

**Statement of Common Ground between (i) Stroud District Council (SDC)
Council and (ii) the Promoter – Sharpness Development LLP**

Local Plan Site Name and Policy Reference: Sharpness new settlement PS36
Date: February 2023

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by the two parties to establish the main areas of agreement between Council and site promoter and to identify any areas where further work is required for completion to prove soundness and deliverability to the Inspector.

1. Description of the site	The land is located to the south and east of tier 3a Newtown & Sharpness and north of tier 2 Berkeley, on the B4066 and adjacent to the existing Sharpness rail branchline. The site is located within the parishes of Hamfallow and Hinton and has a gross site area of 338.6 hectares (phases 1 & 2)*(but see promoter’s revised plan).
2. Local Plan context	The site, as identified on the policies map, is allocated within the Draft Local Plan (submitted October 2021) for a new garden community comprising employment, residential, retail, community and open space uses, as well as strategic green infrastructure and landscaping. The site is proposed as a long-term strategic site.
3. Relevant promoter representations	Representation 932 (Ridge and Partners LLP), including additional reports.
4. Main areas of agreement.	<p>The parties agree that the land, as identified on the policies map, is allocated for a new garden community, which will deliver an exemplar, high-quality mixed use new settlement, within a network of Green Infrastructure, and with the ability to meets the day to day needs of its residents within the new community, with the aim of relegating car use and maximising the ease and convenience of alternative transportation options including a network of personal transport routes and supporting infrastructure and the development of a new train station to support the re-opening of the Sharpness railway branch line. The proposals will include:</p> <p>Employment: 10 hectares of Class E(g), B2 and B8 employment land and ancillary employment uses, to reflect the identified sectoral needs of the District and local area.</p> <p>Housing: Approximately 2,400 dwellings by 2040 (5,000 by 2050 subject to Local Plan Review), including 720 affordable dwellings (30%), to address tenure, type and size of dwellings needed within the District and Berkeley Cluster areas. However, the promoter is suggesting some modifications (see below).</p> <p>Transport/Access: A site layout which prioritises walking and cycling and access to public transport over the use of the private car. A site internal movement system that prioritises sustainable and active mobility by providing dedicated walking and cycling routes linking</p>

key areas and a centrally located Strategic Mobility / Interchange Hub at a new rail station in the heart of the new community.

High quality and accessible walking and cycling routes within the site including the retention and diversion of existing footpaths as necessary, the provision of connections to employment, local centre, education and contributions towards the enhancement of off-site walking and cycling routes to key destinations including to Berkeley GREEN, Newtown /Sharpness and Berkeley town centre and linking to the national cycle and canal networks.

A Strategic Mobility / Interchange hub which will be central to the new community. It will also be accessible to residents of existing neighbouring communities and will operate as a modal interchange and point of transfer between different modes of public transport, micro-mobility options such as bike share and e-scooter systems (subject to regulatory approval) as well as car clubs.

Car clubs will be publicly accessible shared cars which can be used by residents for occasional and special use further reducing the need to own a car. Direct, attractive and demand responsive express coach/bus services to key destinations, including Bristol and Gloucester, delivered at an early stage and designed to be more attractive than the use of private car for comparable trips. Public transport permeability through the site and bus stops and shelters at appropriate locations within the development to access existing diverted and new bus services and contributions to enhance local bus service frequencies to key destinations including Berkeley, Cam and Dursley, Stonehouse and Stroud. New railway station and enhancements to the Sharpness branch line and contributions to support a regular passenger service. It is anticipated that this service will go to Gloucester via Cam and Dursley.

The multiple mobility options serving the site will be designed and provided to reduce car ownership, as well as car usage. Mobility options will be accessible within a single user interface under a Mobility-as- a-Service (MaaS) system as well as by traditional phone booking systems. This will be designed to provide occasional and frequent access to vehicles, bike hire schemes, e-scooters (subject to regulatory approval) and public transport vouchers/incentives. Behavioural change measures will be designed to encourage sustainable travel through the implementation of a Travel Plan. Primary vehicular access from the B4066, with a movement strategy put in place to avoid significant impacts upon existing local rural lanes to Breadstone and Gossington to the east and with necessary improvements to the existing highway network.

Infrastructure: A primary school (incorporating early years' provision) and contributions towards the provision of a secondary school (+ 6 form) on an agreed site within the development. On-site community and sports built provision and contributions to off-site

indoor sports and leisure facilities, in accordance with local standards. A local centre, incorporating local retail, surgery and community uses as required to meet the needs of the development. Zero carbon energy generation to meet the needs of the community, but the promoters are seeking a modification (see below). Ultrafast broadband to homes and businesses with top average speeds of 1Gbps. Any associated infrastructure enhancements required and identified in the Stroud Infrastructure Delivery Plan in this location.

Environmental: A network of multifunctional Green Infrastructure (GI) designed to permeate throughout the development and to protect the Severn Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar site to the south west. The masterplan will be in accordance with best practice green infrastructure design, using the *Building with Nature* standards to benchmark high quality provision of open space across all areas. The GI network will make up approximately 50% of the entire site area and will comprise the following three broad open space typologies.

