher; and AM peak hour flows 13% higher. This will affect the capacity analysis results.**
- **Paragraph 8.2.9** confirms the signalised A14 junction for Hatchfield Farm **exceeds capacity in the future scenarios.**
- **Paragraph 8.2.16** refers to **further detailed feasibility assessment being required and likely to include the widening of the A14 bridge.** Aecom state that **further study should include** the whole section of Fordham Road between Windmill Hill to the north and Studland Park Ave/ Fordham Road roundabout to the south in order to take account of the interaction between junctions. **This could take the form of a microsimulation assessment which is outside the scope of this study.** At Paragraph 8.2.20 Aecom recommend that the enhanced signalised option is explored further, with the potential for bridge widening and slip road realignments considered as necessary.
- **Based on the above there is no evidence and therefore no certainty that a suitable design to accommodate traffic associated with growth in Newmarket can be achieved and it is considered a wider microsimulation study should be undertaken as advocated previously by NHG and now by Aecom.**
- **The Aecom study is inconclusive with Hatchfield Farm included. Potentially serious safety issues have been identified on Fordham Road and large scale infrastructure is required at the A14 junction, which is as yet untested and not costed.**

Aecom report dated October 2016 entitled: FHDC SAP Cumulative Impact Study - Addendum (B17 in the evidence library) excluding 400 units at Hatchfield Farm. Main points concerning NHG as follows:

- **Paragraph 1.2.9** confirms **448 additional dwellings allocated across the study area to account for the removal of Hatchfield Farm.** **Alternative locations have therefore been found for more than the 400 dwellings removed at Hatchfield Farm at various locations; leaving 321 dwellings at Newmarket (Table 7).**
- **Paragraph 1.6.10** confirms the preferred mitigation option at the A14 junction **does not fully mitigate the impact in the PM peak hour.** **Potential bridge widening and slip road realignments to be examined.**

- **Paragraph 1.8.4** states that the conclusions and recommendations provided within the previous assessment remain the same, despite the removal of Hatchfield Farm site.
 - **Potentially large scale improvements are required to the A14 junction which remain to be analysed and costed.**
- 3. Horse crossings** – there is no mention in the Aecom reports of specific improvements to horse crossings being required as a result of the new development as referred to in the Deloitte report (B37 in the evidence library). **This is a concern to the NHG.**
- 4. Jockey Club Estates (JCE) instructed CTP earlier this year to work with Suffolk CC (SCC) to design upgraded Horse Crossings at 17 locations.** SCC have identified £150k of funding and JCE will match this. The funds available at this time will not allow signalisation (Pegasus Crossings). However, it has been agreed with SCC that six horse crossings will be upgraded to Pegasus Crossings when the funding becomes available. **NHG are concerned that equine behaviour / horse safety has not been addressed by FHDC; and that there should be a Policy to ensure that any new development contributes towards the implementation and maintenance of the necessary horse crossing infrastructure.**