

**East Herts District Plan
Examination in Public**

Bishop's Stortford South

**Statement of Common Ground
Between
East Herts District Council
and
Countryside Properties**

September 2017

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Appendix 1 – Site Boundary Plan


Appendix 2 – Illustrative Master Plan

Appendix 3 – HCC Highways Meeting Note

Appendix 4 – Utilities and Infrastructure Report

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On behalf of Countryside Properties

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared and agreed by East Herts District Council (“the Local Planning Authority”) and Countryside Properties (“the Developer”).
- 1.2 It relates to the land south of Whittington Way, Bishop’s Stortford (“Bishop’s Stortford South”), which has been allocated for residential-led mixed-used development in Policy BISH5 of the East Herts District Plan Submission Document (March 2017).
- 1.3 This SoCG provides further information on the deliverability of Bishop’s Stortford South and to assist the Inspector at the forthcoming Examination in Public (EiP). In particular, the SoCG considers the intended type and mix of development, utilities and infrastructure, highways, education, mitigation measures, phasing and the timing of a planning application.

2.0 SITE BOUNDARY

- 2.1 Bishop’s Stortford South comprises 53 hectares (ha) of agricultural land, located to the south of Whittington Way. The site is bounded by the A1184 to the south, Obrey Way to the west, Whittington Way to the north and the rear gardens of properties along Thorley Street to the east. The full extent of the site is shown on the Site Boundary Plan at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Developer has an option agreement in place with the landowners to promote Bishop’s Stortford South for development and, subject to planning, to purchase and build out this site for the same purpose.

3.0 INDICATIVE LAYOUT

- 3.1 The Proposed Development is likely to comprise:
 - approximately 750 dwellings, including affordable homes;
 - care home / flexi-care or sheltered housing;
 - local centre;
 - employment area (4-5 ha);
 - land for a primary school;
 - land for a secondary school;
 - public open space;
 - strategic landscaping; and
 - all associated and ancillary infrastructure and development.
- 3.2 An Illustrative Masterplan is provided at Appendix 2 and presents a potential layout for the Proposed Development, as a basis for further assessment. This includes: the two schools (a secondary and a primary) located towards the centre of the site on the lower ground, with their playing fields on the higher ground immediately south of the

Hertfordshire Way; new residential areas to the north, east, west and southwest of the site; and, a local centre and an employment area to the southeast. This approach provides a linear park of public open space and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) along the existing brook, which passes through the site on a broadly east-west alignment.

- 3.3 However, the detailed form and layout of the Proposed Development will be appraised and informed by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and extensive pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and other third parties, before being presented in a subsequent planning application.

4.0 QUANTUM OF DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The Developer and the Local Planning Authority agree that the following indicative type and mix of development could be brought forward at the Site:

Residential

- 4.2 Approximately 750 dwellings, including up to 40% affordable homes, subject to viability in accordance with Policy HOU3 in the East Herts District Plan Submission Document.
- 4.3 The detailed housing mix will be a matter for discussion between the Developer and the Local Planning Authority in due course and will be agreed at the detailed planning application stage. However, for purely indicative purposes and to assist the EiP process, it should be possible to deliver the following 'illustrative' mix at Bishop's Stortford South:
- Market Housing – 5% one-bed flats / houses (22 dwellings); 20% two-bed flats / houses (90); 25% three-bed houses (113); 40% four-bed houses (180); and, 10% five-bed houses (45).
 - Affordable Housing – 35% one-bed flats / houses (105 dwellings); 40% two-bed flats / houses (120); 20% three-bed houses (60); and, 5% four-bed houses (15).
- 4.4 The Proposed Development is also likely to include a care home / flexi care or sheltered housing facility and a number of self-build plots. The location and scale of these elements will be subject further discussions between the Developer and the Local Planning Authority in due course.

Education

- 4.5 Land for a primary school with 2 forms of entry, early years and nursery provision and scope to expand to 3 forms of entry to meet longer term needs.
- 4.6 Land for a secondary school with 6 forms of entry and scope to expand to 8 forms of entry to meet longer term needs.

Local Centre

- 4.7 This will accommodate floorspace for flexible local centre uses, comprising any or all of the following Use Classes: A1 (retail); A2 (financial or professional services); A3 (food and drink); A4 (drinking establishments); A5 (hot food takeaway); and, D1 (health services, crèche / day nursery or community uses).

Employment Area

- 4.8 A new employment area to provide 4-5 ha of modern business premises, suitable for and attractive to B1 (business use) and other employment generating uses (including Sui Generis).
- 4.9 The detailed employment mix will be a matter for discussion between the Developer and the Local Planning Authority in due course and will be agreed at the detailed planning application stage.

