

Statement of Common Ground

B&NES Core Strategy – Enlarged Strategic Site at
East Keynsham

PCL Planning on behalf of Withies Farm Landowners' Group,
Glenavon Farm Landowners' Group and Mactaggart & Mickel

and

Bath & North East Somerset Council

10 March 2014

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In his note of 3rd January 2013 ([ID/44](#)) the Inspector outlined his requirements in terms of Statements of Common Ground that he would like to be prepared in advance of his preparation for the hearings in March/April 2014. He has also confirmed the dates and scope of coverage for these hearing sessions.
- 1.2 The Inspector has requested that the Council and the various owners/developers/promoters of the Green Belt sites proposed for allocation in the November 2013 Amendments should prepare Statements of Common Ground relating to delivery and environmental impact of those allocations as per the Council's proposals in the following revised policies:
 - B3A Land Adjoining Odd Down, Bath
 - B3B Land Adjoining Weston, Bath
 - KE3A Land Adjoining East Keynsham
 - KE4 Land Adjoining South West Keynsham
 - RA5 Land at Whitchurch
- 1.3 The deadline for submission of hard copies of these Statements of Common Ground to the Inspector is noon on 14th February 2014; the Council has a working deadline of **7th February** in order to ensure timely completion.
- 1.4 The Inspector has specified in ID/44 what the Statements of Common Ground, should include (but not be limited to), this template covers these issues accordingly:
 - Delivery: Availability/start on site/likely annual completions (assuming that the Core Strategy is adopted by Autumn 2014).
 - Evidence already submitted relating to the main documents, including the evidence from landowners/developers included in the Core Documents or submitted with representations to the November consultation.
 - The Statement of Common Ground should make clear which parts of evidence are agreed and where there is disagreement briefly the main reasons for that disagreement.
- 1.5 The Inspector has suggested that the Statements of Common Ground may need to involve parties not currently active in the Examination, but they will only have a right to be heard if they have already made representations at an appropriate opportunity. The Council considers that this relates primarily to landowners who have not previously been involved in the examination process prior to Nov-Dec 2013.
- 1.6 In addition, Statements of Common Ground between the Council and other promoters in relation to their suggested alternative or enlarged proposals are welcomed by the Inspector as separate submissions. This Statement of Common Ground relates to an enlarged proposal.

2.0 Description of the site

- 2.1 The proposed site allocation comprises c. 65.54 ha of land south of the A4; and c. 32.66 ha north of the A4.
- 2.2 The area is principally characterized by arable, pasture and grass lands with hedgerows, ditches, some trees and other countryside features.
- 2.3 The railway which runs east to west between Bath and Bristol defines the northern boundary of the site.
- 2.4 The topography of the area is reasonably flat with a gentle incline from north to south across the site.
- 2.5 There are areas of housing in Keynsham to the west and Saltford to the east. Both are inward-facing towards the existing developed areas of the respective settlements. There are also small fragmented clusters of residential development that front onto the A4 that adjoin the site. The A4 is a major public transport corridor. Wellsway secondary school lies adjacent to the site to the south of the A4, on the eastern edge of Keynsham; the town centre of Keynsham is further west from here, approximately 1.2km along Bath Road and Bath Hill.
- 2.6 To the north of the A4 lies a broad mix of land uses within and adjacent to the site, including industrial units, large format retail, some pockets of housing, a nursery and farm.
- 2.7 The Manor Road Community Woodland lies adjacent to the south west edge of the site.
- 2.8 Vegetation within the area comprises small copses and mature trees, together with hedgerows. More Extensive mature vegetation is located toward Manor Road at the southern boundary.
- 2.9 A series of small watercourses and ditches edge the field boundaries, linking together and flowing north westwards to the site boundary.
- 2.10 The north western corner of the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.11 The site lies within the Avon Valley Landscape Character Area as defined in the Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment SPD.
- 2.12 See map included in **Appendix 1**.

