

## STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND (SoCG) BETWEEN: Warrington Borough Council; Homes England and Miller Homes Ltd

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this SoCG is to set out the latest position that has been reached between Warrington Borough Council (WBC); Homes England and Miller Homes Limited to assist the Examination of the WBC Local Plan.
- 1.2 The content of this SoCG relates to the "South East Warrington Urban Extension" (SEWUE), proposed for allocation under Site Policy MD2 (as indicated on the Local Plan Policies Map), which Homes England and Miller Homes are promoting for development.
- 1.3 Homes England and Miller Homes are strongly supportive of the SEWUE allocation and confirm that the site allocation is deliverable and viable. This SoCG focuses on the extensive areas of agreement between Homes England, Miller Homes and WBC.
- 1.4 Areas subject to further discussion, and areas which have not been agreed, are also summarised. The SoCG can be updated as the Examination progresses to reflect the outcome of ongoing discussions between all parties concerned.
- 1.5 This SoCG is accompanied by:
  - **Annex 1:** Land Control Plan with the SEWUE allocation boundary overlaid
  - **Annex 2:** Proposed structure for the SEWUE Development Framework

### 2. Plan Participation to Date

- 2.1 Joint discussions between WBC, Homes England and Miller Homes regarding the SEWUE have taken place since 2021, informing the Local Plan policy, supporting documents and evidence base, as well as informing the joint representations submitted by Homes England and Miller Homes. Prior to this, between 2018 and 2020, the Homes England and Miller Homes land interests were part of the wider Warrington Garden Suburb proposal; hence there has been joint working with WBC on the promotion of the land for many years.
- 2.2 Homes England and Miller Homes continue to work jointly together on the promotion and intended delivery of the SEWUE.
- 2.3 Homes England and Miller Homes prepared the "Deliverable Proposition" in August 2021, which forms part of the WBC evidence base (reference MP1).
- 2.4 During the Updated Proposed Submission Version Regulation 19 consultation in late 2021, Homes England and Miller Homes submitted representations which further demonstrated the deliverability of the SEWUE in response to the draft policy, including the "Deliverable Allocation" document (respondent references 0404-03 and 0432-01). Both parties have a strong record of delivery, as demonstrated in the representations.
- 2.5 Although strongly supportive of the SEWUE allocation, Homes England and Miller Homes also submitted representations seeking selected modifications to the Local Plan Policy MD2, its

supporting text, and supporting evidence base (respondent references 0404-02 and 0432-02). The changes sought were focussed on improving the soundness and precision of the Policy. Homes England and Miller Homes provided a "tracked changes" version of Policy MD2 within their submitted representations (ibid, see page 32-39).

- 2.6 In response to the Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions, Homes England and Miller Homes have submitted a joint Hearing Statement (reference M6b.09). Homes England and Miller Homes have confirmed their intention to attend the forthcoming Hearing Sessions for Matter 6b on 12 September 2022.

### 3. Geography and Site Description

- 3.1 The SEWUE allocation is located to the South East of the main urban area of Warrington, comprising land from Stockton Lane in the North to the M56 in the South. The allocation directly abuts established residential areas, including Stretton, Pewterspear, Dudlow's Green, Appleton Cross, Grappenhall Heys, and Stockton Heath. The village of Grappenhall lies to the North East, and the village of Appleton Thorn lies directly to the East, and beyond this, established employment areas at Barleycastle Industrial Estate, and proposed employment uses within the South East Warrington Employment allocation (see policy MD6).
- 3.2 The land within the SEWUE allocation is currently predominantly in agricultural use. A limited number of residential and farm buildings are included within the allocation. Residential and other smaller properties are excluded from the allocation. Woodland belts, hedgerows, watercourses, existing roads and footpaths cross the site.
- 3.3 The SEWUE allocation boundary covers approximately 241ha in total. The land owned and promoted by Homes England within the SEWUE is approximately 184ha. The land promoted by Miller Homes totals approximately 39ha. A further circa 34ha of land owned by Homes England in the immediate vicinity of the SEWUE is available for supporting uses such as playing fields, public open space, ecological or Green Belt compensation or mitigation, and can accommodate new highways. In addition, Homes England owns a further 4.43ha of Green Belt land in nearby Appleton Thorn and Stretton. A Land Control plan, including the SEWUE boundary, is provided at **Annex 1**.