1. Policy Open Space – largely located within the development and includes playing fields, allotments, community orchards, amenity greenspace, parks and recreation as required by local policy DHC7. These more intensive/active and community uses to be located away from the more sensitive areas around the Estuary. A mixture of woodland blocks, parklands, meadows, amenity spaces, gardens, allotments and play spaces will be integrated within this area.
2. SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) - a large-scale naturally landscaped area, the primary purpose of which is to attract recreational activity, particularly dog walking, away from the Estuary shoreline and its sensitive habitats and bird populations. SANG will be provided at an overall rate of 8ha per 1000 population across Phase 1 and 2. The design will restrict access to the estuary shoreline using natural features in the landscape such as existing ditches, hedgerows and treelines, whilst providing views over the estuary for public enjoyment.
3. A managed new Nature Reserve between Berkeley Pill and the proposed SANG will be provided. This area will have access restricted, except for those managing the land, and is intended to act as buffer between the SPA and development, whilst also providing a high tide winter bird roosting site to complement the existing roost site at Berkley Pill. The section of the Severn Way footpath that passes through this sensitive area will be diverted through the SANG to further reduce recreational disturbance to the SPA while allowing appropriate seasonal access to the current route. Such measures are to be accompanied, if appropriate, by a contribution to off-site access management to avoid significant effects on SPA.

Proposed structural landscaping buffers along boundaries to incorporate existing and new native hedgerows and trees linking with existing green infrastructure. The extent of new habitat creation proposed across the GI network will ensure a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10% is delivered, together with the provision of valuable Ecosystem Services including tree planting and wetland creation to achieve significant carbon capture and enhanced management of water resources.

Flood risk: Fluvial and tidal modelling has been undertaken to confirm floodplain extents, depths, velocities and the potential impacts of climate change. This has enabled the Promoter to determine the developable area and understand the use and design of the proposed SANG and Nature Reserve. The SANG design will also create additional dry areas through the creation of raised footpaths and boardwalks that will ensure the usability of the area following extended wet periods or rare flooding events. The remainder of the public open space within the site and the SANG to the north of the site is relatively unconstrained.

Drainage: The surface water drainage strategy will propose that all surface water runoff from the site is to be attenuated through the use of above-ground Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features (assuming no infiltration) prior to discharge into existing watercourses and ditches - this will also enhance biodiversity and improve water quality. As the masterplan evolves there may be scope to incorporate additional surface water management measures to reduce the reliance on strategic features and provide additional ecology and amenity benefits.

Heritage and Archaeology: a thorough assessment and appropriate treatments of assets and their settings will be undertaken as part of any planning application. Initial assessments have been carried out to inform the masterplanning strategy to respect the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets within or near the site. A full programme of field investigations will be carried out to determine the presence and significance of features of archaeological interest.



Design: A range of tools including a community engagement and stewardship strategy, design codes and a spatial masterplan and implementation plan, to be approved by the District Council, will detail the way in which the new community, land uses and infrastructure will be developed in an integrated and coordinated manner. A bespoke and innovative layout, density, built form and character which respond to the landscape and heritage context within the Berkeley Vale.

Viability: Although the promoter notes that the Council's May 2021 viability assessment does not accurately reflect the viability of the allocation site given it is more of a high-level appraisal, both parties

	<p>nonetheless agree that the site is a viable and deliverable strategic site, taking into account the policy requirements.</p> <p>Other matters: Phasing arrangements to ensure that employment land is developed and occupied in parallel with housing land completions and retail and community provision is made in a timely manner.</p>
<p>5. Main areas of disagreement / dispute/areas requiring further work.</p>	<p>There are no major matters of disagreement. The promoter considers the plan sound but does suggest some minor modifications to help improve the clarity of the Local Plan and the requirements for site allocation PS36.</p> <p>Site area: The promoter has submitted a revised plan showing some additional areas to be added to the site allocation boundaries (Phase 1), most notably south west of Wanswell (moved from Phase 2 to Phase 1) and north west of Berkeley (moved from Phase 2 to Phase 1 and additional land). (See rep 932 Phase 1 & 2 Site Plan). A further revised plan is attached at Appendix 1 of this SoCG.</p> <p>30 year Vision and Phase 2: Some additional supporting text is recommended as a modification to refer to an early partial review of the Plan to address the need and potential for further development in this area.</p> <p>Housing: The promoter considers that there is potential to deliver 2,750 homes within the Plan period. They have therefore suggested the figure could be modified to “at least 2,400 dwellings by 2040” and “approximately 5,000, subject to Local Plan Review”.</p> <p>Transport/Access: The promoter states that the Council’s traffic modelling relies on historic trends in traffic growth to justify the provision of additional highway infrastructure, which perpetuates the reliance of the private car and could undermine the Council getting to net zero by 2030. The modelling should recognise the benefits of MaaS and be more aspirational in its approach to modal shift. A flexible approach should be taken to mitigation measures and their implementation, with a requirement for on-going monitoring of actual outturn conditions during the development and tailored mitigation responses that address actual impacts. Nevertheless, the promoter’s Highway Capacity Assessment considers a fallback position which is predominately car-based, as a test against the possibility of delayed achievement of the desired future transport which, and shows that the site can be accommodated on the local highway network.</p> <p>Other matters: A modification is proposed to ensure flexibility on the forms of zero carbon energy generation to be implemented as technologies are rapidly evolving.</p> <p>Viability: Whilst the promoter appreciates that the Council’s May 2021 viability assessment is not able to consider site specific factors,</p>