3.0 Delivery

- 3.1 The area of the site to the south of the A4 and east of the gas pipeline is included in the SHLAA as available with moderate to high 'suitability / credentials' (SHLAA, November 2013 - **CD10/E19** Appendix 1c – **Location**

K27a Withies Farm, South of A4). The area of the site to the north of the A4 is included in the SHLAA as available with low to moderate ‘suitability / credentials’ (SHLAA, November 2013 - **CD10/E19** Appendix 1c – **Location K27c**¹ Glenavon Farm, North of A4). The remainder of the site to the south of the A4, north of Manor Road and east of Saltford is included in the SHLAA as available with partly nil, partly low to moderate site ‘suitability / credentials’ (SHLAA, November 2013 – **CD10/E19** Appendix 1c – **Location K27b** Glenavon Farm, South of A4).

- 3.2 In their submission to the Core Strategy consultation (December 2013), Mactaggart and Mickel presented a concept plan for the comprehensive development of land south of the railway and north and south of the A4. The red line boundary is indicated within their Concept Report and in the appendices of **CD10/LD3d**.
- 3.3 Mactaggart and Mickel have also produced a Housing Delivery Trajectory based on a consortium of three developers.
- 3.4 The majority of the land in the red line area is already within the control of Mactaggart and Mickel. Negotiations are continuing between Mactaggart and Mickel and other landowners and they anticipate that, in the event of the enlarged site being allocated, agreements will be reached in respect of any residual areas. Mactaggart and Mickel states that it is not unusual for option and/or development agreements with all those with interests in strategic sites not to have been concluded at the time of their allocation in a draft Development Plan Document.

4.0 Key relevant evidence

- 4.1 The key evidence prepared by the Council in relation to land at East Keynsham is as follows:

Key evidence 2011-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous iterations of SHLAA • Green Spaces Strategy CD4/ENV3 <p>NB Much of the earlier Core Strategy evidence is in part superseded by more detailed evidence prepared to support the allocations as outlined below.</p>
Additional evidence to support proposed changes Submitted March -Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Keynsham Development Concept Options Report CD9/CO2 • Core Strategy Additional Evidence Heritage Asset Study CD9/LV/1 Main Report, Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 • Keynsham East Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment CD9/LV/7 • Green Belt Review Stage 1 CD9/E2

¹ Referred to as K27c in the summary, but assessed on page 24 under reference K28.

2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Belt Review Stage 2 CD9/E9 • Affordable Housing Viability Study CD9/H1 • Flood Risk: The Sequential and Exception Tests Update CD9/FR3 • Infrastructure Delivery Plan CD9/I1 • Transport Evaluation Report Main Report CD9/I2/1; and appendices including Appendix E Land Adjoining East Keynsham and Appendix EE: Scenario 2 – RTA calculations CD9/I2/6; Appendix K: Accession Maps: Walking and Cycling CD9/I2/12; Appendix L: Accession Maps: Public Transport CD9/I2/13; Appendix N: Ward Model Share & Ward Maps CD9/I2/15
Documents associated with the Core Strategy strategic site allocation Submitted Nov 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment – East Keynsham CD10/E6 • Bath and North East Somerset – Community Infrastructure Levy: Strategic greenfield allocations – viability testing CD10/E7 • Addendum to Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment: Keynsham CD10/E13 • Renewable Energy Assessment for B&NES Green Belt sites: Assessment CD10/E16 • Valuing people, place and nature – a Green Infrastructure Strategy for B&NES CD10/E17 • Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) CD10/E19 • Extract B&NES Playing Pitch Strategy CD10/E20 • B&NES Local Education Authority – Education Requirements for the sites CD10/E21 • Transport Access Assessment Core Strategy Greenfield Site Allocation Keynsham CD10/E22 • B&NES 51
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Appraisal Annex L – Locational Alternative Appraisal Matrices CD9/A1/5 • Sustainability Appraisal Matrices (Annex O) CD10/A1/3 • Previous iterations of the SA

4.2 Mactaggart and Mickel has prepared a number of detailed technical reports on matters relating to transport, ecology, landscape & visual appraisal, and flood risk. These technical reports have been submitted to the Council in support of their representations on both the proposed changes to the Core Strategy (published for consultation March 2013) and amendments to the Core Strategy (published for consultation November 2013). Key evidence is summarised below:

Key landowner evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Report • Mactaggart & Mickel, Land at East Keynsham Preliminary Transport Appraisal Report CD10/LD3b • Land East of Keynsham, Ecological Assessment, A Report on behalf of Mactaggart and Mickel Homes CD10/LD3c • Land East of Keynsham, Landscape and Visual Appraisal, A Report on behalf of Mactaggart and Mickel Homes CD10/LD3d • Land East of Keynsham, Level 2 Flood Risk Assessment CD10/LD3e • Housing Delivery: Land at East Keynsham (January 2014)
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- 4.3 The Council has undertaken further transport modelling using a micro-simulation transportation Paramics model of Keynsham. The results of this modelling were made available on 14th February 2014. As the modelling is being published alongside this statement of common ground, and Mactaggart and Mickel have not seen the report, further discussions will take place during the lead up to the hearings to identify, where possible, further areas of agreement or disagreement between the parties to provide the Inspector with clarity and inform his framework for the Hearings. The parties agree that during the drafting of this statement the most recent modelling work was not part of the evidence base, did not inform the proposed allocation of the site, and as Mactaggart and Mickel have not seen the further transport modelling it is not possible at this stage to determine whether there will be sufficient time before the programmed hearings to properly assess the transport evidence due to be submitted.

5.0 Summary of Agreed Matters

- 5.1 The following are matters agreed between the parties:
- 5.2 The principle of preparing a comprehensive masterplan, through public consultation and agreed by the Council is supported.

Green Belt

- 5.3 The site is currently in the Green Belt as defined in the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan (Adopted October 2007).
- 5.4 The Bristol – Bath Green Belt boundaries on land between Keynsham and Saltford were first established in the Somerset County Development Plan in 1966.

- 5.5 The inner Green Belt boundaries as defined in the Somerset County Development Plan and subsequent Local Plans left areas of undeveloped land on the eastern edge of Keynsham and the western/southern part of Saltford outside of the Green Belt. The Green Belt Stage 1 review (CD9/E2) states that 'white areas' were shown at Keynsham and Saltford to provide limited expansion beyond the plan period without amending the Green Belt boundary. These areas have since been developed and as a result the Green Belt boundaries surrounding both settlements are now tightly drawn, generally following the limits of built development.
- 5.6 The principle of removing land from the Green Belt for residential and employment development with associated infrastructure on land east of Keynsham is supported.
- 5.7 The principle of removing additional land to the east of Keynsham from the Green Belt and safeguarding for future development is supported.
- 5.8 In accordance with the evidence in CD9/E2 and CD9/E9, land currently included in the Green Belt east of Keynsham and west of Saltford south of the railway line does not serve the following Green Belt purposes:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- 5.9 Removal of land east of Keynsham and west of Saltford from the Green Belt would not reduce the openness of the gap between either Keynsham and Bristol or Saltford and Bath.
- 5.10 A gap based on the requisite buffer zone around the gas pipeline would ensure some separation between Keynsham and Saltford for as long as the pipeline is in operation, and can be given appropriate planning policy protection to ensure its permanence.
- 5.11 There is no prescribed width of gap that is necessary to maintain adequate separation between settlements. The appropriate extent of separation between built up areas will vary dependent on location.
- 5.12 Correspondingly, the existing gap between Bristol and Whitchurch, and the ensuing gap between Bath and Southstoke as a result of the proposed strategic allocation at Odd Down (B3A), are/will be less than the residual gap between Keynsham and Saltford based on the proposals for the enlarged site in the Mactaggart and Mickel Development Concept Document.
- 5.13 Consistent with para 81 of the NPPF, the residual Green Belt gap between Keynsham and Saltford has the potential to be positively enhanced through strategic planting.

Transport

General Transport Context

- 5.14 Bath & North East Somerset employed consultant Arup to undertake a transport evaluation of potential locations identified for possible allocation for residential/mixed use development. The Transport Evaluation Report 2013 (TER – CD9/I2/1) grouped sites into 3 categories based on performance in a number of transport areas as follows:
- 1) Best Performing
 - 2) Average Performing
 - 3) Worst performing
- 5.15 The TER found the proposed allocation site at East Keynsham to be average performing with only the proposed allocations in Bath performing better. The TER categorised the proposed allocations in South West Keynsham and Whitchurch within the worst performing category.
- 5.16 The overall conclusion to be drawn from the evidence in the ARUP TER is that the East Keynsham location has the greatest potential of all the proposed allocations outside Bath for non-car modes of travel.