### 4. Evidence Base and Development Framework

- 4.1 The following WBC-published documents are of particular relevance in the consideration of the proposed allocation:
- Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan and Policies Map (2021) (reference SP1)
  - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2021) (reference IN1)
  - Local Plan Viability Assessment (2021) and Addendum Report and Appendices (2022) (reference V1, V1a, V2, V2a)
  - SEWUE Deliverable Proposition (August 2021) (reference MP1)
  - WBC Responding to Representations Report (April 2022) (reference SP6)
- 4.2 Homes England and Miller Homes have prepared an indicative master plan and delivery schedule to inform their engagement with, and response to, the preparation of the Local Plan. The master plan and delivery schedule has been informed by technical work carried out by WSP, Optimised Environments, and Savills. This was initially presented in the "Deliverable Proposition" document (reference MP1).

- 4.3 Homes England and Miller Homes then presented refined proposals within a "Deliverable Allocation" document which was appended to joint representations submitted to the Proposed Submission Version consultation (respondent references 0404-03 and 0432-01). This document sought to demonstrate how the requirements of Policy MD2, including residential capacity and supporting infrastructure, could be delivered within the land controlled by Homes England and Miller Homes.
- 4.4 Homes England and Miller Homes recognise the need for further, more detailed technical studies and master planning to be completed in support of the SEWUE. This work will progress through the preparation of the Development Framework, and subsequently in support of planning applications.
- 4.5 To commence this process, Homes England and Miller Homes have commissioned a series of further technical workstreams ahead of future work on the Development Framework.
- 4.6 Additionally, a proposed structure and content list for the SEWUE Development Framework has been prepared by Homes England and Miller Homes, provided here at **Annex 2**, presenting an illustrative idea of content of the Development Framework. WBC has confirmed its initial satisfaction with the indicative content, but this will be subject to further discussion and agreement between the parties.

## 5. Areas of Agreement

- 5.1 Homes England and Miller Homes are in agreement with WBC regarding many aspects of the SEWUE proposal and its delivery. The following outlines a summary of the key matters which are agreed between Homes England, Miller Homes and WBC:
- 5.1.1 The SEWUE allocation is deliverable and viable.
  - 5.1.2 The boundary of the SEWUE allocation is as indicated on the Policies Map.
  - 5.1.3 The minimum residential development capacity of the SEWUE is 4,200 homes including 2,400 homes for delivery within the Plan period to 2038 ("Plan Period").
  - 5.1.4 The SEWUE will provide a range of housing tenures, types and sizes, including affordable housing, for which a target of 30% will apply.
  - 5.1.5 The SEWUE will provide housing at an average minimum net density of 35dph.
  - 5.1.6 The SEWUE will provide education capacity to meet evidenced demand arising from the SEWUE.
  - 5.1.7 The SEWUE will provide health and leisure capacity to meet evidenced demand arising from the development. Any leisure facility required can be co-located with any new secondary school if required.
  - 5.1.8 The SEWUE will provide for local shops of an appropriate scale.
  - 5.1.9 The SEWUE will accommodate surface water drainage arrangements in accordance with the SuDs principles and hierarchy.

- 5.1.10 The SEWUE will provide a highway improvement scheme to relieve pressure at the A49/B5356 junction.
- 5.1.11 New highways, walking and cycling routes, and sustainable transport links will be delivered within the SEWUE, including links towards existing and planned residential and employment developments.
- 5.1.12 The SEWUE will provide safeguarding of corridors for use as mass transit routes.
- 5.1.13 The SEWUE will be supported by a comprehensive approach to travel planning.
- 5.1.14 The SEWUE can provide financial contributions to off-site highways improvements, including to affected motorway junctions, to mitigate the impact of the SEWUE, where a deliverable scheme has been identified and a proportionate contribution from the SEWUE is justified by evidence and is in accordance with the statutory tests.
- 5.1.15 Where the SEWUE boundary consists of field boundaries, these will need to be strengthened, with details to be set out within the Development Framework.
- 5.1.16 A Development Framework will be prepared jointly by Homes England and Miller Homes (as the principal landowners and promoters of the SEWUE respectively), in consultation with WBC departments, statutory consultees and local communities, and ultimately approved by WBC in advance of planning applications being submitted. An illustrative structure for the Development Framework, with which WBC is broadly satisfied, subject to further discussion and agreement, is included at **Annex 2**.
- 5.1.17 The SEWUE will provide s106 contributions and s.278 works to mitigate the impact of the SEWUE, where justified by evidence and in accordance with the statutory tests.
- 5.1.18 The SEWUE allocation is based on the premise that land required for education and leisure uses, to mitigate the impact of the SEWUE, will be made available to WBC in line with policy requirements.
- 5.1.19 WBC's Local Plan Viability Assessment has demonstrated that the allocation is viable, taking into account the infrastructure and policy requirements set out in the allocation policy and IDP.

