

Warrington Local Plan Examination

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)

Between

(1) Richborough Estates Limited

&

(2) Warrington Borough Council

In relation to land at Hollins Green (Policy OS3)

Site Ref: 0429

August 2022



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (“SoCG”) has been agreed jointly between Richborough Estates Limited (“Richborough”) and Warrington Borough Council (“the Council”) (“herein referred to jointly as “the parties”), to assist the Inspectors’ consideration of matters in the Examination in Public (EiP) of the Warrington Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021-20238 (September 2021) [WUPSVLP] (SP1).
- 1.2 The SoCG relates to the promotion of land for Green Belt release and the allocation for a residential-led development at Hollins Green under draft Policy OS3 (“the site”), that will be discussed under Matter 7c at the EiP Hearing Sessions.
- 1.3 This SoCG reflects those matters which have been agreed between the parties prior to EiP, without prejudice to any future agreement which may be reached between the parties during the course of the EiP Hearing Sessions. This SoCG does not preclude any additional representations by Richborough or that their professional advisors may wish to make to the Local Plan Examination, whether orally or in writing, in respect of relevant matters relating to the proposed allocation.
- 1.4 This statement sets out agreement between the parties on the following matters:
 - a) **The site**
 - b) **The release of the site from the Green Belt**
 - c) **The scale of development**
 - d) **Deliverability**
 - e) **Housing trajectory**
 - f) **Policy OS3 (Hollins Green)**

2 THE SITE

- 2.1 The site is situated north of Manchester Road/ A57 comprises approximately 4.27 hectares of agricultural land immediately adjoining the south west edge of the settlement of Hollins Green.
- 2.2 The north-eastern boundary runs adjacent to the houses and gardens of Glen Close, Warburton View and Orchard Brow in Hollins Green. The north-western boundary runs adjacent to the cul-de-sac of Marsh Brook Close, areas of green amenity space and a small area of woodland. The south-western boundary of the site is formed by Marsh Brook and a buffer of trees, beyond which is the access road and buildings of Brook Farm. The south-eastern boundary is formed by the A57.
- 2.3 The parties agree that Richborough control the entirety of the land within the proposed housing allocation under Policy OS3 of the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (“UPSVLP”). The parties further agree that the site is in a sustainable and accessible location and should be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development in the Local Plan.

3 RELEASE OF THE SITE FROM THE GREEN BELT

3.1 The allocation of the site forms part of a wider spatial strategy that will ensure that sufficient land is provided to meet Warrington's development needs, assisting in addressing housing affordability and creating new sustainable communities, in a manner that will support the delivery of strategic infrastructure that will also unlock major brownfield development sites.

3.2 The parties fully support the release of the site from the Green Belt and are agreed that:

- There are 'Exceptional Circumstances' that support an amendment to the Green Belt boundary. In addition to contributing to Warrington's overall development needs, the site will increase housing choice, provide affordable housing and support the vitality and viability of local services in Hollins Green. The greenfield and relatively unconstrained nature of the land will enable the site to be delivered early in the Plan period meeting identified housing needs in the shorter term.
- The site is a logical extension to the settlement and will not harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt around Hollins Green.
- The development of the site will create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary. A new permanent boundary would be created by the A57 Manchester Road and through strengthening the other existing physical and visual boundaries, which are characterised by an existing watercourse and mature vegetation.

4 THE SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

Quantum of Development

- 4.1 The parties agree that, based on the technical assessment work undertaken by Richborough to date and on the clear understanding of the site constraints, the site can accommodate a “minimum” of 90 dwellings.

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

- 4.2 The parties agree that, in accordance with Policy OS3, the site should deliver a “*range of housing tenures, types and sizes will be required in order to ensure development contributes to meeting the Borough’s general and specialist housing needs, including family homes with gardens, specific provision for older people and for younger people looking to purchase their first home*”.
- 4.3 The parties agree that the site should seek to deliver a minimum of 30% of homes that are affordable, subject to viability, in accordance with Policy DEV2.

