

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

Warwick District Council Examination into Local Plan – September 2016

Land south of Coventry – various sites providing land for housing, employment, open space, leisure and recreation, transport and other infrastructure, community facilities, education, emergency services, healthcare and other associated social infrastructure and the protection of ecological resources

This statement is agreed by the following parties: -

- Warwick District Council;
- Coventry City Council;
- Warwickshire County Council

This statement addresses the following areas of common ground:

1. Description of the area
2. Description of the main sites
3. Reason for the proposed development
4. The quantum and broad location of housing;
5. Strategic infrastructure requirements;
6. Future planning processes including the potential for an early Plan Review and timescales;
7. A commitment to an ongoing process to work together to resolve issues and work on the detail;
8. Clarifying the Coventry City Council position
9. Shared aims and objectives for the delivery of exemplar sites

Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding between the key parties is intended to demonstrate a robust and clear commitment to a shared way forward that can:

- Support investment decisions and provide clarity and certainty for developers
- Support the Local Plan Examination
- Ensure allocated sites are brought forward with an understanding of wider development potential
- Prepare the ground for a future partial Plan Review.

1. Description of the area

Please also see attached the reference map of the area (appendix A)

The area to which this agreement relates is not formally identified on a plan but effectively covers land to the immediate south of the boundary between Coventry City Council (CCC) and Warwick District Council (WDC) in the county of Warwickshire. It is defined broadly: -

- to the north by the boundary of the city of Coventry, including the University of Warwick Campus where it lies within / adjacent to the boundary
- to the south by the emergent line of HS2 and to the east by the A46
- to the east by the current built-up area
- to the west by the settlement of Burton Green

The whole of this area is not identified for development. The land and identified sites lie within the confirmed green belt.

2. Description of the main sites

- a) Westwood Heath (site reference H42) – an area of around 25ha has been identified for a residential-led, mixed-use development. Given infrastructure constraints, especially along the strategic and local highways network, the housing to be provided on site is capped at 425 dwellings (of a possible 600) during the current plan period. However, the creation of improved road infrastructure / additional network capacity could allow for further residential development to be accommodated without undue adverse impacts on local amenity on land that has been safeguarded adjacent to the allocated site.
- b) Kings Hill (site reference H43) - an area of 269ha has been identified for a residential-led, mixed-use development. The site has an overall capacity of c. 4,000 dwellings, with c. 1,800 dwellings being deliverable by the end of the current plan period. The mixed use development will also deliver opportunities for employment provision. Land will be made available for open space, leisure and amenity uses and a green infrastructure network will link to the wider countryside and north to the conurbation. A local centre will be provided at an appropriate scale, incorporating a range of local community facilities and services including meeting space / community buildings, emergency services infrastructure, youth facilities / play areas and local retail provision for convenience shopping. A new primary school will be required to serve the development, which may need to be expanded as the site develops over time and further provision will also be needed to meet secondary educational requirements.
- c) Area of safeguarded land to immediate east of H42 (site reference S1) – area of around 44ha of land currently within the green belt but which has been removed for potential future allocation. WDC has identified this area between

the urban area of Coventry and a new Green Belt boundary in order to assist in meeting potential long term development requirements.

3. Reason for the proposed development

The Inspector appointed to consider the submitted new local plan prepared by WDC identified a number of concerns relating primarily to the levels of housing being proposed in it. He asked the authority to look again at the total levels of unmet housing need in the light of CCC being unable to meet its own needs within its boundaries. This equated to WDC having to increase the housing requirement from 12,860 to 16,776 across the plan period and to reduce what the Inspector saw as an overoptimistic reliance on windfall provision.

The modifications focus primarily on how the housing needs of Coventry can most appropriately be accommodated in the District, at the same time as ensuring that the overall distribution continues to provide balanced and sustainable patterns of growth across the whole District. The starting point therefore was to seek to provide for the City's needs in sustainable locations including locations close to the City.

4. The quantum and broad location of housing;

At the time of the Plan's publication, the housing requirement focused on Warwick District. As a result the distribution focused on the District's main settlements and did not include major Green Belt releases on the edge of Coventry.

There were a number of substantial sites on the southern edge of Coventry that were submitted through the SHLAA. Some of these were assessed as suitable and therefore provided an opportunity to meet a significant part of the needs of the City as close to the City as possible, subject to Green Belt and infrastructure considerations.