## 6. Modifications Proposed by WBC

- 6.1 WBC has proposed selected modifications to Policy MD2 which are set out within Hearing Statement M6b.01. The extent to which these are agreed by Homes England and Miller Homes is outlined below.
- 6.2 **Compensatory Green Belt improvements** – Within M6b.01 paragraph 12.1, WBC has proposed the following wording to be included within clause 26 of Policy MD2.

*A scheme of compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt will be required. **In the first instance, the improvements should be made in the immediate vicinity of the site and delivered by the developer. The Council will***

**consider improvements in the wider area where it can be demonstrated that the improvements cannot be delivered in the immediate vicinity of the site or where this will provide greater benefits.** Financial contributions will **only** be considered where this would help to ensure that the benefits of compensatory improvements can be maximised by providing them in ~~the most~~ **a more** appropriate location.

6.3 Homes England and Miller Homes have no objection to this modification. In relation to the SEWUE, Homes England and Miller Homes have demonstrated the availability of Green Belt land in the immediate vicinity of the SEWUE, which is suitable for accommodating compensatory improvements. However, the Homes England and Miller Homes submitted representation sought some further modifications to clause 26, particularly regarding the role of the Development Framework. These further modifications are not agreed by WBC.

6.4 **Role and Function of the IDP** – Within M6b.01 paragraph 12.2, WBC has proposed:

*The Council accepts that the wording in the supporting text should clarify the need for infrastructure requirements to be kept under review, with any subsequent updates being dealt with through a review of the Plan. To this end the Council is proposing that the following text be added to paragraph 10.2.25 within the supporting text to Policy MD2:*

*The allocation Policy, together with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, set out the key infrastructure requirements to support the SEWUE. **The IDP will be kept under review and any changes to the policy requirements will be confirmed through future reviews of the plan.***

6.5 Homes England and Miller Homes welcome this clarification to some degree, albeit consider that the clarification could go further in a) confirming the role of the Development Framework and b) clarifying that Appendix 2 to the IDP does not set "requirements".

6.6 Within Statement M3.01 paragraph 31.1-31.3, WBC has further clarified the purpose of the IDP. WBC has acknowledged that the Appendix 2 to the IDP might be better appended to the Local Plan Viability Assessment, and that the costs included therein are cautious in that they provide comfortable headroom, and hence ensure an appropriate level of contingency for the purposes of the Assessment. Homes England and Miller Homes welcome this clarification and request that this is confirmed within the Local Plan wording, such as in the supporting text to Policy MD2, and/or updated IDP.

6.7 **Primary Care Needs / Appleton Cross** – Within M6b.01 paragraph 12.3, WBC has proposed:

*To confirm the NHS's preferred approach to meeting future primary care needs, the Council is proposing a modification to include an additional bullet under Part 3 of Policy MD2:*

**Contribution to expansion of proposed Appleton Cross GP facility**

6.8 Homes England and Miller Homes welcome the addition to this policy and are supportive of the flexibility to allow for the Appleton Cross health centre, which will be provided outside of the SEWUE boundary on land in Homes England ownership, to be expanded to cater for the primary care needs of the SEWUE. This is reflected in Homes England and Miller Homes suggested modification to MD2 clause 3d.

6.9 **Holcroft Moss** – Within M6b.01 paragraph 12.4, WBC has proposed:

*As result of concerns expressed by Natural England regarding the potential in combination impact of the Local Plan on Holcroft Moss within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation, the Council is currently working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on potential mitigation measures for the moss. The Council is therefore proposing a modification to the Plan, and specifically a modification to Part 40 of Policy MD2, which will require a project level HRA to be undertaken and, if required, provide a financial contribution towards appropriate mitigation measures. The mechanism for establishing any required contribution from individual developments and how this will be used to undertake the mitigation could then be set out in an SPD and therefore an addition to the supporting text will need to be made referring to this.*

- 6.10 Homes England and Miller Homes note the WBC intention to implement this proposed change and reserve the right to comment further once the proposed modification wording is set out.

