

# **Warrington Borough Local Plan Examination**

## **Land off Pool Lane and Warrington Road, Lymm – Local Plan Allocation Policy OS4**

### **Statement of Common Ground between Warrington Borough Council and Gladman Developments Ltd**

#### **1. Purpose of this Statement**

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared between Warrington Borough Council (hereafter referred to as 'the Council') and Gladman Developments Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'Gladman') in order to support the delivery of Land off Pool Lane and Warrington Road, Lymm (hereafter 'the Site'), as proposed to be allocated under Policy OS4 of the Warrington Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021-2038 (Sept 2021) [WUPSVLP] (SP1).
- 1.2 The SoCG confirms that the Site is developable for housing, and furthermore that the Site is capable of delivering housing within the early part of the Local Plan period.
- 1.3 The remainder of this statement confirms:
  - The Site's current Planning Status
  - Site Availability
  - Site Suitability
  - Planning Application Progress and Delivery

#### **2. Current Planning Status**

- 2.1 The Site is currently designated as part of the Warrington Green Belt, located immediately adjacent to the western boundary of Lymm, which is identified as one of six Outlying Settlements in the Council's Local Plan strategy. The Site's suitability for release from the Green Belt has been assessed as part of the Council's Local Plan Green Belt evidence base under the references 1622 (Land at Pool Lane) and 1528 (Land off Warrington Road).
- 2.2 The Site has now been identified as being a suitable location to release from the Green Belt and has been proposed as an allocation for a minimum of 170 dwellings under Policy OS4 of the WUPSVLP (SP1).
- 2.3 Policy OS4 of the WUPSVLP (SP1) describes the policy requirements that any development proposals coming forward on the Site will be expected to fulfil. The requirements of Policy OS4 will be subject to further discussion at the Local Plan Examination Matter 7d hearing session.

### **3. Conclusions on the Green Belt**

#### **Exceptional circumstances**

- 3.1 The WUPSVLP (SP1) includes a demonstration of the exceptional circumstances for each area, including justifying the release of Green Belt land around the outlying settlements, including Lymm. This allocation site will increase housing choice, provide affordable housing and support the vitality and viability of local services in Lymm. The greenfield and relatively unconstrained nature of the land will enable the site to be delivered in the early period of the Local Plan, meeting identified housing needs in the shorter term.
- 3.2 This allocation also forms part of a wider spatial strategy that will ensure that sufficient land is provided to meet Warrington's development needs, that housing affordability is addressed and new sustainable communities are created, in a manner that will support the delivery of strategic infrastructure that will also unlock major brownfield development sites.
- 3.3 Gladman and the Council agree that exceptional circumstances exist to alter the borough's Green Belt boundaries to remove this site from the Green Belt.

#### **Five purposes of the Green Belt**

- 3.4 As evidenced within the Council's Green Belt Assessment (Green Belt Assessment Collated Report – 2021) (GB4), the Pool Lane part of the allocation site makes a moderate contribution to two purposes, a weak contribution to one, and no contribution to two. In line with the methodology, the assessment concludes that the site makes a weak overall contribution to the Green Belt. The Warrington Road part of the allocation site makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose, a weak contribution to one, and no contribution to two. In line with the methodology, the assessment concludes that the site makes a moderate overall contribution to the Green Belt. The Council's Green Belt Site Selection – Implications for Green Belt Release - August 2021 Report (GB3) also concludes that the Pool Lane site currently makes a weak contribution to the Green Belt purposes and the Warrington Road site makes a moderate contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
- 3.5 Gladman agrees with the conclusions of the Council's Green Belt assessments.

### **4. Site Availability**

- 4.1 The Site is currently in the ownership of a single collective/family of landowners who are all committed to seeing the Site come forward for development in the short term. There are no third-party landownership issues that need to be resolved or would prevent the Site from coming forward.

- 4.2 The Site is being actively promoted through the plan preparation and Local Plan process on behalf of the single collective/family of landowners by Gladman. This is with the benefit of a signed Promotion Agreement that has been entered into by all relevant parties.

