

## Statement of Common Ground between (i) Dover District Council (DDC) and (ii) Persimmon Homes

Local Plan Site Name and Policy Reference	SAP1 Whitfield Urban Expansion
Date	18.10.2023

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by Persimmon Homes and DDC to establish the main areas of agreement between the Council and the principal site promotor and developer to demonstrate soundness and deliverability to the Inspectors.

### 1. Description of Site

The site forms a total of circa 380 Ha of land around the west, north and east of Whitfield identified as the Whitfield Urban Expansion (Policy SAP1). To the east it is bounded by the A256 and to the south by the A2. The site is currently made up of mainly agricultural land however parts of the site have recently or are in the process of being developed with a range of uses and form the initial phases of the major new urban extension of Whitfield. The area of the site remaining without planning consent is 308ha.

The site ownership is shown at Appendix 1 to this statement. Persimmon Homes has a controlling interest in Area G, totalling 227.8 Ha constituting the main development partner responsible for delivering new development at the site. Other parties include Danescroft (who have a controlling interest over Areas F (47.2 Ha) and Pentland Homes (who have a controlling interest over Area D (13.5Ha)).

### 2. Local Plan Context

The urban expansion of Whitfield was identified as a strategic allocation in the Core Strategy 2010 for the delivery of at least 5,750 new homes. The strategic allocation at Whitfield was found to be justified, effective and consistent by the Inspector examining the then draft Core Strategy with the conclusion that it formed part of a sound spatial strategy<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent to this the Whitfield Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in 2011 in order to provide the planning framework to guide delivery of the site.

To date 1,483 homes have been granted consent at Whitfield of which there have been 478 completions. There remains 1,005 homes extant as at 31 March 2023, with 678 of these having detailed reserved matters consent. These housing completions / extant permissions are denoted by purple hatching on the enclosed plan (within Areas A, B and C).

Through the HELAA work, the Council has also identified an area of land to the north-west of the existing allocation (HELAA Ref: WHI001 & WHI005) and it is proposed to extend the area of the previously identified site to include this land. The additional area of land itself does not provide for significant built development but is mainly to be provided as open space to serve a number of functions. This enables an increase in capacity of the existing site by approximately 600 homes.

The site as a whole is therefore identified for in the region of 6,350 homes, with the final number to be determined through the masterplanning work that will accompany the outline planning applications, and at detailed design stage, when reserved matters planning applications are submitted.

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<sup>1</sup> [See paragraphs 6.1-6.16, Inspectors Report \(2009\)](#)

### **3. Relevant site promoters representations**

The site has been promoted throughout the emerging Local Plan process with Regulation 19 representations made by DHA on behalf of Danescroft Land Ltd & Pentland Homes Ltd in December 2022 (Rep ID: SDLP1017). Persimmon Homes has extensive background knowledge of the site and a track record of delivery within DDC however the company has only recently secured an interest in the site and support the representations and conclusions of DHA.

### **4. Main Areas of Agreement**

The overall policy objectives of development at the site allocation is set out within Policy SAP1. As set out within SDO6<sup>2</sup>, additional modifications are sought (refs: AM29 & 30). It is agreed that these modifications are necessary as they provide clarity on the method of delivery of an appropriate form of development at the site and how specific criteria are expected to be complied with.

Policy SAP1 is clear that a revised masterplanning approach will be required to guide future development at the site. It is agreed that this is necessary in order to reflect the changes in the allocation boundary and resultant changes in quantum of development proposed, to properly take into account national planning policy changes (made since 2011) and the anticipated updated phasing and delivery strategy. As such, it is agreed that this proposed approach would ensure that the Policy is justified and consistent with national policy.

Persimmon Homes are leading on updating the masterplan for the allocation and will work positively and proactively with the other landowners/developers to develop the plan.

AM29 clarifies that an updated masterplan is expected to set out how specific policy objectives can be delivered (e.g. achieving net zero carbon living). It is agreed that the appropriate mechanism to secure this is through a revised masterplanning process as this will provide flexibility on how important objectives can be met and will ensure that the policy is effective, being able to respond to changing circumstances that are likely to take place over the delivery period of the site.

The revised masterplanning process will establish how the policy criteria will be complied with.