## **7. Areas of Disagreement**

- 7.1 Homes England and Miller Homes submitted representations (respondent references 0404-03 and 0432-01) proposed a range of modifications to Policy MD2. Homes England and Miller Homes have revisited the proposed schedule of changes and identified where these are now considered to be main modifications, and included an updated table within Hearing Statement M6b.09.

- 7.2 Regarding minor modifications proposed in representations, WBC will consider these outside of the Examination process, through further dialogue with Homes England and Miller Homes. This process has not yet begun.

## **8. Clarification regarding Policy MD2 clause 27f**

- 8.1 Within submitted representations, Homes England and Miller Homes highlighted the potential for clause 27f of policy MD2 to be modified, pending further evidence being provided to justify the level of any contribution that may be required to ameliorate development related impacts.
- 8.2 As explained within representations and Hearing Statement M6b.09, and confirmed in para 5.1.14 of this Statement, Homes England and Miller Homes support the principle of the SEWUE providing mitigation for its own highways impacts. Homes England and Miller Homes agree with WBC that the impact of the SEWUE on nearby motorway junctions can be assessed pursuant to clause 27 of Policy MD2 once the detail of the SEWUE is known. Furthermore, that a method by which a "proportionate contribution" from the SEWUE to an identified scheme(s), if required and where justified, can be agreed.
- 8.3 For clarity, the area of disagreement with WBC relates to ambiguity associated with the current wording of clause 27f and inclusion within the IDP (reference IN1) Appendix 2, of costs of £4m from the SEWUE towards the M56 and M6 junctions respectively (£8m in total).
- 8.4 WBC has undertaken strategic transport modelling work as recommended by National Highways to identify the likely impacts of the development proposed in the Local Plan on the local and strategic road networks. Together with National Highways' own modelling, this has identified key mitigation requirements which WBC and National Highways consider have then been appropriately reflected in specific allocation policies where required. For allocation sites in south east Warrington, including the SEWUE and MD6 South East Warrington Urban Extension, this has included reference to motorway junction improvements.

8.5 Working with National Highways, WBC has established initial cost estimates for the mitigation measures and assumptions on potential sources of funding, including developer contributions. This has informed WBC's infrastructure costs included in Appendix 2 of the IDP. As set out at para 6.4 above, WBC has clarified the purpose of Appendix 2 of the IDP in its Matter 3 Statement (M3.01).

8.6 As set out in the SoCG agreed between WBC and National Highways (paragraph 4.3.6),

*The Council will continue to work with National Highways as the SEWUE proposals are worked up in more detail to ensure that there is a full understanding of the impact of the proposed development (both cumulative and individual). This will agree the detail of the required mitigation measures and ensure that these measures are both feasible and deliverable.*