5.0 UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.1 Subject to further technical assessment and EIA, the following utilities and infrastructure could be required to facilitate development at the site.

Highways

- 5.2 The principal access points for the site are referenced in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and involve:
- A new junction on Whittington Way at the junction with Bishops Avenue;
 - A priority junction on Obrey Way; and
 - A new roundabout junction on St James Way.
- 5.3 Furthermore, additional priority junctions to serve the residential part of the development adjacent Whittington Way and Obrey Way have been discussed with HCC, who have raised no objection in principle to these access points.

Electricity

- 5.4 The electricity infrastructure position is likely to be as follows:
- To avoid unnecessary relocation costs, UK Power Network's 33/11kV primary substation is likely to be retained in its current position on-site. However, the 11 kV overhead power line linking the primary substation to the junction of Whittington Way / Pynchbek will require undergrounding to facilitate development.

- The Proposed Development will be connected to the local electricity network via the existing primary substation. The primary substation will serve four new 11kV / low voltage substations on-site, which in turn will supply the new properties at a low voltage.
- No off-site works are required to facilitate connection to the local network and there is adequate capacity in the local network for the Proposed Development.

Gas

5.5 The gas infrastructure position is likely to be as follows:

- National Grid has offered a connected system exit point (CSEP) to their existing medium pressure gas main along Whittington Way. This main will be extended into the Proposed Development and a Pressure Reduction Station will be provided within the site. There is very limited off-site works required to facilitate this connection.
- There is adequate capacity in the local network to accommodate the Proposed Development and no requirement for network reinforcement.

Potable Water

5.6 Adequate supply exists adjacent to the Proposed Development.

Telecommunications

5.7 The telecommunications infrastructure position is likely to be as follows:

- Opportunities for connections to telecoms and high speed broadband exist in the local area. British Telecom's preferred point of connection will depend on the detailed layout for the site.
- There is adequate capacity in the local network for the Proposed Development, with no requirement for chargeable reinforcement.

5.8 The above electricity, gas, potable water and telecommunications information is derived from the Utilities & Infrastructure Report (February 2017) contained at Appendix 4.

Foul Water

5.9 The Developer has obtained confirmation from Thames Water that the existing sewer network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the foul water discharge from the Proposed Development. Thames Water has also identified a point of connection for the discharge from the Strategic Pumping Station and a discharge rate.

5.10 This is set out in the Sewer Impact Study (November 2016) contained at Appendix 5. Thames Water confirmed that this Study is still valid and up-to-date on 1st August 2017.

- 5.11 Indicative costs are not available for these utilities and infrastructure works at this current stage. However, the works set out above are considered to be relatively modest for a development of this scale and the Developer submits that they are unlikely to place an unacceptable burden on the Proposed Development or its viability.

6.0 UTILITY PROVIDERS

- 6.1 The Developer's infrastructure consultants, TriConnex Ltd, has contacted UK Power Networks, National Grid, Affinity Water and British Telecom to identify the availability of utilities to serve the Proposed Development and to assess the extent of any network reinforcements or connection works that may be required. The Developer has also contacted Thames Water in respect of foul water capacity and connections.
- 6.2 The results of this work are presented in the Utilities & Infrastructure Report (February 2017) at Appendix 4 and the Sewer Impact Study (November 2016) at Appendix 5. In summary, there is adequate capacity in the surrounding utility networks to serve the Proposed Development and any network connection works required are considered to be modest for a development of this scale.

7.0 HIGHWAYS

- 7.1 Pre-application discussions have taken place with HCC. A record of the meeting is contained in Appendix 3.
- 7.2 In addition, initial findings from the HCC COMET model have been provided, which demonstrate that the Proposed Development would not lead to a notable change in the operation of the Highway Network, that would not normally be addressed through mitigation that would be agreed through the planning process.
- 7.3 Therefore a clear way forward has been identified with HCC involving;
- Agreeing the Trip rates and Distribution of Traffic from the Development which is an on-going process.
 - Testing the impact of development traffic using:
 - (i) The HCC TRANSYT Model to assess the impact of the town centre network;
 - (ii) Creating a model of the London Road corridor; and
 - (iii) Standalone Assessments would be provided for a) St James Way/Great Hadham Road and b) London Rd/Station Rd Sawbridgeworth.
- Traffic Surveys have been undertaken to inform this process.
- Agreeing a mitigation package in broad accordance with the IDP.

