

Local Plan Examination

(DRAFT) Statement of Common Ground
between Suffolk Coastal District Council and
Ipswich Borough Council.

August 2016

**Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies &
Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan
Development Plan Documents**





Statement of Common Ground

Issued on behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Ipswich Borough Council in respect of:

- Housing development at Westerfield and Witnesham;
- Development at Westerfield and the relationship with Ipswich Garden Suburb and the proposed country park; and
- The protection of the landscape in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, including the site at Ransomes, Nacton Heath, and of nature conservation interests in the Orwell Valley.

Joint Examination into Suffolk Coastal District Council Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD; and Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan

Date: August 2016

1. Introduction.

- 1.1 This statement has been produced jointly by Suffolk Coastal District Council and Ipswich Borough Council. The statement has been produced at the request of the Inspector Mrs Elizabeth Hill appointed to examine the Suffolk Coastal Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD.

- 1.2 The request was made as part of a package of information published on behalf of the Inspector on 22nd July 2016. It stated:

“A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is requested between the Suffolk Coastal District Council and Ipswich Borough Council on the following matters:

Housing development at Westerfield and Witnesham and the infrastructure to support it.

Development at Westerfield and the relationship with Ipswich Garden Suburb and the proposed country park.

The protection of the landscape in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, including the site at Ransomes, Nacton Heath, and of nature conservation interests in the Orwell Valley.”

- 1.3 Both Councils recognise these matters as important cross boundary issues in terms of their land-use planning implications, and in ensuring continuing co-operative working for the benefit of their existing and future local communities.

- 1.4 Section 2 of this SoCG addresses the first two points, given the interrelationship between development proposals for Westerfield and Witnesham and the Ipswich Garden Suburb of which the country park is an important element. This statement also picks up and addresses Question 50 of the Matters and Issues which the Inspector has requested answers to. That question reads:

SSP17, 18 and 19 – Give further details on how the infrastructure requirements for these sites, which are likely to be provided in the Ipswich BC area, would be provided?

Policies SSP17, SSP18 and SSP19 are the housing developments proposed at Westerfield and Witnesham referred to above.

- 1.5 Section 3 addresses matters related to the AONB and Orwell Valley and should be read in conjunction with a separate SoCG produced on behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council, Ipswich Borough Council and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership [Submission Document Library C-02].

2. Developments at Witnesham and Westerfield and Ipswich Garden Suburb.

Ipswich Garden Suburb (IGS) – background context

- 2.1 Ipswich Garden Suburb is a large urban extension situated on the north/north eastern edge of Ipswich, the county town of Suffolk. When complete, the development is expected to provide up to 3,500 new homes, associated physical, social and community infrastructure. Part of the recreation provision includes the provision of a country park. As well as helping to meet the recreational needs of existing and future populations in this part of Suffolk Coastal and Ipswich Borough areas, it is a mitigation requirement to off-set the impact of development on nearby Natura 2000 sites.
- 2.2 The IGS proposal is plan led. It is identified in the Ipswich Borough Council Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (2011), policy CS10 Ipswich Northern Fringe; and the Proposed Submission Core Strategy Review Incorporating Proposed Pre-Submission Main Modification (March 2016) which updates policy CS10 now re-titled Ipswich Garden Suburb. Further detailed planning guidance is provided in the Ipswich Garden Suburb Supplementary Planning Document adopted by Ipswich Borough Council as interim guidance in 2014.
- 2.3 IGS comprises three areas Fonnereau; Red House and Henley Gate. Each of the three areas controlled by a separate developer – CBRE, Mersea Homes and Crest Nicholson respectively. It is the Henley Gate area which is of most relevance in respect of this SoCG as it is this part of the development which crosses the administrative boundaries of the two councils.
- 2.4 Suffolk Coastal District Council has been provided with the opportunity to comment/input into each of these documents as they have evolved. The Suffolk Coastal Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Document includes Policy SSP35 Land off Westerfield Road and Lower Road, Westerfield (Ipswich Garden Suburb country park). This policy allocates two areas of land which are required as part of the wider country park proposal for public open space. The nearest train station serving the IGS is at Westerfield, and within Suffolk Coastal district. Westerfield Road which crosses between the two authorities is a public transport route.
- 2.5 Most recently, planning applications have been submitted to both Councils by Crest Nicholson seeking outline planning permission (SCDC DC/16/2592/OUT; IBC **Add Ref**) at Henley Gate for:

“Mixed use development comprising up to 1,100 residential dwellings (C3) a local centre including up to 250sqm (net) of convenience floor space (A1), up to 300sqm of comparison floorspace (A1), up to 250

sqm in use classes A1-A5 and up to 500sqm visitor centre (D1); provision of land for a primary school (D1); provision of sports facilities, Country Park (including up to 500sqm Visitor Centre) and open space (including amenity open space / children's play areas and allotments), sustainable urban drainage systems; and associated landscaping, infrastructure and engineering/earthworks; and the creation of 2No. new vehicular accesses from Henley Road, 1No. vehicular access from Westerfield Road (to serve Country Park only), pedestrian/cycle bridge over railway (access only), vehicular bridge over railway (access only)

- 2.6 The built development associated with the IGS is located wholly within the Ipswich Borough Council administrative area. Two parcels of land required for the Country Park (which would include provision for a car park to serve the Country Park) are proposed within Suffolk Coastal district and included in the above application.
- 2.7 In Suffolk Coastal district three relatively small parcels of land are allocated for housing development at Westerfield and Witnesham. The scale of development on these sites (total 40 in Westerfield; 20 in Witnesham) is small compared to the 3,500 proposed via the IGS. Whilst these sites are not directly related to the IGS, it is reasonable to assume that the residents of these sites will benefit from and are likely to use the facilities that it will provide, given their proximity and ease of access.