Many of these sites will make best use of existing infrastructure and are located close to existing and future employment opportunities. In general this area therefore offers a sustainable broad location.

5. Strategic infrastructure requirements;

Please also see attached reference map (Appendix A).

Strategic infrastructure is identified in the Infrastructure Development Plan (document reference IN07PM in the Local Plan Evidence Base).

6. Future planning processes including the potential for an early Plan Review and timescales;

The area is subject to a proposed additional policy in the emerging Local Plan for Warwick District Council (DSNEW1), which will be considered during the reopened examination between October and December 2016.

Assuming the Plan is adopted in 2017, developers / promoters of the allocated sites have indicated that they are keen to pursue development as soon as possible, and are currently working on putting together pre-application material. These applications would be considered next year and the housing trajectory for the sites has been considered to be as follows: -

- Kings Hill - Between 2020/ 21 - 2028/ 29, the assumed build-out rate is c200 units a year, based on the assumption of multiple outlets once planning permission has been achieved.
- Westwood Heath - The current trajectory assumes that 25 units will be built in 2018-19 and the remainder will be built out at a rate of 100 units per annum between 2019-20 and 2022-23.

With regard to the area of safeguarded land identified as S1 in the emerging plan, this will be subject to an early partial review of the Plan five years after adoption. The intention is to consider at that point, given the ongoing work on infrastructure in the immediate area, whether there would be sufficient need arising within the sub-region and the district to warrant additional land coming forward for housing.

7. A commitment to an ongoing process to work together to resolve issues and work on the detail;

There is a commitment at Chief Officer and political level amongst the three Councils to ensure that the detail of the approach to the comprehensive planning and funding arrangements for this area, as outlined in this Statement, is undertaken through robust partnership arrangements.

A Strategic Programme Board comprising of senior officers from each authority, feeding into a Senior Member and Officer Board, again with representation from each authority, has been established to provide the governance framework for a major transport project that will impact on the future development of this area.

The three authorities are committed to establishing a similar governance framework to cover the issues set out in this Statement.

8. Clarifying the Coventry City Council position

Coventry City Council confirms that this Statement of Common Ground is agreed at officer level and as Local Planning Authority. In doing so, it reflects the principles and policies agreed and endorsed by the Council in its own Local Plan (currently subject to its own public examination), most notably Section 1 and Policies DS2 and GB2.

The City's Local Plan confirmed that in principle it would be supportive of development within Warwickshire but adjacent to its own administrative boundary where it was supported by appropriate and sustainable infrastructure. In this respect we have always felt that the provision of sustainable infrastructure would be required on a cross boundary basis and are committed to working jointly with all relevant parties including the site promoters and the District Council as the proposed allocations evolve through the District Councils Local Plan. We would also expect this to materialise in Section 106 agreements or CIL proposals with Warwick and Coventry (as relevant and appropriate).

It should be stressed however that this SOCG does not pre-judge any decision that may or may not be taken by the Council as landowner at a later date in relation to the disposal of the Council's land holdings in this area.

9. Shared aims and objectives for the delivery of exemplar sites in the area

The following outcomes are what the successful development of land south of Coventry will achieve: -

Traffic and roads - a strengthened and improved network of strategic transport links serving the area and providing sufficient capacity to address forecast congestion issues to and from the conurbation, Kenilworth, Warwick and Leamington. This will include: -

- Improvements to existing junctions, carriageways and points of access to the strategic network to mitigate the impacts of additional traffic and, where possible, alleviate current levels of congestion
- The provision of new road infrastructure where required to serve the area and various junction improvements.
- Provision of park and ride opportunities to serve commuters travelling into Coventry and the Warwick / Leamington / Kenilworth areas
- The design of layouts for new housing and amenity areas that allows for the use of modes of transport other than the private car
- Strategic road infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be phased throughout the life of the developments, with a framework in place to share costs equitably amongst developers in the wider area.

Public and Personal Transport – the extension of existing services to meet demands from new development fully and frequently. This will be particularly important when considering the needs of the resident and incoming student population. Measures to mitigate and improve services will include: -

- Additional / improved public transport links of all types, where feasible and viable, servicing the University and Kings Hill
- Improved bus provision, including the extension of extant services and provision of additional routes where necessary
- The creation and enhancement of a network of cycle routes and paths, including safe and accessible links into the conurbation, University and to and from the rail halt.
- The creation and enhancement of safe and accessible pedestrian routes into the conurbation, University and adjacent development, linking wherever possible to existing public footpaths and longer distance routes.