Walking

- 5.17 Two areas of residential development are proposed by Mactaggart and Mickel at East Keynsham either side of proposed strategic parkland. To the west of the parkland the centre of the residential development is 1600 metres from Keynsham town centre. To the east of the parkland the centre of residential development is 1200 metres from the centre of Saltford. The centre of the proposed allocation at South West Keynsham is 2 kilometres from the town centre.

Cycling

- 5.18 The East Keynsham site is well located for cycle trips to Bristol and Bath. Access to the traffic free Bristol to Bath Cyclepath (National Cycle Route 4) is available at Saltford (1.6km from the centre of development east of the proposed parkland) and Willsbridge (4.5km from the centre of development west of the proposed parkland), which also facilitates trips to the Emersons Green enterprise area via another traffic free spur which runs along the A4174 ring road (Avon Cycleway Route 410 and Regional route 16). The south western boundary of the proposed South West Keynsham allocation is approximately 3.2 kilometres from National Cycle Route 3 which is a combination of on- and off-road sections. The proposed allocation at Whitchurch is located close to National Cycle Route 3.

Public Transport

- 5.19 The East Keynsham site enjoys good proximity to high level bus services which will facilitate trips by bus to the centre of Saltford, Keynsham, Bath and Bristol, although Mactaggart and Mickel consider the proximity to be ‘very good’. Currently there are 6 express services per hour in each direction to Bristol and Bath with a journey time of a little under 30 minutes to Bristol and 20 minutes to Bath (service X39). There are also 2 non-express services per hour which travel through Keynsham Town Centre (Service 338). There is also the potential (with agreement of the bus operators) to divert some bus routes through the site to further encourage trips by bus.
- 5.20 This is in contrast to the proposed allocation at South West Keynsham (KE4) where currently access to bus services is poor and would require new or diverted bus services. In the ARUP TER it is stated that “*the orientation of this location leading away from Charlton Road would make any diversion into this location difficult and bus services are therefore likely to remain on the periphery of the development area*”; however, the recently completed Section 106 agreement for the Somerdale development includes funds for revenue support for a bus service supporting Keynsham, Whitchurch and south west Bristol via Charlton Road which is immediately adjacent to the KE4 site. The proposed allocation site at Whitchurch (RA5) is well located for bus services.

Travel Plan

- 5.21 Of the proposed residential site allocations the East Keynsham site is the best site outside those located in Bath for encouraging non car modes of travel. It is considered that a significantly higher percentage of trips would be made by non-car modes from the East Keynsham site than at South West Keynsham and Whitchurch.

Ecology

- 5.22 The findings of CD10/LD3c have been reviewed and accepted by the Council, who have not found it necessary to commission further ecological assessment to support their evidence base.
- 5.23 The ecological assessment of the enlarged site set out in CD10/LD3c comprised Desk Study, Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Great Crested Newt Survey, and was undertaken to accepted methodologies and standards. It provides an appropriate basis for more detailed assessment work if the land is allocated for development.
- 5.24 There are no ecological or biodiversity designations that would be affected by development proposals across the enlarged site.
- 5.25 Subject to a positive and integrated approach to biodiversity, the site has the capacity to accommodate the extent of the development proposed without unacceptable ecological impacts.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 5.26 The impacts assessed in the Keynsham East LVIA (CD/LV/7) for all Areas (A, B and C) and as summarised on Map KE4-6 are broadly appropriate.
- 5.27 Whilst the LVIA states and assesses residential as the proposed development, elements of other land uses, such as low density commercial of appropriate design, scale and mass, would result in similar assessment conclusions.
- 5.28 The LVIA undertaken for the wider area (CD10/LD3d) provides an appropriate basis for more detailed assessment work if the land is allocated for development.
- 5.29 Through an extension of Manor Road Community Woodland, the enlarged site area provides an opportunity for a substantial element of strategic green infrastructure, as detailed in Section 6 of CD10/LD3d.