## **5. Site Suitability**

- 5.1 The Site is current used for a mixture of pasture/horse paddocks and the production of haylage. The parties agree that these uses are not considered to pose a constraint to the Site's development and that there are no known technical constraints that would preclude the Site's delivery.
- 5.2 The Site is situated immediately adjacent to the existing settlement boundary for Lymm, one of six Outlying Settlements identified within the WUPSVLP (SP1). After Warrington, Lymm is the second largest settlement within the Warrington Borough area and benefits from a good range of local services and facilities that would be accessible to new residents and to support development at this location.
- 5.3 As detailed above, Local Plan Policy OS4 describes the criteria that any proposal coming forward on the Site will be expected to meet, which will be discussed further at the Matter 7d hearing session. Policy OS4 provides a set of broad parameters that will ensure a suitable development proposal comes forward on the Site at the planning application stage.

## **6. Site Achievability**

- 6.1 The Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment has demonstrated that the site is viable, taking into account the infrastructure and policy requirements set out in the allocation policy.

## **7. Planning Application Progress and Delivery**

- 7.1 In tandem with the Local Plan Examination process, Gladman has undertaken/is currently in the process of a completing a series of background technical studies and appraisals to support the Site's delivery on matters including ecology, landscape, highways and access, drainage and heritage. So far, these studies have not identified any issues preventing the site's delivery. It is the intention that these documents will subsequently form the basis for a future planning application, which is currently being readied for submission to the Council.
- 7.2 The timescales for the submission of a planning application are subject to further discussion. However, on the basis of its current work programme and internal project timetable, Gladman can confirm that it can be in a position, in principle, to submit an outline planning application on the site to the Council in autumn 2022.

- 7.3 As a company, Gladman has a strong track record of converting outline planning permissions to housing completions on site, having secured planning consent for more than 15,000 dwellings. The nature of Gladman's contractual agreement with the Site's owners means that once permission is secured, it works with the landowners to sell the site to a housebuilder. It is in the interests of both Gladman and the landowners to market the site expeditiously, to receive a capital receipt.
- 7.4 The housebuilder who subsequently takes the site forward will be equally motivated to secure a reserved matters approval and commence construction to begin making a return on their investment as soon as possible. All those involved in the process are motivated to see an outline planning permission converted into occupied new homes as quickly as possible.
- 7.5 Gladman is therefore confident that the Site is capable of coming forward quickly and in the short term to assist the Council in meeting the borough's housing needs. It is agreed that the Site represents a fully deliverable site, capable of being delivered in line with the Council's housing trajectory to help meet the borough's housing and affordable housing needs.
- 7.6 In order to provide further assurances that the Site can be brought forward quickly at the planning application stage, Gladman would be willing to accept a condition that would reduce the standard time period for the submission of reserved matters applications and the commencement of development, in accordance with paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF').

## **8. Modifications proposed by WBC to Policy OS4**

- 8.1 The Council has proposed a modification to Policy OS4 regarding **compensatory Green Belt improvements**. Within the Council's Matter Statement relating to Matter 7d(i), at paragraph 14.1, WBC has proposed the following wording to be included within clause 14 of Policy OS4:

*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 **a more** appropriate location.*

- 8.2 Gladman have commented on the Council's proposed modification within their Matter 7d – Site Allocations - Lymm Hearing Statement (ref: M7d.08). Gladman

acknowledge that paragraph 142 of the NPPF refers to compensatory Green Belt improvements. The Council's proposed modification to clause 14 of Policy OS4 will be discussed in more detail during the Matter 7d hearing session.

## 9. Signatories

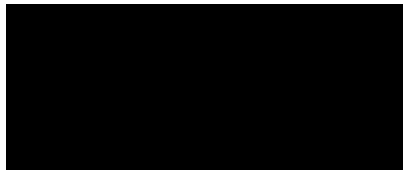
9.1 This SoCG is signed by the following parties on behalf of the Council and Gladman:



Signed

On behalf of Warrington Borough Council

Name: Steve Park  
Position: Director of Growth  
Date: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022



Signed

On behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd

Name: Robert Wilding  
Position: Senior Planner  
Date: Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022