8.0 EDUCATION

- 8.1 Following discussions with HCC and the Local Planning Authority, the Developer has incorporated land to accommodate a primary school (2 forms of entry, early years and nursery provision and scope to expand to 3 forms of entry) and land to accommodate a secondary school (6 forms of entry and scope to expand to 8 forms of entry) on their Illustrative Master Plan.
- 8.2 The Developer and the Local Planning Authority agree that the sports facilities and pitches at the new schools should be made available for community use, in accordance with Policy BISH5 of the East Herts District Plan Submission Document.

9.0 LIST OF MITIGATION MEASURES

- 9.1 The Developer acknowledges that the following mitigation measures warrant consideration alongside the Proposed Development.
- 9.2 If secured by way of a Section 106 legal agreement, these measures will be required to comply with all of the legal tests set out in Regulations 122 and 123 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 9.3 The effect of Regulation 123 is further explained in Paragraph 25-100 of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This means that as well as demonstrating that all obligations are (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, (b) directly related to the development and (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, the Local Planning Authority will need to confirm that (d) five or more planning obligations have not been entered into since 6th April 2010 for the infrastructure project or type of infrastructure being sought.

Transportation

- 9.4 The transportation mitigation measures are likely to comprise:
- A package of highway improvements to the London Road corridor in Bishop's Stortford;
 - Bus improvements including improved frequency of services to Bishop's Stortford town centre, Bishop's Stortford railway station and Stansted Airport, plus the possible diversion of the Harlow / Sawbridgeworth service;
 - A cycle strategy to provide cycle access to the Development and potential enhancements to the local cycle network, for example improvements along Whittington Way;
 - A Smarter Choices Campaign for the surrounding areas to encourage sustainable travel and reduce background traffic, as has been agreed at Bishop's Stortford North (this site has been allocated in Policy BISH3 of the East Herts District Plan Submission Document); and

- A Travel Plan, including a number of marketing measures to encourage sustainable travel (i.e. Travel Packs and Community Travel Website) and a commitment to monitor the Travel Plan.

Green Infrastructure

9.5 The green infrastructure mitigation measures are likely to comprise:

- Arrangements necessary to secure the long term management and maintenance of any green infrastructure, which has the scope to provide multi-functionality and to incorporate landscape improvements, new wildlife habitat and public open space on-site, as well as SUDS and other surface water drainage measures which contribute to wildlife habitat and open space; and
- Where a particular open space typology is not provided on-site, a planning contribution will be made towards the off-site provision of parks and public gardens, outdoor sports facilities, amenity green space, provision for children and young people, allotments or burial space, elsewhere in Bishop's Stortford.

Education, Childcare & Libraries

9.6 The education, childcare and library mitigation measures are likely to comprise:

- Land for a primary school of up to 3 forms of entry and a planning contribution towards primary and early years provision commensurate with the need generated by the Proposed Development;
- Land for a secondary school of up to 8 forms of entry and a planning contribution towards secondary provision commensurate with the need generated by the Proposed Development;
- A planning contribution for childcare facilities and activities in Bishop's Stortford;
- A planning contribution for youth services in Bishop's Stortford; and
- A planning contribution for library services in Bishop's Stortford.

Health

9.7 The Developer has held discussions with NHS England and the East & North Herts and Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG). In summary, the Developer has sought guidance on how best to meet the health needs resulting from the Proposed Development – i.e. whether to provide:

- Serviced land and a planning contribution for a new GP / health centre on-site;
or
- A planning contribution for an expanded GP / health centre off-site.

9.8 The correspondence contained at Appendix 6 confirms that NHS England and the CCG prefer a planning contribution from the Developer to facilitate development works at the existing Thorley Health Centre (a branch of the Church Street Partnership).

- 9.9 The Proposed Development will also provide other elements that, although not strictly mitigation measures, will contribute towards people's health and wellbeing. These include the on-site provision of: public open space, including equipped areas of play, recreation space, natural greenspace and formal sports facilities / pitches within the new schools; tree lined streets; pleasant views over the brook / watercourse; opportunities to promote walking, running and cycling; new planting and other design treatments to improve noise conditions near St James's Way; and, high quality new homes that maximise quality of life and living conditions.

Local Centre

- 9.10 The Developer intends to deliver a local centre on-site, including any or all of the following Use Classes - A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and D1.

Other

- 9.11 Subject to further discussions between the Local Planning Authority, the Developer and HCC, other mitigation measures could comprise:

- A planning contribution towards town centre improvements, including high quality paving and surfacing, planting, street furniture, signposting, bins and canal / river towpaths; and
- A planning contribution for domestic waste bins and recycling boxes and towards community recycling facilities.

