

**Statement of Common Ground**

**Major Alternative Sites in the Green Belt**

**Barton Willmore on behalf of Taylor Wimpey and  
Bovis Homes and Bath & North East Somerset  
Council**

**Land at Whitchurch**

**20<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 As requested by the Core Strategy Inspector, Simon Emerson, Bath & North East Somerset planning authority has been asked to coordinate the production of succinct *Statements of Common Ground* to establish areas of agreement between the hearing participants pursuing major alternative development sites in the Green Belt and the Council to help focus discussion at the hearings.
- 1.2 The Inspector is clear that these must not be lengthy description background, but should highlight matters that will assist him with getting to grips with the complex and diverse material relating to the sites, including clear cross referencing to existing material. The content of these statements should include:
- What evidence remains relevant and how it should be used
  - What evidence is lacking –
  - What are the critical areas of agreement/disagreement

## 2 Description of the site

### Whitchurch Development Area

- 2.1 The site, as defined in the BANES SHLAA Report of Findings, Appendix 1e (May 2011) (CD4/H14) is located approximately 3.7 miles to the south-east of Bristol City Centre and extends to approximately 200 hectares. It comprises a broad ribbon of land following the existing urban edge of Stockwood and Bristol and is bisected by the A37 which runs in a broadly north-south direction through the site. The site, which comprises mostly agricultural fields of various sizes and in various ownerships, is immediately adjacent to the existing village of Whitchurch which contains a range of uses including comparison retail shops, offices and public houses. Generally, the fields are smaller close to Whitchurch village and get larger to the south.

## 3 Matters of Agreement

1. The following evidence has been submitted by Barton Willmore to Bath & North East Somerset Council and presented to other interested parties, including Bristol City Council and is described in appendix 1 of Examination Statement Issue 3<sup>1</sup>:
- Draft Environmental Report by EDP (2006): Preliminary study of landscape, ecological and archaeological constraints for Whitchurch and Hicks Gate;
  - Land Budget Version 1 by Barton Willmore (June 2006): Calculations of employment land requirements, retail impact, education provision and public open space requirements to inform masterplan;
  - Development Phasing and Transport Accessibility Strategy for Land at Whitchurch by Odyssey (August 2006): Investigation of how much development might be possible in advance of the South Bristol Link submitted as an appendix to BW's submission on the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy, further copy sent to Adrian Clarke, BANES, May 2007.

<sup>1</sup> Whitchurch Development Area: Summary of Evidence Submitted (December 2011)

- Archaeological and Landscape Assessment of the Setting of Maes Knoll/Wansdyke and Other Heritage Features in the Area of Whitchurch by EDP (August 2006); rebuttal to the archaeological content of BANES Preliminary Environmental Study, submitted as an appendix to BW's submission on the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy;
  - Preliminary South Bristol Ring Road Alignment Investigations by Odyssey (Revised Version January 2008); Possible Phase 3 Alignments sent to BANES and BCC following meetings held with them.
  - Geophysical Survey Report by GSB Prospection Ltd (April 2008): Geophysical survey of land at Lyon's Court Farm;
  - Interim Briefing Note - Ecology by EDP (updated April 2008);
  - Whitchurch: Concepts for a New Sustainable Suburb by Barton Willmore, 2008: Document showing how the masterplan concepts were derived. Presented at the meeting with BANES officers, May 2008.
2. Barton Willmore agree with much of the material in paragraphs 5.23 – 5.29 of the B&NES Spatial Options Consultation (CD5/4) which describes the Council's position at that time of Whitchurch as the preferred location for an urban extension at South East Bristol. However, the Council is not planning for an urban extension to south east Bristol in the submission Core Strategy for the reasons set out in its evidence and summarised in Topic Papers 2 and 9.

## 4 Matters in Dispute

- Barton Willmore's view that the housing target in the B&NES Core Strategy significantly underestimates the housing requirement for the area and is unsound.
- Barton Willmore's view that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is inconsistent with the SEA Directive because the approach has not examined reasonable alternatives at a strategic level (i.e. different levels of growth in B&NES) or likely significant effects of increased population and/or economic growth above the level's anticipated.
- Barton Willmore's view that by not providing for an urban extension to South East Bristol the draft Core Strategy is inconsistent with RPG10 and up to date evidence on sub-regional housing requirements.
- Barton Willmore's view that the Bristol-Bath Green Belt boundary in B&NES should be reviewed to make provision for the growth of Bristol.
- Barton Willmore's view of the impact of development in the Whitchurch location on Maes Knoll a scheduled ancient monument and its setting. The main area of disagreement between the Council and Taylor Wimpey (Barton Willmore) is in relation to development potential in the south west part of the area of search at Whitchurch, namely, the setting of Maes Knoll.
- Whilst the Council is of the view that the Core Strategy as submitted is sound, should the Inspector conclude that it is unsound in respect of either the level of housing and economic development it plans for or the degree of flexibility required there is disagreement between the parties regarding the process by which one or other of these aspects of unsoundness would be addressed.

## Declaration

The contents of this document are agreed for the purposes of the B&NES Core Strategy hearing.

Signed on behalf of Participant

..... *Simon Prescott* .....  
Position..... *Partner, Barton Willmors* .....  
Date..... *20<sup>th</sup> December 2011* .....

Signed on behalf of LPA

..... *R. Dore* .....  
Position..... *PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER* .....  
Date..... *21/12/11* .....