STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

Between Wyre Forest District Council and Homes England in relation to the Lea Castle Village Strategic Allocation

Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan Examination

Date – 21st April 2020

1. Parties Involved

Wyre Forest District Council
Homes England

2. Signatories

<table>
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<th>Signed:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Mike Parker</td>
<td>Name: Sarah Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position: Corporate Director Economic Prosperity &amp; Place</td>
<td>Position: Head of Planning and Enabling (Central)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation: Wyre Forest District Council</td>
<td>Organisation: Homes England</td>
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<td>Date: 22nd April 2020</td>
<td>Date: 21st April 2020</td>
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3. Purpose of Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)

This SoCG sets out details of the agreement between Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) and Homes England in relation to the proposed strategic allocation in the Local Plan, referred to as Lea Castle Village. Both parties have worked jointly on the proposed allocation and are committed to delivering quality development over the Plan period.

4. Planning Area Covered by SoCG

This SoCG covers the area included as the proposed strategic allocation in the Local Plan.
This proposed allocation includes the former Lea Castle hospital site, as well as the surrounding land, which is in the ownership of Homes England.

Homes England is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It exists to accelerate the delivery of housing across England.

The former hospital site has outline planning permission (application reference 17/0205/OUTL) and a reserved matters application (19/0724/RESE) was submitted for the site in November 2019. The draft allocation covers the part of the site that has planning permission and the wider areas as delineated on the concept plan (reference Figure 1, April 2020).

5. Agreed Strategic Matters

WFDC and Homes England have worked together to develop a concept plan for the Lea Castle Village proposed allocation (reference Figure 1, April 2020). A Steering Group was established, comprising representatives from WFDC, Worcestershire County Council (WCC), Homes England and their consultants Wood. The following Steering Group/Focus Group meetings were held, along with a number of meetings with Planning Officers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th March 2018</td>
<td>Initial meeting of steering group</td>
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<tr>
<td>26th April 2018</td>
<td>Green Infrastructure Group – including Worcestershire Wildlife Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>25th May 2018</td>
<td>Land uses, including representatives from housing, education, economic development, sustainability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st June 2018</td>
<td>Land uses, including historic environment, ecology, highways, NHS and Countryside</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st August 2018</td>
<td>Transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>30th August 2018</td>
<td>Employment – meeting with Lichfields including site visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>15th February 2019</td>
<td>Green Infrastructure Group</td>
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Consensus on the approach to the concept plan was achieved at these meetings, and key consultee/stakeholder comments fed into each iteration of the concept plan.

Land Use Principles

The principles relating to the land use mix, quantum and location of development, as illustrated in the Concept Plan (reference Figure 1, April 2020), have been agreed.

These principles provide an agreed policy framework, which will be refined through the further masterplanning and technical work required to inform the forthcoming planning application(s). Variations to the mix, quantum and location of development in the Concept Plan may be required. These will be justified and determined through the development management process.

Deliverability

Land required for the Lea Castle Village is available and can be delivered over the Plan period.

The proposed allocation area is within the ownership of Homes England. Homes England is committed to delivering development in this location. Full reserved
matters for all residential phases of the former hospital part of the proposed allocation have already been submitted for determination.

It is anticipated that development will start on the former Lea Castle Hospital site during 2020, with legal contracts in place between Homes England and the Developer. Homes England will work with the developer to maximise the pace of delivery and infrastructure.

Homes England will apply these same principles to the agreement with the selected development partner(s) for the land surrounding the former Lea Castle Hospital site, providing confidence that development can be brought forward quickly and on a comprehensive basis, once the necessary consents are granted.

The land surrounding the former Lea Castle Hospital can be readily divided into development parcels. These could be delivered by more than one developer, and at the same time, to expedite delivery.

The Concept Plan illustrates how the wider site can be integrated well with the development already permitted on the former Lea Castle Hospital site.

**Quality**

Lea Castle Village will be delivered to a high standard of design quality. Homes England will obligate its development partners to meet Building for Life 12, and to work towards securing Building with Nature accreditation. These standards are achievable for Lea Castle Village.

**Access Strategy**

The general location of access points to each parcel on the Concept Plan are agreed.

Pedestrian and vehicle access can be integrated with the permitted scheme for the former Lea Castle site.

Additional traffic movements on the local highway network can be accommodated within existing capacity or mitigated

**Residential Density**

Residential development of 1,400 dwellings can be accommodated across the allocation area, with a range of densities for different parcels of land.

**Employment development**

The employment land requirement will be reviewed over the Plan period and may vary in response to changing market demand. The Concept Plan provides for around 7.84 hectares of employment land (mix of B1c/B2 with limited B1a and small-scale B8 uses).

The employment development proposed at the entrance of Park Gate Road (that forms part of the planning permission for the former Lea Castle Hospital site) can be relocated and incorporated within a single employment parcel and marketed as such. This land parcel can be considered for alternative uses.

**Biodiversity**
There are no existing or proposed landscape/environmental designations preventing development as proposed in the Concept Plan.

The principles of biodiversity net gain will be embedded within the scheme as it develops.

**Creating a Sustainable New Community**

The Lea Castle Village, as shown in the Concept Plan, can achieve the NPPF definition of sustainable development.

The new local centre will be delivered as an early phase of development. This site will include a community hub, retail for local needs, potential for a GP surgery and small cafe/meeting space together with a 2 form entry primary school.

The new sports pitches (3G or grass) will be delivered and a suitable management vehicle will be identified.

There are no significant constraints to development identified through the technical and environmental work undertaken to date. This evidence is sufficient to underpin the allocation of a strategic allocation and provides a high level of confidence that a new sustainable community can be delivered at Lea Castle Village.

**Timetable for review of SoCG**

Homes England and WFDC are committed to working together to deliver the vision for Lea Castle Village.

The SoCG will be reviewed on a regular basis through this collaborative working arrangement.

**End.**