Notwithstanding this, the following matters are agreed between the parties:

- A wide mix of housing types, sizes and tenures will be provided set within distinctive character areas and neighbourhoods supported by necessary social infrastructure informed by a landscape led approach. A site wide Design Code will be prepared which will guide the masterplanning process as well as informing individual applications which will provide further details, as appropriate (Criteria A-D). In light of this it is agreed that it is not necessary to prepare an updated SPD;
- Existing hedgerows and tree lines will be retained and enhanced, where appropriate, whilst due consideration will be given to how existing trees will co-exist and interact with future development (Criteria E & G);

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<sup>2</sup> [Schedule of Additional Modifications](#)

- The site closest to existing Ancient Woodland is within the control of Persimmon. The layout on this part of the site will protect and enhance Ancient Woodland providing a buffer zone of at least 30m (Criterion F);
- Appropriate species and habitat surveys will be carried out prior to application submission (Criterion H);
- Open Space and sport and facilities to meet of the needs of the development, in accordance with the standards set out in Policies PM3 and PM4, will be provided in a mixture of on- and off-site measures. The site has the ability to provide an appropriate SANGS solution capable of being designed in accordance with Natural England guidance (solely on land within the control of Persimmon)(Criteria J and L). On this basis, it is agreed that this proposed mitigation is capable of avoiding adverse impacts on the Lydden and Temple Ewell SAC;
- Where possible open spaces will be multi-functional contributing to wider ecological networks and the provision of sustainable drainage (Criterion K);
- Proposed development on land within the control of Persimmon will be adequately served by the necessary utilities (Criterion M);
- The proposed development on land within the control of Persimmon will make a proportionate contribution (either on-site or by way of contribution) towards the provision of necessary social and community infrastructure (Criterion N);
- A site specific Flood Risk Assessment and surface water management strategy and a strategy for seeking to achieve net zero carbon living over the life time of the development will be prepared to accompany proposals at the site (Criteria O and P);
- Where relevant and if applicable, necessary mitigation to address any air quality issues (as identified in the Air Quality Study (2020) will be implemented (Criterion Q);
- Suitable new access arrangements will be provided to the A2 and A256. It is considered that these new accesses are capable of being delivered direct from land within the control of Persimmon. The spine road will link these two access points and be designed to current Kent Design guidance on Local Distributor Roads and will be built to adoptable standards up to the edge of Persimmon land holdings (Criteria R and S);
- Insofar as they relate to land within the control of Persimmon the proposals will ensure that access measures as per i-iv of Criterion T will be satisfied and met, where possible;
- In respect of the wider strategic and local highway mitigation measures (Criterion U) it is acknowledged that a Statement of Common Ground has been agreed between DDC, National Highways and Kent County Council (March 2023) in respect to the impact on the Whitfield and Duke of York Roundabouts (i). The Statement (ref: GEB06) sets out the work undertaken to date, including the proposed mitigation schemes. It is understood by Persimmon that the Council has

been refining the funding strategy for delivery of the highway upgrades to ensure they are delivered in the timescales required. In this regard, the refined strategy for delivering the upgrades to the Whitfield and Duke of York roundabouts as set out in the Technical Note appended to the Council's responses to the Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions is agreed. Whitfield Urban Expansion will fully fund the delivery of the Whitfield roundabout (the exact cost for the unconsented parts of the site to be determined depending upon the level of contribution to be secured from Phase 1/1a).

