

**South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035**

**Statement of Common Ground**

**between**

**South Oxfordshire District Council**

**and**

**Buswell family and Buchanan (H) Ltd**

**in relation to the Land North of Bayswater Brook STRAT13  
site allocation**

**August 2020**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by South Oxfordshire District Council (“the Council”) and AECOM on behalf of Buswell family and Buchanan (H) Ltd (“the landowner”), hereafter referred to as “the parties”. This SoCG documents matters of agreement and disagreement with regard to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (“the Plan”) and to assist the Inspector following the Examination of the Local Plan.
- 1.2 This SoCG particularly relates to an element within the strategic site allocation at Land North of Bayswater Brook as set out in STRAT13 for the development of approximately 1,100 homes (“the allocation”). The entire STRAT13 allocation measures 112 hectares, with the majority (106 hectares) owned by Christ Church, Oxford and Dorchester Residential Management with the remainder of the site to the east of Bayswater road and south of the brook adjoining Sandhills belonging to the Landowner (“the site”, elsewhere “Sandhills”), shown to the east in the Local Plan Policies Map (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The Council has proposed this strategic site for allocation having considered reasonable alternatives including assessing the relevant evidence, and following consultation with stakeholders and the public.

## 2. Context

- 2.1 The site primarily consists of open green space (with no public access), with a single hedgerow through the centre of the site. There are no buildings on the site, with woodland and the Bayswater Brook to the north and an existing Public Right of Way to the immediate south. The site is bound on all sides by development or thick, screening vegetation.
- 2.2 The majority of the site is designated as being within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency’s flood risk maps. There are some areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 associated with the Bayswater Brook water course although built development will be located entirely within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.3 The STRAT13 Allocation in the Local Plan is identified for approximately 1,100 homes and supporting facilities and services. The site will be delivered in accordance with an agreed comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the concept masterplan, as set out in the Local Plan and potential refinement through examination.
- 2.4 The site is expected to deliver a high-quality development that integrates and relates closely to the existing settlement of Sandhills.
- 2.5 The site will be delivering the necessary site accesses, alongside onsite and identified off site transport infrastructure (as required), including pedestrian and cycle routes within the site and links from the site to adjacent transport links.

This mitigation, including detailed design, will be determined through the production of a planning application covering the Sandhills site.

- 2.6 The site promoters are advancing the preparation of a planning application for the site for approximately 120-150 dwellings and supporting facilities and services on this site to be submitted in 2021 providing the Plan is adopted at the end of 2020 and the Green Belt boundary amended.
- 2.7 The proposed scheme has not yet been subject to EIA scoping or the commencement of any pre-application discussions or consultation, beyond the extensive consultation undertaken as part of the Local Plan preparation post-2017.
- 2.8 The promoter recognises that the concept design shown for STRAT13 (Appendix 2) is illustrative and that detailed proposals will be developed which respond to the site and context as part of the development of a planning application. Following these initial design stages referenced above, more detailed design development to date (shown in Appendix 3 although subject to further refinement) envisages that the site can accommodate a range of between 120-150 dwellings although these projections are dependent on arriving at the appropriate density for this site, further to the policy refinements suggested as part of the examination.
- 2.9 The parties are committed to partnership working, including continuing to progress regular meetings with SODC, OCC, and local stakeholders to ensure the optimum outcome for the site that delivers new residential development in a sustainable location.
- 2.10 On behalf of the Landowner, AECOM submitted representations throughout all stages of the development of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and also wrote to the programme officer to reiterate that the landowners position remains the same as their Reg 19 response. In accordance with the examination advice and guidance received regarding hearings, and having reviewed the Inspectors initial matters and questions for STRAT13, AECOM did not request to speak at the Matter 16 hearing as they support the Local Plan, believe it to be positively prepared, effective and based on sound evidence base and approach. This SoCG has been produced at the Inspector's request following the Matter 16 hearing to reiterate the landowner's position and commitment to working with a number of stakeholders to deliver sustainable, high quality development in this location.
- 2.11 The sole shareholder of Buchanan (H) Ltd is Harry Aubrey-Fletcher, who has been involved with the Land North of Bayswater Brook allocation since 2012 and was the sole owner of Wick Farm before the sale to Christ Church in December 2018. The landowner has therefore worked closely and supportively with Christ Church and Dorchester Residential Management from the start.