Assessing Impacts:

- 2.8 It is agreed between the Councils that:

1. The development sites within SCDC will, on their own generate limited infrastructure requirements. No specific requirements have been identified against each site, although each would attract a CIL contribution. SCDC adopted its CIL charging schedule in July 2015. The Regulation 123 list is sufficiently broad for applications to be made for funding for specific agreed projects. A copy is attached as Appendix 1 to this SoCG. It would be for the relevant authority to bid for funding from the SCDC CIL pot at the appropriate time. Any decision would however be a matter for SCDC Councillors to agree through the CIL spend process.
2. Contributions may be requested in relation to specific projects particularly those which can be seen to benefit both authorities. Projects which might benefit both authorities include improvements to Westerfield railway station. The station currently has no dedicated parking provision for motor vehicles or bicycles. Contributions may also

be sought towards the provision of car parking associated with the Country Park.

3. SCC – Education has confirmed that primary school pupils from Westerfield currently have the option of going to school at Witnesham (within SCDC) or at Rushmere Street (within IBC area). The three housing allocations will contribute to the CIL spending pot. They will also generate small numbers of pupils and thereby are likely to require contributions from the CIL pot (education contributions are requested from SCC for sites providing 10 or more units). Witnesham primary school currently provides for a number of out of catchment pupils. If pupils from the Westerfield and Witnesham sites attend the Witnesham school then there will be a displacement of the out of catchment pupils attending Witnesham who will need to be catered for elsewhere. This is most likely to be within Ipswich Borough and potentially within the new primary school proposed as part of the Henley Gate development.

A case may therefore be made by SCC for requesting funding from the SCDC CIL pot for education provision in IBC.

4. Access to the country park. It is important that the relevant policies in Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD identify opportunities for the public to directly access the country park.

5. There is no objection in principle as to why that part of the country park which is located within Suffolk Coastal District could not be managed by another party.

Suggested Amendments to the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD

- 2.9 It is agreed that it would be inappropriate and not possible to justify amendments to policies SSP17; 18 and 19. However, in the introductory section to Westerfield the opportunity exists to be more explicit in terms of the types of projects that might benefit both authorities such as improvements to Westerfield train station for example through the provision of bike racks. Additional commentary could also be provided in relation to education provision.
- 2.10 The following is suggested as amended text to replace paragraphs 2.126 to 2.127 of the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD.
- 2.11 Westerfield is a Local Service Centre, located close to the outskirts of Ipswich, and with a train station is one of the more sustainable locations within the district. It is reasonable to assume that residents from this part of the district already make use of the social and community infrastructure that the county town can provide. The location of the district/ borough boundary in this location is of limited relevance to how people live their daily lives. Primary

school pupils for example, may attend schools within Ipswich Borough or at the neighbouring village of Witnesham within Suffolk Coastal district.

- 2.12 The village is located close to Ipswich's main growth area, Ipswich Garden Suburb, which will provide for around 3,500 homes together with associated social, community and physical infrastructure provision. When built, these facilities will also be accessible to the people of Westerfield. Similarly, the residents of the garden suburb will be expected to make use of Westerfield railway station. It will be important to ensure that opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle links between the village and the new development are maximised.
- 2.13 The provision of a country park is an important element of the Ipswich Garden Suburb required to mitigate the impact of the new development on nearby sites designated as being of international importance for their nature conservation interest (e.g. Orwell and Deben estuaries European sites). Part of the land required for the provision of the country park (including a car park to serve the country park) is located within Suffolk Coastal. These two parcels of land are allocated for public open space under policy SSP35. This will help maintain the separate identity of Westerfield from the new development.
- 2.14 Given the clear linkages and relationship between Westerfield (and Witnesham) and the new development in Ipswich Garden Suburb, the Council will be sympathetic to requests for contributions from the Suffolk Coastal District Council CIL pot towards infrastructure provision which can be shown to be beneficial to the residents of both authority areas. A separate infrastructure and delivery framework mechanism is to be agreed with Ipswich Borough Council for the Ipswich Garden Suburb development given that the new built development is to be provided wholly within their administrative boundary.

3. Nacton Heath and the AONB.

- 3.1 Following clarification from the Inspector, it was confirmed that her request in relation to matters concerning the protection of the landscape in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, including the site at Ransomes, Nacton Heath, and of nature conservation interests in the Orwell Valley was for an update only.
- 3.2 There are no updates in relation to the Suffolk Coastal local plan document.
- 3.3 Ipswich Borough Council is currently part way through its examination into its Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review and Site Allocations and Policies (Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) Development Plan Document.
- 3.4 Ipswich Borough Council's submission statement on Matter 6, Employment Policies and Allocations, refers to site IP152 Land at Airport Farm Kennels at

paragraph 21 and to the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with Suffolk Coastal District Council and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership. The SoCG itself is attached as Appendix 3 to the submission statement. The SoCG commits Ipswich Borough Council to proposing a modification to their plan. This information is currently before the Local Plan Inspector.

Signed

Dated

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On behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council

Signed

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On behalf of Ipswich Borough Council