- Proportionate contributions will be made for the upgrade to the Duke of York roundabout.
- It is agreed that trigger points for payments and Grampian conditions to restrict occupations will be necessary to ensure that the delivery of development aligns with the delivery of the roundabout upgrades. The site specific viability work that has been jointly prepared by Persimmon Homes and Dover District Council (as set out in Section 7) includes higher costs allowance than are likely. Contributions will be phased to ensure the mitigation can be delivered by the approved trigger points.
- In respect of ii and iii of this criteria, it is agreed that as part of the supporting Transport Assessment accompanying proposals at the site, an assessment will be made on the impact on the local road network (with any necessary mitigation measures being identified) as well as consideration for the need of a park and ride facility to serve Dover Fastrack;
- The supporting Transport Assessment will also set out a range of suitable on and off-site sustainable transport measures, having regard to Policy T11, that would be delivered alongside proposals at the site. It is agreed that any cycling infrastructure will comply with LTN 1/20 (in accordance with Criteria V and X);
- It is agreed that any future application at the site will be accompanied by a Travel Plan to include targets and measures with an aspiration to achieve a modal shift (from private car to sustainable travel modes) of between 10 and 20% (as sought by Criterion W). To achieve this, a Travel Plan co-ordinator will be responsible for the management of the Travel Plan measures which will be based on travel surveys undertaken at agreed points post occupation (as set out in the s106 agreement) in order to measure effectiveness;
- The proposals will, where possible, secure improvements to the PROW network to increase connectivity as well as preserving the integrity and setting of the North Downs Way National Trail with enhancement measures being explored and delivered where possible (e.g. retention of existing hedgerow and provision of additional planting)(in accordance with Criteria Y and Z); and
- As part of any planning application at the site, a Heritage Assessment will be prepared to show how proposals will protect and enhance existing heritage assets and their settings (as per Criterion AA).

It is agreed that to ensure that the site is planned and delivered comprehensively, future planning applications on the Persimmon controlled part of the site will be based on a revised phasing and delivery strategy to be developed in partnership with DDC (that will differ from the phasing strategy set out within the current SPD (Figure 6.1). It is agreed that a revised phasing approach will assist in

speeding up delivery from the site and which will also ensure that the implementation of the site as a whole is not prejudiced.

It is acknowledged that other Policies within the emerging Plan may also be relevant in the consideration of proposals at the site which will have due regard to these policy objectives.

It is agreed that the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment(s) that are required to accompany future applications at the site will be based on guidance contained within 'Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2013). The methodology of the LVIA, which will guide the location of future built development at the site, will be agreed between DDC and Persimmon as part of pre-application discussions.

It is agreed that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>3</sup> (ref: ED3 V3, July 2023) sets out the infrastructure requirements arising from new development at the Urban Extension Site. The parties are committed to working together to ensure that development on land within the control of Persimmon Homes makes a proportionate contribution (either on-site or via an off-site financial contribution) to the delivery of necessary supporting infrastructure (as per that sought by Criterion N of Policy SAP1).

## **5. Promoters' anticipated start and build out rates**

Persimmon Homes has confirmed its intention to begin work on the overarching masterplan and planning application in January 2024. Given the due diligence and public consultation that needs to be undertaken Persimmon Homes anticipates being in the position to submit a Hybrid application in January 2025.

The Hybrid application will comprise 300 units in detail and a decision on the application is being forecast for January 2027. This will allow sufficient time for pre-commencement conditions to be discharged before a start on site is made in Summer 2027. Taking into account the on-site infrastructure that will need to be provided we anticipate first legal completions will be delivered Summer 2028. This would allow 50 much needed new homes to be provided in the year March 2028 – March 2029.

It is the intention that Persimmon would deliver 50 homes per year and then increase to 100 homes per annum with two distinct selling outlets (Persimmon Homes and Charles Church Homes).

Persimmon Homes is experienced in the delivery of new housing in the Dover District with developments having recently been completed in Deal and Aylesham. Aylesham was a collaboration between Dover District Council, Barratt Homes and Persimmon Homes where the company has delivered in excess of 100 new homes in a year.


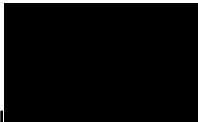

## **6. Promoter's deliverability/viability statement**

DDC and Persimmon Homes have jointly prepared a viability update note in relation to the site (Appendix 3 to the Council's response to Matter 3, Issue 1). This concludes that based upon the updated information, the parties can have confidence that the Whitfield Urban Expansion (Policy SAP1) will be able to deliver a broadly policy compliant scheme.