### **3. Agreed Matters**

#### Strategic Matters on which the parties agree

- 3.1 The parties agree that the Plan is meeting the Council's own housing need as well as their apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need.
- 3.2 The parties agree that the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate, and that the Plan is sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change.
- 3.3 The parties agree that there is a clear need for deliverable sites in the short term to meet identified housing needs in a timely manner and to sustain a five-year housing land supply.
- 3.4 The allocation of the site accords with the Spatial Strategy of the Plan as set out in STRAT1. The parties agree that the site selection process as set out in the Site Selection Background Paper Part 1 and 2 is robust, being soundly based on the Council's evidence base which demonstrates that this site is sustainable.
- 3.5 The parties are working positively together to ensure the site delivers appropriate infrastructure, mitigation and design drivers to ensure sustainable development of the site.

#### Site Specific Matters on which the parties agree

- 3.6 The site is sustainable, suitable, available, viable and deliverable. The site is not subject to any insurmountable environmental, legal, ownership or technical constraints that would otherwise impede development.
- 3.7 The parties agree that this site can be delivered in general accordance with the policies contained in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. The parties agree that the site will deliver a high-quality sustainable development.
- 3.8 The parties agree the general strategic site requirements identified in Policy STRAT4 and the site-specific requirements set out in Policy STRAT13 (including amendments made in CSD13) identify the key requirements for this site to deliver, including:
  - affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
  - appropriate development densities (subject to refinement following examination);
  - provision of appropriate education capacity required to mitigate the impact of the proposed development, including financial contributions towards early years, primary, secondary and Special Educational Need provision (to be further refined throughout the preparation of the planning application);

- appropriate transport improvements and delivery of safe access, including consideration of new and existing public rights of way and pedestrian and cycle connections, particularly to key employers such as the John Radcliffe Hospital;
- Appropriate archaeological evaluation ahead of determination;
- Noise and air quality assessments, alongside other supporting documentation agreed with the parties, will be undertaken during the preparation of and submitted alongside the Planning Application or as a conditioned document; and
- Provision for a permanent, defensible Green Belt boundary.

3.9 The site is capable of being developed in a way that complies with Policy STRAT13 and STRAT6. The parties agree the boundary as set out in the Plan provides an appropriate boundary whilst retaining a defensible Green Belt boundary.

3.10 It is agreed that Land North of Bayswater Brook (STRAT13, including the Sandhills element) meets some of the unmet housing needs of Oxford City. The parties agree the provision of 50% affordable housing is viable at Sandhills reflecting Policy H9.

3.11 The parties consider that the site is developable. At this stage in the plan making process, all issues currently identified can be accommodated as part of the proposed development masterplanning to ensure that the design is policy compliant and includes the necessary mitigation identified as part of the transport evidence base specific to the proposals. .

## **4 Outstanding Matters**

### Delivery Timescales

4.1 Delivery timetables are an outstanding matter as the Councils estimate of delivery of STRAT13 is 2025/26. A planning application is anticipated by the developer in 2021 (following amendments to the Green Belt boundary through the adoption of the Plan). The developer expects the first dwellings to be delivered from 2023/24 and delivered within three years. The Sandhills element of STRAT13 is in single ownership with the potential for the developer to retain ownership of development.

## **5 Conclusion**

5.1 The Landowner supports the allocation of Land North of Bayswater Brook within STRAT13, and the parties agree that the site is suitable, available and deliverable for sustainable housing development. The Sandhills element of the site has been considered throughout the refinement of the strategic site allocation, as outlined in the Site Selection background paper.

- 5.2 The promoter, supporting technical team and landowner are committed to inclusive and effective engagement throughout the pre-application process and emerging masterplanning with the LPA and Oxford City Council.
- 5.3 The parties are working jointly to enable delivery of the planned development at the earliest opportunity and will continue to work cooperatively on all matters of mutual interest. This will include with the promoters of the other element of STRAT13 in the production of a wider scale, comprehensive masterplan process, which is separate to the individual planning applications.