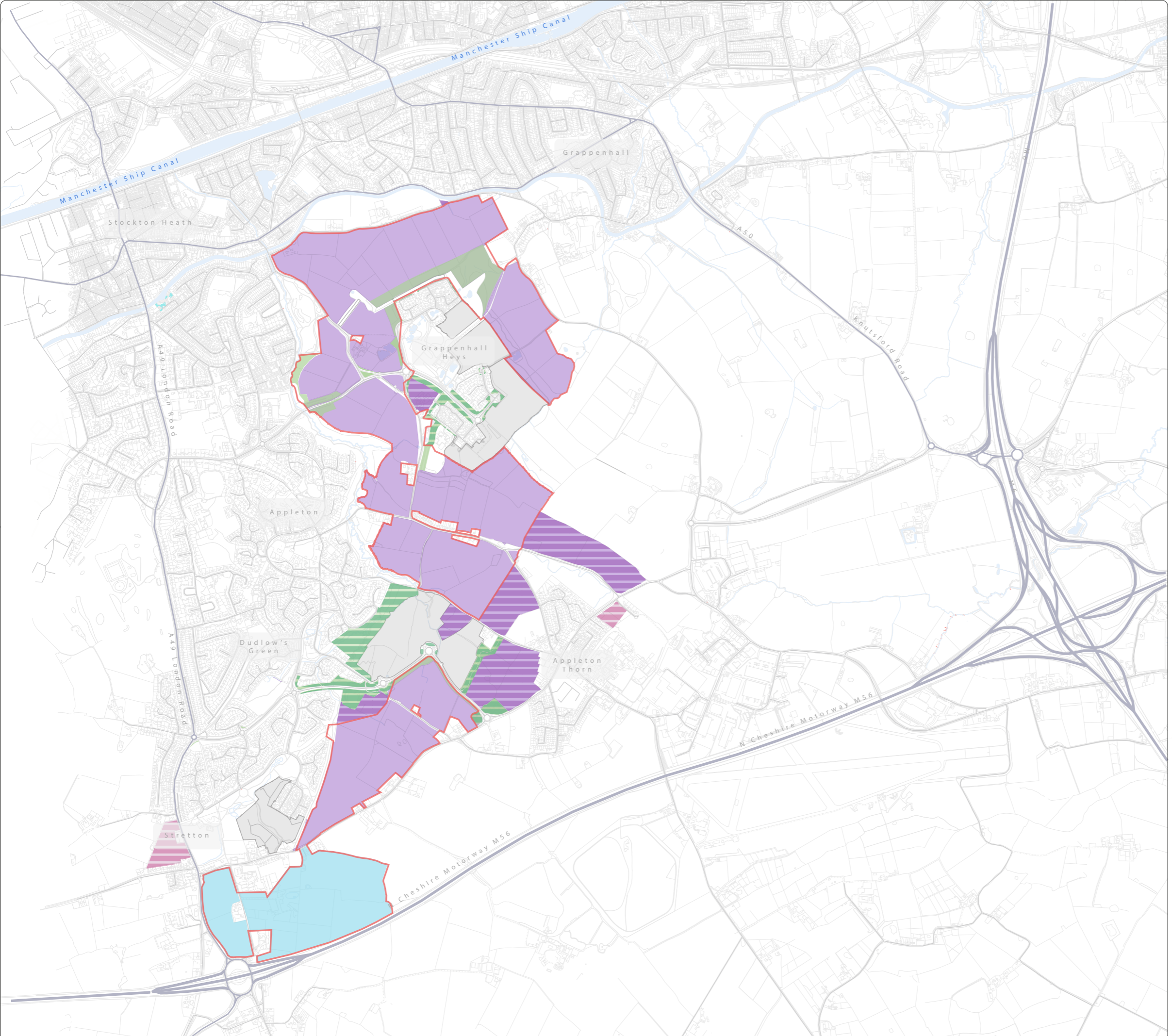
8.7 Given that there is currently no final detail of what these interventions will comprise or their associated costs, Homes England and Miller Homes confirm acceptance to the detail of WBC's Matter 3 statement in so far as (30.4) confirms that infrastructure requirements are to be kept under review through further updates to the IDP and (31.2) confirm that identified costs are currently based on the best available information at the time of publication, and will be subject to change during the plan period (following detailed assessment of the requirement for intervention at both M56 and M6 junctions).

## 9. Signatures









On behalf of	Name	Signature	Date
Homes England	Nicola Elsworth		15 August 2022
Miller Homes	Alex Forsyth		15 August 2022
Warrington BC	Steve Park		15 August 2022

**Annex 1: Land Control Plan**





- Notes**
1. Drawing to be read in conjunction with all other drawings and specifications forming part of the project package.
  2. Do not scale off this drawing.
  3. This drawing must not be copied in whole or in part without prior written consent of Optimised Environments Ltd.
  4. Ownership boundaries provided by Savills / WSP.
  5. Policy MD2 boundary traced from Council website, available at [https://mapping.warrington.gov.uk/wml/Map.aspx?MapName=Planning\\_and\\_LLC\\_External](https://mapping.warrington.gov.uk/wml/Map.aspx?MapName=Planning_and_LLC_External)

-  Policy MD2 allocation boundary
-  Homes England ownership within Policy MD2 boundary
-  Homes England ownership beyond Policy MD2 boundary
-  Additional Green Belt land within Homes England ownership
-  Miller Homes promotion land within Policy MD2 boundary
-  Approved applications
-  Land Trust Transfer Land within Policy MD2 boundary
-  Land Trust Transfer Land within the immediate vicinity of Policy MD2 boundary