Services and strategic provision – development will be provided with sufficient levels of water, sewage and power infrastructure, to ensure that impacts on adjacent facilities is mitigated.

- Improvements to the capacity of Finham Works will be required as appropriate
- Developers will liaise with service providers to ensure the most appropriate and future-proofed delivery of capacity is achieved, e.g. through shared ducting
- High-speed broadband (fibre optic cabling, wireless etc.) will be provided as standard, as will next-generation mobile technology

Education – the provision of capacity meet demands arising from the new development: -

- New primary school(s) at Kings Hill to meet demand generated by the new community
- A new secondary school will be provided although further discussion will be required between all stakeholders to determine how and when this will be delivered.
- The ongoing development and expansion of the University of Warwick, with best use made of the existing landholding and the extension of the University's built environment in accordance with an agreed masterplan that reflects the high quality of design and sustainability being sought for the area.

Community Facilities – the provision of suitably located and accessible facilities and services to enable the new developments at Westwood Heath and Kings Hill to function as successful and sustainable communities in their own right: -

- Westwood Heath will provide new local services and facilities as necessary and appropriate levels of retail facilities (a convenience store of no more than 500sq.m. gross),
- Kings Hill will provide a new local centre, and employment opportunities
- Both developments will incorporate appropriate levels of emergency services infrastructure, in agreement with the respective services
- Both developments will also include as appropriate community meeting spaces / multi-function buildings that can serve as community hubs.
- Both developments will work with various health providers to ensure sufficient capacity is available for residents of the new development

Green infrastructure – the nature of the landscape and environment in this area will dictate that a significant amount of open space will be required as part of the wider strategic infrastructure requirements. This will be in the form of a mixture of both formal and informal provision: -

- There are existing sports facilities at Kings Hill (Alvis) that will either be retained or relocated within the area, to provide at the least a commensurate level of sports and leisure activity.
- Additional sporting and leisure provision will be required as part of the development areas, to allow people to engage in pursuits conducive to a healthy and active lifestyle.
- The development sites themselves (together with areas safeguarded for potential future development) will be removed from the Green Belt.
- The status of the Green Belt in the rest of the area will be maintained and land will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with the requirements of the NPPG.
- Landscape enhancement will be required, to mitigate the impacts of development on the landscape in general and to reinforce Green Belt and other boundaries to prevent encroachment.
- The opportunity to strengthen and reinstate traditional landscape forms will be encouraged.
- Informal public open space will be required on all development sites, especially in locations where meaningful links can be made to the wider countryside. This will allow for wildlife corridors to be maintained and for local communities to be able to enjoy the benefits of a wider range of leisure and recreational opportunities.
- Biodiversity on development sites will be maintained through the provision of habitat creation opportunities or, where habitats are unavoidably impacted on or removed, appropriate levels of offsetting provided elsewhere on the site or as close to it as possible.
- Sensitive habitats, such as Wainbody Wood and the woodlands on Westwood Heath, must be retained and protected and development will maintain these as integral and valued aspects of the final layouts.

Housing – these developments offer an opportunity for the delivery of exciting and innovative housing layouts, house types and a mix of tenures and sizes, that reflect best environmental and sustainable practice: -

- Housing schemes will be of high quality and reflect high standards in construction and residential amenity
- Development will promote higher standards of environmental performance and durability
- Residential development will be expected to make best use of available land, services and infrastructure

- Residential provision will be easily managed and maintained at all stages in the lives of the residents
- Affordable housing will be required to help meet identified need in Warwick District and Coventry, to be apportioned between the two authorities accordingly.
- The level of provision of affordable housing will accord with the requirements set out in the relevant local plan policies for the district.

Employment and economic growth – opportunities for economic growth, both within and adjacent the sites, will help cement the stability and sustainable growth of the sub-region: -

- Employment-generating uses will be housed in modern, attractive and environmentally sustainable buildings that promote energy efficiency and carbon neutrality
- Spin-out activity from the University will be supported and delivered in close proximity, in line with a masterplan
- Infrastructure to support economic growth, such as transport and highways improvements, will be supported through the implementation of the IDP and the provision of funding through legal agreements and CIL requirements.
- A range of new employment opportunities will be explored and where appropriate identified as part of the various masterplans for the sites being promoted.
- The presence of HS2 and the new rail halt will themselves be drivers for economic growth and it will be important to ensure that opportunities for linkages to existing infrastructure and accessibility are maximised.