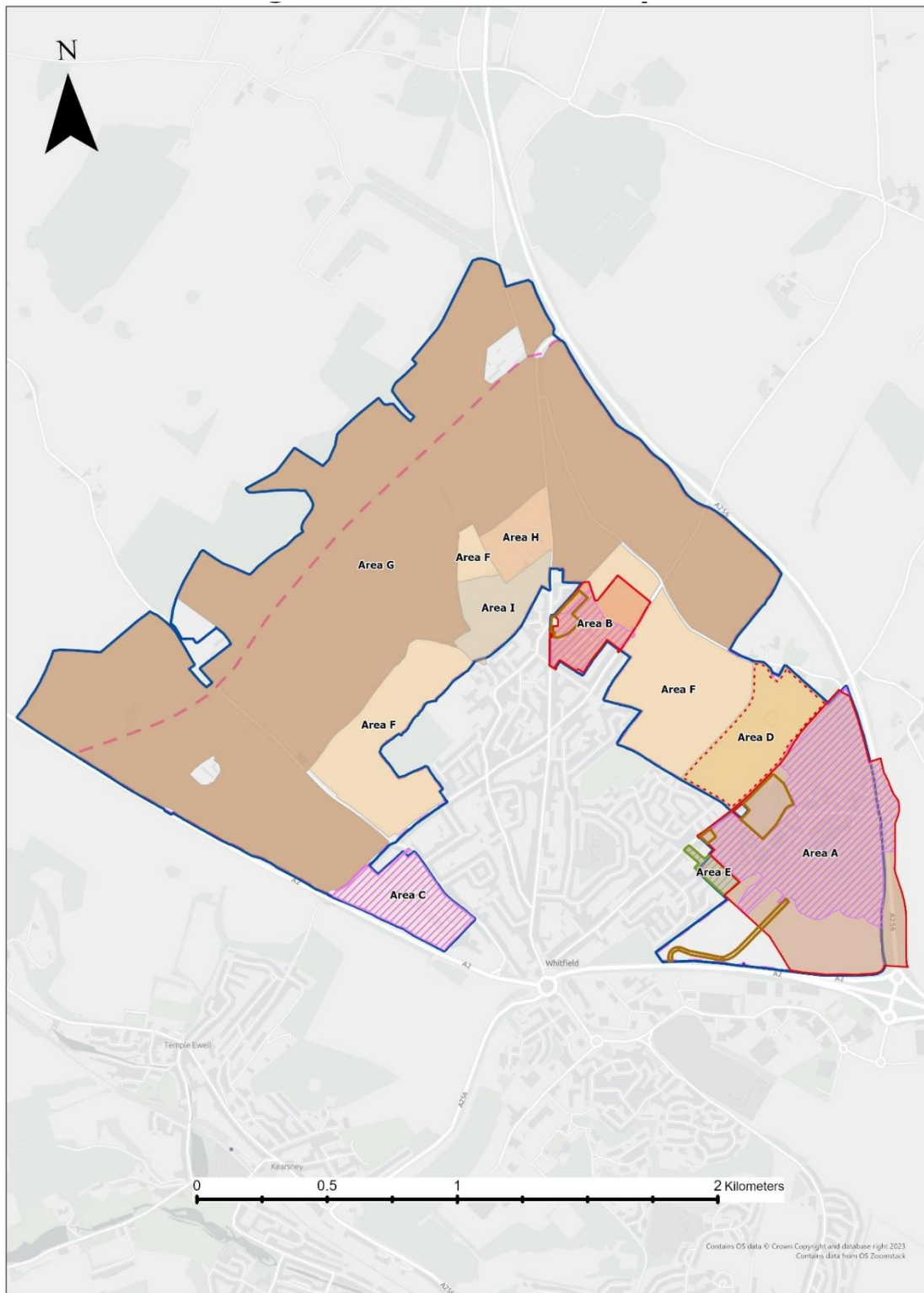
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<sup>3</sup> [Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2023](#)








**7. Signatories**

<p><b>Signed on behalf of Dover District Council:</b>  <b>Name: Sarah Platts</b> <b>Position: Head of Planning and Development</b> <b>Date: 18.10.2023</b></p>	<p><b>S</b>  <b>of Persimmon Homes</b> <b>N</b>  <b>d</b> <b>Position: Planning Director Designate</b> <b>Date: 18.10.2023</b></p>
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# Appendix 1 – Whitfield Urban Expansion Site by Landholding



**Legend**

 SAP1 Boundary	 Outline Apps Granted	 Whitfield RM/ Full Permissions	 Infrastructure Apps
 Whitfield Core Strategy Allocation	 Outline App Pending Consideration	 Refused App: 21/00075	