**open**  
 optimised environments  
 PART OF SLR

optimised environments Ltd  
 EDINBURGH 2nd Floor | Quartermile Two | 2 Libar Square | Edinburgh | EH3 9DL  
 LONDON Wardour Court | 28 Throgmorton Street | London | EC2N 2AT  
 MANCHESTER 88 Princess Street | Manchester | M1 8NG

**Client**  
 Homes England

**Project**  
 South Warrington Urban Extension

**Drawing Title**  
 Land Control Within Policy MD2



<b>Scale</b>	NTS @ A3	<b>Date</b>	28 June 2022
<b>By</b>	CMC	<b>Status</b>	FOR INFORMATION
<b>Checked</b>	JF	<b>Approved</b>	MF
<b>Dwg no.</b>	M10372_14	<b>Rev</b>	02

**Annex 2: Proposed structure for the SEWUE Development Framework**

## **SEWUE – Illustrative Development Framework Content**

### **1. Introduction**

- Background to the SEWUE and purpose of the Development Framework, including its status in decision making and its limitations.

### **2. Planning Policy Context**

- To the SEWUE and the DF

### **3. Engagement to Adoption**

- the engagement strategy, steps we and WBC have been through, forms of consultation undertaken and how that has informed the DF

### **4. Refined Site-wide Ops and Constraints**

- Informed by advanced technical assessment work, and consultation, that has taken place since the earlier masterplanning exercise

### **5. Infrastructure analysis**

- what community, travel, utilities, green, environmental and health and wellbeing infrastructure does the SEWUE need to deliver to support the new population?

### **6. Masterplan Review**

- the evolution of the masterplan to date leading to the Indicative Development Framework contained in 'Deliverable Allocation'
- summarise the next steps now required to take the masterplanning process to the next level of detail through the DF

### **7. Landscape Strategy/Green Infrastructure**

- Key views and sensitive locations
- Retained and enhanced infrastructure
- New structural planting – short and long-term measures
- Addressing the Green Belt – boundary treatment and compensation measures available
- High level landscape design codes for the most sensitive development interfaces

### **8. Drainage strategy and multi-functional landscape infrastructure**

- Local infrastructure
- SUDS design

### **9. Noise and air quality mitigation**

- Necessary design interventions
- Measures to reduce emissions

### **10. Protection of heritage assets**

- Outcomes of heritage impact assessment and measures to protect the significance of potentially affected assets

### **11. Ecological mitigation and enhancement and biodiversity net gain**

- A site-wide strategy

- The baseline position
- On-site and off-site opportunities for mitigation and enhancement

### **12. Sustainable Transport and Movement Strategy**

- Traffic and highway infrastructure considerations and scope for TA
- Approach to travel planning, sustainable and active travel
- Public transport integration and improvements
- Walking and cycling
- Internal and external movement strategy
- Green corridors
- Parking Strategy
- Street hierarchy typologies

### **13. Community Facilities**

- Education
- Health
- Leisure
- Retail

### **14. Climate change mitigation strategy and sustainable design**

- Use of design, layout, building techniques and energy generation technologies

### **15. Masterplan Framework**

- High-level land use parcels
- Mix of housing typologies, including affordable housing strategy
- Delivery of local centres alongside new homes
- Community facilities
- Health and wellbeing
- Utilities
- Transport infrastructure
- Green infrastructure

### **16. Design Framework**

- Design studies – exploring local character, etc
- Use of local vernacular
- Street hierarchy
- Density
- Character areas – narrative of how character areas will be established
- Anti-coalescence
- Permeability
- Urban grain and rhythm of develop
- Green corridors
- Open space typology, links to existing opens spaces
- Public open space and play areas
- Local centres and community/public spaces
- Connectivity
- Woodland
- Lighting

### **17. Illustrative Masterplan**

**18. Visualisations**

**19. Phasing and Delivery**

- Phasing strategy
- Site specific infrastructure delivery plan
- Infrastructure funding model

**20. Ongoing Consultation Strategy**

- consultation measures to inform planning application

**21. Skeleton Section 106 agreement –**

- infrastructure and other matters to be secured