- 9.12 The mitigation measures relating to 'green infrastructure', 'health' and 'other' obligations are based on the East Herts Planning Obligations SPD (October 2008). Those relating to 'education, childcare and libraries' are based on HCC's Planning Obligations Guidance – Toolkit for Hertfordshire (January 2008). Clearly these documents could be subject to change and if so, the above lists may need to be amended accordingly.

- 9.13 Indicative delivery arrangements are not available at this stage for the above mitigation measures. However, the Developer and the Local Planning Authority will seek to agree further mitigation details in due course, including during pre-application discussions, as part of the normal planning application process.

10.0 PHASING PLAN

- 10.1 Policy DPS3 in the East Herts District Plan Submission Document (March 2017) expects Bishop's Stortford South to deliver its first 250 dwellings in the period 2017 to 2022. The subsequent 500 dwellings are then to be delivered from 2022 onwards.

- 10.2 These timescales should be achievable, providing that a formal grant of planning permission is issued in Autumn 2018, all conditions are discharged within nine months and a start-on-site takes place by Summer 2019. This would enable the first phase of completions to be delivered by Spring 2020.

- 10.3 The Developer and the Local Planning Authority will discuss and agree a detailed Phasing Plan in due course, probably as part of the planning application process. This will in relation to the number of residential completions (including affordable housing) per annum from 2020 onwards consider timescales for the delivery of the local centre, the employment area and serviced land for the primary and secondary schools. In the interim, the Developer agrees that the Housing Trajectory for Bishop's Stortford South, as set out at Policy DPS3 in the East Herts District Plan Submission Document and repeated at paragraph 10.1 above, is realistic and deliverable.

11.0 HOUSEBUILDERS AND OUTLETS

- 11.1 It is expected that the majority of the Proposed Development will be built out by the Developer, although it will be for HCC and / or the school end user(s) to address matters of school design, specification and construction.
- 11.2 In relation to the residential development, a build rate of approximately 100 dwellings per annum is anticipated, based on two outlets operating from the site at any one time. Peak output could be as much as 150 dwellings per annum, dependent on the provision of affordable homes.
- 11.3 The timing of the delivery of the local centre, the employment area and serviced land for the primary and secondary schools will be discussed and agreed between the Developer and the Local Planning Authority in due course.

12.0 TIMING OF PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

- 12.1 In March 2015 the Developer submitted a Request for a Scoping Opinion under the EIA Regulations 2011 (as amended). This referred to a maximum quantum of development at Bishop's Stortford South of up to 1,000 dwellings including affordable homes, reserve land for a secondary school, a primary school, a local centre, up to 5 ha of land for an employment area, public open space and landscaping, and associated and ancillary development. The Local Planning Authority published its Scoping Opinion (ref. S/15/0179) in November 2015.
- 12.2 Furthermore, in March 2017 the Developer and the Local Planning Authority signed up to a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA), to set the overarching framework for pre-application discussions. The PPA identifies a series of stages, including a number of meetings with officers and engagement events with members and the public, leading up to agreement on a site-wide Master Plan and the submission of a formal planning application. Pre-application meetings began in February 2017 and are likely to continue into Autumn 2017.

13.0 TIMING OF PLANNING APPLICATION

- 13.1 The Developer intends to undertake an EIA and progress the necessary technical work concurrently with the above pre-application meetings. This should enable a planning application package to be prepared and made ready for submission in late 2017 / early 2018.
- 13.2 It is anticipated that the District Plan will be adopted and the Local Planning Authority in a position to report the planning application to committee, with a recommendation for approval, by late Spring 2018. This should enable any Section 106 agreement to be concluded and a formal grant of planning permission to be issued by Autumn 2018.
- 13.3 In turn, this timing should enable a start-on-site by Summer 2019 and in accordance with the information set out in Section 10 above.

14.0 NEXT STEPS

- 14.1 The next steps on this project are for the Developer and the Local Planning Authority to continue to progress the pre-application process in accordance with the agreed PPA, including:
- additional technical and planning meetings with officers;
 - engagement and consultation with members, the public and other stakeholders; and
 - leading to agreement on a collaborative site-wide Master Plan.
- 14.2 The collaborative preparation of a Master Plan will establish the principles of development for the site and underpin any subsequent planning application. The application will be closely aligned with the Master Plan provisions and will be broadly consistent with the overall objectives set out in the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan for the area.
- 14.3 The EIA process will be progressed by the Developer in parallel with these next steps and any significant findings will be fed back into discussions with the Local Planning Authority, before the formal planning application package and the Environmental Statement are finalised.