### Signatures

Signed on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian Duffield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.

Adrian Duffield  
Head of Planning

DATE:  
14 August 2020

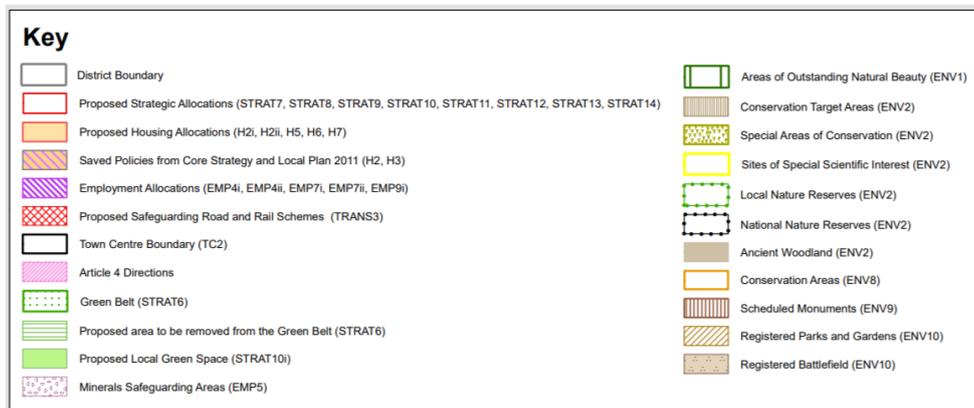
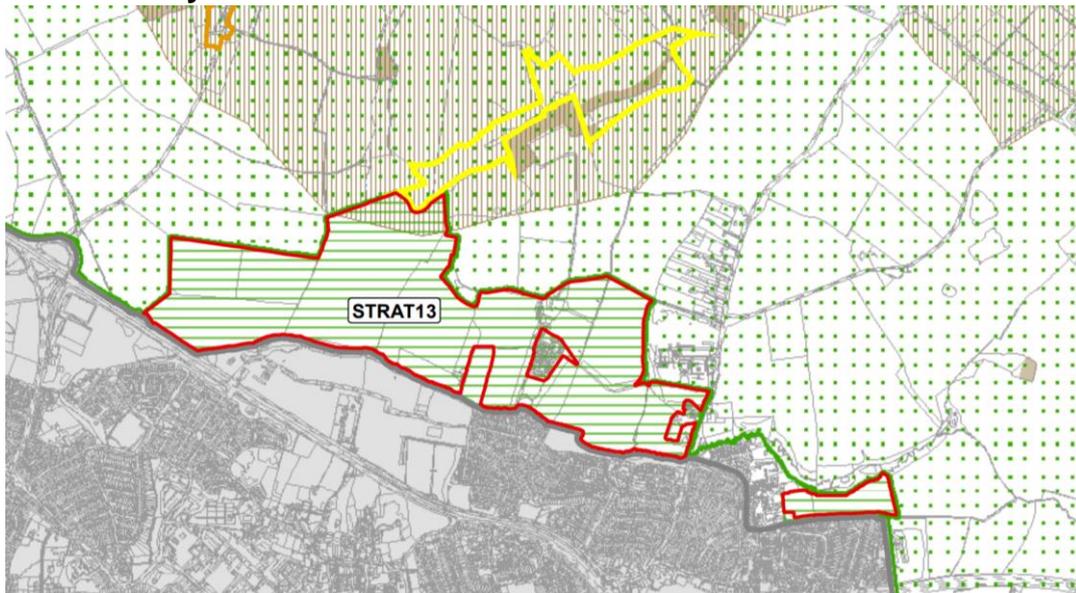
Signed on behalf of Buswell family and Buchanan (H) Ltd

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Aubrey-Fletcher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.

Harry Aubrey-Fletcher  
Landowner

DATE:  
14 August 2020

## Appendix 1: Extract from Local Plan Policies Map (North) outlining Strat 13 allocation boundary



## Appendix 2: Concept plan (SODC Local Plan)



### Appendix 3: Promoter's current site concept plan (to be refined throughout the production of a planning application including engagement with stakeholders):

