

Breckland Local Plan – Examination in Public

Statement of Common Ground

Delivery of the Thetford Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE/KingsFleet)

This Statement of Common Ground is an Agreement made between the following parties:

- Breckland District Council
- Pigeon [Thetford] Ltd

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) sets the terms and understanding between Breckland District Council (the Council) and Pigeon [Thetford] Ltd (Pigeon) with regard to the development requirements, delivery strategy and timescale for the Thetford Strategic Urban Extension (SUE). It is intended to provide the Inspector with a summary of the areas of agreement between the Council and Pigeon.
- 1.2. Pigeon are the Master Developer responsible for comprehensive planning and delivery of the Thetford SUE on behalf of the landowners, The Kilverstone Estate and The Crown Estate. No formal representation was received from Pigeon on the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Publication Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1. The SUE forms a key part of the housing delivery strategy for the Council within the plan period (to 2036) and is the largest single site allocated within the Local Plan. The site has outline planning permission for up to 5,000 dwellings, on land to the north of the town. The site has outline planning permission under planning reference 3PL/2011/0805/O which was approved on 27th November 2015. The Local Plan includes the first 3,250 dwellings to be delivered by 2036 with the remainder of the dwellings being delivered beyond this point.
- 2.2. The SUE was initially allocated through the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD and the Thetford Area Action Plan DPD. When adopted the Local Plan will supersede these DPDs. Thetford remains a key settlement within the Local Plan, which also saves a number of policies from the Thetford Area Action Plan which directly relate to the delivery of the SUE.
- 2.3. The SUE covers an area extending over 285 hectares (c. 700 acres). In addition to 5,000 dwellings it will also provide 22.5 hectares of employment land, local centres, up to 3 primary schools, green infrastructure, playing fields, other amenity areas and means of access. The first reserved matters application for Sub-phase 1a has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and is currently being determined.

- 2.4. The Local Plan at Policy HOU01 includes a stepped housing trajectory with the housing target increasing from 2021 reflecting the increased delivery rates once the Sustainable Urban Extensions in Attleborough and Thetford start delivering. The NPPF at paragraph 47 states that Local Planning Authorities should *'identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.'* To be considered developable sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged. The Thetford SUE can be considered to be a developable site based on the definition within the NPPF.
- 2.5. This Statement of Common Ground is the result of continued collaboration between the developer and the Council and there has been a strong alliance throughout the emerging Local Plan process and the determination of the planning applications. This may also be seen by the lack of representations received on the Local Plan at the Regulation 19 stage of the plan making process.
- 2.6. The purpose of this Statement of Common Ground is to provide the Inspector with a summary of the agreed development requirements for the Thetford SUE, the delivery strategy and the timescale for delivery.

3. Development Requirements

- 3.1. The planning conditions attached to the outline planning permission require that the phases of the development shall be developed sequentially in ascending numerical order. A S.106 Agreement accompanies the outline application and secures relevant planning obligations.
- 3.2. The parameter plans as part of the outline application set out the following key principles:
- Site Boundaries;
 - Land Use;
 - Access and Movement Hierarchy;
 - Pedestrian and Cycle Routes;
 - Open Space and Landscape;
 - Building and Infrastructure Heights;
 - Density;
- and
- Development Zones.

4. Delivery Strategy and Timeline

- 4.1. The delivery strategy and timeline form the key element of this SoCG.
- 4.2. The Local Plan includes the delivery of 3,250 new dwellings within the Thetford SUE over the plan period to 2036. The balance of the dwellings will come forward beyond the end of the plan period. The maximum annual rate of delivery within the SUE is likely to be around 250 dwellings. Both parties agree the delivery of these dwellings is an achievable target.
- 4.3. The development phasing and infrastructure requirements with indicative costs are set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Nov 2017 (LP/V/1). An updated version of this is appended to this SoCG at Appendix 1 and includes the latest anticipated annual delivery rate. In summary the proposed timeframe for the delivery of each phase is as follows:

Phase	Time Period	Number of Dwellings
1	2019/20-2025/26	1,058
2	2026/27-2031/32	1,100
3	2031/32-2034/35	711
4	2034/35-2040/41	1,422
5	2040/41-2042/43	709

- 4.4. As incorporated through the outline planning application the development is proposed through 5 phases. The reserved matters planning application (3PL/2017/1576/D) which has been received from Hopkins Homes relates to a Sub-phase of Phase 1 for 343 dwellings. This is the first of what is likely to be two reserved matters applications within Sub-phase 1a which when developed will be for 450 homes, a neighbourhood centre, public open space and the first phases of drainage and highways infrastructure. It is likely that around 1,750 new homes would occur beyond the end of the plan period.
- 4.5. Both parties agree that the planning strategy should maximise the opportunity to commence development as early as possible, recognising the importance of this development in the satisfactory development of Thetford and also its role in delivering the housing needs for the District. Appendix 1 shows the timeline for the delivery of the site alongside the necessary strategic infrastructure. The key stages can be summarised as follows:
- Reserved Matters Planning Application 3PL/2017/1576/D determined spring/summer 2018.
 - Construction to start on site with first residential completions/occupations in 2019.

4.6. In order to achieve the delivery targets set out above the intention is that the site will be purchased and developed by a number of housebuilders. This assumes the industry standard of around 50 new homes per year delivered by each developer. Both parties agree the timeline as set out represents a deliverable, achievable and sustainable pattern of development.

5. Conclusion

5.1. The SUE constitutes an appropriate and deliverable urban extension to Thetford which supports the vision and objective of the plan. There are no insurmountable impediments to development either in terms of ownership control, infrastructure or environmental consequences. There is also a clear planning route to ensure delivery of the site commences as early as possible. Working together, the Council and Pigeon, have successfully bid for £9.95 million from the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund. This will secure a new primary electricity substation (along with associated connections) and the necessary improvements to the local water supply. This will help to accelerate the later phases of delivery on the site.

5.2. The following key agreements are supported by both parties in order to establish the satisfactory development of the town:

- The importance of the SUE in meeting Breckland's housing requirements.
- The SUE is a developable site in the context of Footnote 12 of the NPPF at page 12.
- The importance of continued ongoing collaboration to ensure the satisfactory and timely delivery of KingsFleet.
- Recognition of the requirement for a number of developers to deliver the likely annual housing targets.

6. Declaration

The content of this document is agreed between the undersigned for the purpose of the Breckland Local Plan Examination.

Signed on behalf of Pigeon [Thetford] Ltd:

Signed on behalf of Breckland District Council:

William van Cutsem
Director

Christine Marshall
Executive Director of Commercialisation

Date: 22/03/2018

Date: 26/3/2018

