

**THE STEVENAGE LOCAL PLAN (2011-2031)
EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC – JANUARY 2017**

**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND
STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL AND RPF DEVELOPMENTS**

13th December 2016

INTRODUCTION:

This Statement of Common Ground relates to the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2011-2031) and representations made by RPF Developments throughout the Local Plan process, and in particular at pre-submission stage (RPF representor reference 773057).

This document sets out the agreed position between RPF and the Estates Department (as landowner for the Council) at Stevenage Borough Council ('SBCE') in relation to strategic housing allocations which inform the Submission Draft of the Local Plan which is to be considered at Examination in Public on 17th January to the end of March 2017. The Statement is intended to provide the Inspector with a summary of i) matters of discussions ii) matters of agreement between RPF and SBCE; and 3) the degree of cooperation that there is between the two landowners as to the delivery of the proposed housing allocation across both of their land interests.

BACKGROUND:

Both RPF and SBCE have provided comment through the plan making process on all aspects associated with housing delivery, and in particular, housing delivery at Land South East of Stevenage - Draft Allocation HO4. Both parties agree to the HO4 allocation to provide approximately 550 new homes through a release of land to the north and south of the A602 (currently in the Green Belt).

JOINT WORKING:

RPF and SBCE have worked proactively since the pre-submission and submission stages of the Local Plan to address issues and opportunities jointly associated with the land within its ownership South East of Stevenage. Officers at SBCE and representatives of RPF have held a number of meetings, the most recent of which was on Thursday 10th November 2016 at which the following matters were discussed:

- Draft Policy HO4: South East of Stevenage – strategic allocation for the delivery of approximately 550 new dwellings; approximately 150 dwellings North of the A602 (RPF) and approximately 400 dwellings to the South of the A602 (SBCE).
- Draft Policy HO4, Clause a: access from the A602.
- Draft Policy HO4, Clause c: aspirational homes.
- Draft Policy HO4, Clause e: affordable housing.
- Draft Policy HO4, Clause h: local community facilities.
- Draft Policy HO4, Clause k: archaeological assessment.
- Draft Policy HO4, Clause l: flood risk assessment.
- Delivery of Draft Policy HO4.

COMMITMENTS MADE:

It is agreed that RPF and SBCE will continue to work proactively together to inform the delivery

of approximately c.550 new homes at allocation HO4. With regards to obtaining planning permission post adoption of the Local Plan, the following commitments are made jointly by RPF and SBCE:

- Joint working post Local Plan adoption.
- Joint working to agree a joint point of access to the Land North of the A602 and Land South of the A602 which is technically supported by Hertfordshire County Council Highways and Stevenage Borough Council. Both RPF and SBCE have undertaken due diligence regarding the detail of a new roundabout on the A602 and are confident of its deliverability.
- Joint working to review infrastructure (including social infrastructure) requirements across the two sites
- Consideration of joint-instructions on technical surveys and assessments where efficient to do so – particularly archaeology, flood risk and drainage.
- To consider the preparation of an illustrative masterplan for the Land North and Land South of the A602 to inform future planning application submission(s).

Both parties agree that the site(s) are viable and deliverable. It would be the intention of both parties to begin pre-application discussions with SBC in 2017 with a view to submitting planning applications in 2018. As such, following the Green Belt release this site would be able to contribute towards a five year housing land supply.

Both parties are aware that the site lies within a minerals area of search and are committed to undertaking investigations to determine the extent and viability of the reserves which may or may not need to be extracted prior to development.

Both parties note that some parts of both sites are located in the flood plain and further work will be needed at the application stage to determine the appropriate mitigation.

An ecological impact assessment on the SBCE site has determined that there are no ecological matters that would impact on development.

SUMMARY:

Both RPF and SBCE are committed to the delivery of approximately 550 dwellings at Land South East of Stevenage. This Statement seeks to provide the Inspector with comfort that the two parties will work jointly in the delivery of new homes at Allocation HO4

Submitted Stevenage Council on 13th December 2016 by both

RPF Developments; and
Stevenage Borough Council Estates