	<p>due to the scale of the site, it considers the viability of PS36 is not accurately reflected within the high-level appraisal. The sensitivity analysis of the viability assessment demonstrates the development is viable even without inputs that are appropriate for a development of scale. The site can successfully deliver the proposed scheme and the viability can be significantly improved to include the potential of a viability surplus on a commercial and market facing basis.</p>														
<p>6. The promoters' anticipated start and build-out rates.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2020-2025</td> <td>2025-2030</td> <td>2030-2035</td> <td>2035-2040</td> <td>TOTAL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>/</td> <td>455</td> <td>1,090</td> <td>1,205</td> <td>2,750</td> </tr> </table>	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	TOTAL	/	455	1,090	1,205	2,750				
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	<p>PS36 (Phase 1) would deliver at least 2,400 dwellings within the Plan period. The promoter considers it will be able to exceed the delivery rates specified by the Council given the potential for multiple sales outlets and the strength of the market.</p>														
<p>7. Promoters' Deliverability/Viability Statement</p>	<p>Viability:</p> <p>The Promoter has instructed Jones Lang Lasalle (JLL) to assess and advise on the viability of the development. The evidence prepared by JLL to date demonstrates that the development can be successfully delivered whilst addressing policy requirements and targeting a reduction in carbon output in the way we both live and work. Furthermore, the Promoter considers that as a result of multiple factors including finance rate, profit, phasing, build cost and the addition of the employment space, will collectively and significantly further improve the viability of PS36 compared to that outlined in the Council's May 2021 viability assessment.</p> <p>Deliverability:</p> <p>The Promoter and its consultant team has already undertaken a raft of baseline work to inform the development of the proposal; this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharpness Vale Natural Neighbourhoods Vision Document (March 2021). • Report on any risk posed by the ammonium nitrate storage at Sharpness Docks on the proposed Sharpness Vale Development prepared by Advanced Safety Plus. • Proposed Recreational Avoidance Strategy prepared by EDP. • Ecology Strategy prepared by EDP. • Winter and Passage Bird Baseline report prepared by EDP. • Flood Model Review Technical Note prepared by Stantec. • Transport Approach prepared by Stantec • Transport Technical Appraisal prepared by Stantec • Mobility-as-a-Service and Express Coach Services Non-car Movement Strategy, Viability & Funding Appraisal • Technical Note - Sharpness branch line – restoring passenger railway services prepared by Stantec. 														

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Note - Status and context of the Restoring your Railway – Sharpness Branch Line - Outline Case Submission – 30th September 2020 <p>In addition to the above, an indicative high level phasing plan has been produced (see Appendix 2) and illustrates one way the proposed development could be sequenced. The main considerations for phasing will be balancing the delivery of new homes with education, health and commercial uses and key triggers of infrastructure, including SANG, Nature Reserve and Transport infrastructure. Work on a detailed schedule of infrastructure delivery, including key trigger points, remains ongoing and all parties expect to have further information in this regard at the Examination.</p> <p>The Promoter and the consultant team have also been working with Stroud District Council officers during the preparation of the Local Plan Review, as well as engaging with other key stakeholders that are important to the delivery of the new settlement including, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), Highways England (HE), Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA), Network Rail (NR) and Vale of Berkeley Railway (VoBR).</p> <p>In addition, GCC Emergency Planners have been consulted and have confirmed that the proposed development can be accommodated within the existing offsite emergency plan for the Berkeley site which is undergoing decommissioning. See correspondence enclosed at Appendix 3.</p> <p>The Promoter has also consulted with the local town and parish councils including Berkeley Town Council, Hinton Parish Council, Hamfallow Parish Council and Slimbridge Parish Council.</p> <p>An EIA Screening request is under preparation for submission to the Local Planning Authority in advance of the examination in public. It is anticipated that an outline planning application would be submitted as soon as the Examination has concluded. Both parties agree that the work necessary to comply with Policy PS36 can be undertaken as part of the planning application process.</p> <p>The parties agree that a Planning Performance Agreement will be entered into for the planning application.</p>
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<p>Signed on behalf of Sharpness Development</p>  <p>LLP</p>	<p>Signed on behalf of Stroud District Council</p> 
<p>Date: 20 February 2023</p>	<p>Date: 16 February 2023</p>

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