5 DELIVERABILITY

5.1 The parties agree that the site is deliverable in the context of the NPPF – being available, suitable and achievable. The site is:

- **Available** - Richborough has entered into an agreement with the landowner to promote the site for residential development. Richborough has a proven track record of facilitating the delivery of high-quality housing developments on suitable and sustainable sites and can confirm that the site can be delivered for housing within the early phases of the Local Plan period. Richborough are strong advocates of a plan-led system and are committed to promoting land for residential development by engaging actively with local authorities, parish councils and other neighbourhood forums through local and neighbourhood plans.
- **Suitable** - the site is a sustainable and logical option for Green Belt release with strong physical and defensible boundaries to the west, south-west and south-east, and is in a sustainable location immediately adjacent to the south-west of Hollins Green. Richborough has demonstrated in its representations and extensive technical work (demonstrated in the Development Statement at Appendix 2 Richborough's Regulation 19 representation, Rep ID: 0429) that there are no significant ecological, flood risk and drainage, landscaping, highways, ground conditions, utilities, archaeology and heritage, air quality and noise constraints that would prevent residential development from coming forward at the site early in the Plan Period.
- **Achievable** – the development of the site is achievable early in the Plan Period. The housing trajectory set out in the following section demonstrates how the site will be able to fully deliver the housing development broadly in line with the Council's housing trajectory at Appendix 1 of the UPSVLP. The Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment (V2) has demonstrated that the site is viable, taking into account the infrastructure and policy requirements set out in the allocation policy.

6 HOUSING TRAJECTORY

- 6.1 As set out in the previous sections, the parties agree that the site is available, suitable and achievable; and can deliver the amount of development proposed by draft policy OS3 of the UPSVLP, as a “minimum”.
- 6.2 Richborough has extensive experience working with nationally significant development partners. Developer partners who have built out Richborough sites include Bellway, Barratt David Wilson, CALA, Miller, Mulberry, Kier, Lion Court, Taylor Wimpey and Vistry. On Richborough’s sites, the average completion rate per sales outlet is a combined rate of 50 dpa for both market and affordable housing provision.
- 6.3 The parties agree that the site can deliver units within the first 5 years of the Plan Period. The parties agree that Table 6.1 sets out reasonable assumptions for an indicative programme and the key milestones from this point forward through to the occupation of dwellings. All anticipated timings are based on the parties’ understanding at this point in time and may be subject to change.

Table 6.1: Hollins Green Indicatives Timescales and Key Milestones

October 2022	Conclusion of Local Plan Examination
January-February 2023	Main Modifications
May 2023	Issue of Inspectors’ Report
February-July 2023	Richborough prepare Outline Planning Application following Main Modifications and issue of Inspectors’ Report (subject to findings). Pre-app with the Council to be undertaken in March 2023.
July 2023	Local Plan adopted (subject to findings)
July 2023	Outline Planning Application submitted
October 2023	Application determined
December 2023	Site disposal to developer partner
December 2023-February 2024	Preparation and submission of reserved matters application
June 2024	Reserve matters application consented and conditions discharged
July 2024	Start on site
Q1 2025	Occupation of first home
Q1 2027	Development complete (based on a development rate of 50dpa for both market and affordable housing).

7 POLICY OS3 (HOLLINS GREEN)

7.1 The parties agree on the principle of releasing the site from the Green Belt and its allocation for residential development.

7.2 The Council, in its Hearing Statement to Matter 7c, has proposed the following modification in relation to Green Belt compensatory improvements (Policy OS3, Point 13):

*“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”.*

7.3 The parties are agreed that this change is an appropriate policy approach to securing Green Belt compensatory improvements and clearly sets out the preferred sequential approach to securing the same.

Agreement

Signed on behalf of Warrington Borough Council

Name: Steve Park

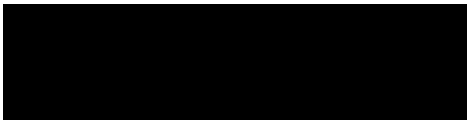
Signature:



Date: 15th August 2022

Signed on behalf of Richborough Estates Limited

Name: Jordan Gresham



Signature:

Date: 11 August 2022