Flood Risk

- 5.30 The assessment in CD10/LD/3e accurately assesses the flood risks associated with developing the enlarged site, and provides an appropriate basis for more detailed assessment if the site is allocated for development. On the basis of the evidence contained in CD10/LD/3e, broad areas of agreement are set out below.
- 5.31 With the exception of an area of land adjacent to the Broadmead Roundabout (adjacent to the north western site boundary), the remaining area of the enlarged site is shown by the EA to be located in Flood Zone 1, which indicates a low level of risk from fluvial and tidal sources.
- 5.32 Whilst localised areas of the enlarged site are currently shown by the EA to be affected by surface water flooding (in topographic lows, along conveyance routes, and in the vicinity of the Broadmead Roundabout), the majority of the enlarged site is not affected by surface water flooding.
- 5.33 The enlarged site includes a longer reach of drainage channel for draining the site and surrounding area, compared to the reach that is within the Council's allocated area. There would therefore be greater opportunities within the enlarged site for making improvements to the existing drainage channel, both for the drainage of the site itself and also to help alleviate flooding in adjacent areas (such as in the vicinity of Broadmead Roundabout).
- 5.34 These improvements could include small ponds and wetland areas within the upper reaches of the drainage channel (in the area between Keynsham and Saltford) together with naturalisation along the drainage catchment, and possibly also with altered land management practices to help reduce surface water runoff rates and volumes.

- 5.35 Based on information from the EA, Wessex Water and B&NES, there are no historical records of flooding having affected the enlarged site. However, there is anecdotal evidence of flooding in the vicinity of Broadmead Roundabout – associated with the drainage channel.
- 5.36 The evidence contained in CD10/LD3e indicates that there are no insurmountable flood risks associated with the development of the enlarged site.

6.0 Summary of Matters in Dispute

- 6.1 There continues to be dispute between the parties on the following matters:
- 6.2 The degree to which the proposals for the enlarged site would be prejudicial to Green Belt purposes, and in particular to the overarching purpose to maintain the separation between Bristol and Bath. The Council considers that the enlarged site would have a significantly greater impact on the Green Belt (in terms of the strategic purpose of separating Bristol and Bath and national purposes 2 and 3) than Mactaggart and Mickel.
- 6.3 The extent to which it is appropriate to retain Green Belt between Keynsham and Saltford, or whether complete removal of the land and the designation of a ‘strategic gap’ is a more appropriate policy tool (as advocated by Mactaggart and Mickel).
- 6.4 The scale of the potential for reduction in car-borne trips, including the proximity of the site to high level bus services. Bath & North East Somerset Council consider that car trips could be reduced by a maximum of 10%. Mactaggart and Mickel consider that the site has potential to reduce car trips further and consider that car trips to Bristol and Bath could be reduced by at least 20%.
- 6.5 The development capacity of land East of Keynsham in highway terms. Based on the Arup TER Bath & North East Somerset considers that there is capacity for the site at East Keynsham to accommodate 250 homes and 30,000m² employment. Using the same parameters as Arup used in its TER Mactaggart and Mickel consider that the site at East Keynsham has capacity for up to 800 dwellings and 20,000m² employment.
- 6.6 The deliverability of up to 30,000 sq m of employment uses, having regard to the commercial attractiveness of the site within the wider locational context. Mactaggart and Mickel consider that this scale of employment development is not based on any robust assessment of market demand / requirements and therefore is of uncertain deliverability.
- 6.6 The additional benefits that Mactaggart and Mickel consider could be delivered from the comprehensive development of the enlarged site compared with the Council’s proposed allocation at East Keynsham.

- 6.7 The appropriateness of the Place-Making Principles, in both general terms as strategic policy criteria, and in terms of the specific matters set out in Policy KE3A, for the reasons adduced in the representations of Mactaggart and Mickel to consultation on the Proposed Green Belt Allocations (November 2013).

7.0 Declaration

- 7.1 The content of this document is agreed for the purposes of the B&NES Core Strategy hearing 2014.

Signed on behalf of Mactaggart & Mickel:



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Position: Director, PCL Planning

Date: 10 March 2014

And

Signed on behalf of Bath & North East Somerset Council:



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Position: Planning Policy Team Leader

Date: 10th March 2014

Appendix 1: Site Plan