Health and wellbeing –National planning guidance identifies the following at paragraph 5 of its Health and Wellbeing section:

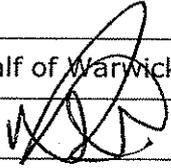
A healthy community is a good place to grow up and grow old in. It is one which supports healthy behaviours and supports reductions in health inequalities. It should enhance the physical and mental health of the community. It should ... encourage active healthy lifestyles ... the creation of healthy living environments.

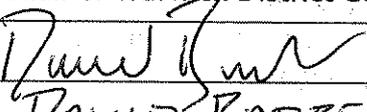
The Vision and Objectives above identify a number of aspects of healthy development, but in addition the following issues should be addressed: -

- Housing will be of sufficient size to prevent overcrowding, will provide for a light, airy living environment and will protect inhabitants from the effects of noise, pollution and extremes of temperature
- Design and layout will promote community interaction through appropriate design and layout, ensuring that residents do not suffer from feelings of isolation
- The layout of schemes will promote physical activity through providing opportunities for walking, cycling and active recreation and will reduce the incidence of traffic accidents
- The provision of substantial areas of open space, landscaping and green corridors will help protect residents from the effects of airborne pollution, as will the design of local streets
- The mental health requirements of residents will be addressed in part through easy and safe access to green open space and the natural environment
- Communities and the residential environment will be enhanced by good access to healthcare, education, social infrastructure and local employment opportunities

Layouts will reflect best practice in designing out crime

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

Signed on behalf of Warwickshire County Council
Signature: 
Print Name Mark Ryder
Position: Head of Transport & Economy
Date: 14 October 2016

Signed on behalf of Warwick District Council
Signature: 
Print Name: DAVID BARBER
Position: POLICY + PROJECTS MANAGER.
Date: 17 th October 2016

Signed on behalf of Coventry City Council
Signature:
Print Name:
Position:
Name:

From: Andrews, Mark [<mailto:Mark.Andrews@coventry.gov.uk>]
Sent: 30 September 2016 10:39
To: Sam Holder
Cc: Dave Barber; 'Janet Neale'
Subject: RE: tripartite???

Hi Sam,

Yes, further to previous discussions, I'm happy with the SOCG

Kind regards

Mark

From: Sam Holder [<mailto:Sam.Holder@warwickdc.gov.uk>]
Sent: 30 September 2016 09:43
To: 'Janet Neale'
Cc: Andrews, Mark; Dave Barber
Subject: RE: tripartite???

Hi Janet

Yes, sorry, I meant to catch up with you as well but you know what it's like!

I think Coventry are Ok with the changes as discussed (Mark, can you confirm that for us? That would be really helpful, thanks) and as such it would just be for WCC to agree.

Many thanks,

Regards,

Sam

Sam Holder
Senior Planning Officer

Ext: 6330

* Please don't print this email unless you really need to.

From: Janet Neale [<mailto:janetneale@warwickshire.gov.uk>]
Sent: 30 September 2016 05:55
To: Sam Holder
Cc: Andrews, Mark; Dave Barber
Subject: Re: tripartite???

Hi Sam,

Sorry I meant to catch you yesterday. Is this now agreed by WDC and Coventry? You have picked everything up we asked for so I will happily send to Mark Ryder for sign off but didn't want to do that until you and Coventry had agreed it.

You'll probably get an out of office notification from me but don't worry, I'll check for an email from you and forward on to Mark Ryder as appropriate.

Thanks Sam

Kind regards

Janet

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From: Andrews, Mark [mailto:Mark.Andrews@coventry.gov.uk]
Sent: 14 September 2016 12:46
To: Sam Holder
Cc: Knight, Colin
Subject: RE: Tripartite Statement of Common Ground for land south of Coventry - revised version

Hi Sam,

Thank you for providing the final draft of the SOCG. I can confirm that this reflects our requested inputs and that I am happy for this SOCG to support the Warwick Local Plan examinations in this regard.

Kind regards

Mark