

Statement of Common Ground
between
Maidstone Borough Council
and
**Defence Infrastructure
Organisation**

in respect of the
**Maidstone Borough
Local Plan Review**

July 2022
DRAFT

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is a jointly agreed statement between the Defence Infrastructure Organisation ('DIO') on behalf of the Ministry of Defence and Maidstone Borough Council ('MBC'), hereafter referred to as "the parties", in relation to the preparation of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review (LPR), namely, the "Invicta Barracks Strategic Development Location" (Policy LPRSP5(B)). GL Hearn are acting as Town Planning Advisors to the DIO. A key diagram identifying the site is included in Appendix 1.
- 1.2** This SoCG is provided to inform the Examination into the soundness of the LPR. It sets out key matters and the approach taken to how the site will come forward.
- 1.3** This Statement first sets out the development position as understood between all parties ('Development Statement' at Section 2.0). This sets out information on the evidence underpinning the delivery of this site, provides details of the development proposals and sets out a future programme of joint work which will be undertaken. The Statement then sets out the matters of common ground between the Council, as the plan making authority, and DIO as owner and the lead developer of the site.
- 1.4** This SoCG also sets out those limited matters that currently remain unresolved but are being worked on by the parties to find a mutually acceptable solution.
- 1.5** It is appreciated that liaison in relation to the matters included in this SoCG are ongoing and will be subject to review. Moreover, this SoCG is not binding on any party and is agreed without prejudice to further matters of detail that either party may wish to raise subsequently through the examination into the LPR.

2.0 Development Statement

- 2.1** This section provides a summary of the development position relating to the proposed redevelopment of the Invicta Barracks site. It is a jointly agreed position statement by all parties named in section 1.1. In doing so, this section briefly summaries the current evidence relating to the potential delivery of the allocation as promoted by the DIO. It also provides a factual update on the development proposals which underpin this site.

Local Plan Review Context: Invicta Barracks Strategic Development Location (Policy LPRSP5(B))

- 2.2** The Invicta Barracks site is proposed as a Strategic Development Location under Policy LPRSP5(B) of the Regulation 19 LPR. This proposed development will provide a significant number of new homes and associated infrastructure; all to be delivered in broad accordance with garden settlement principles.
- 2.3** The principle of directing a significant amount of growth to this urban location has been assessed within the evidence base of the LPR, including the:
1. Sustainability Appraisal of the LPR, and
 2. Strategic Land Availability Assessment,
- 2.4** These evidence base documents have identified the site as a suitable location for housing development, subject to the provision of the appropriate infrastructure which can enable the site to be delivered and suitably mitigate its impacts.
- 2.5** A 'Vision Document' and 'Roadmap' (March 2022) has been prepared by GL Hearn, LDA Design and Wood Group on behalf of the DIO to support the policy position within the LPR. This will be developed and expanded upon as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in partnership MBC and DIO in accordance with the requirement of Policy LPRSP5(B).
- 2.6** The Vision Document and Roadmap sets out how the site can deliver approximately 1,300 new homes, taking into account the constraints and opportunities of the site, based on a range of technical and high-level masterplanning work already undertaken. The existing constraints are well understood and appropriate solutions

will be incorporated into the masterplanning work. It is not considered that any of the constraints could not be overcome through the provision of appropriate mitigation, typical of a site of this scale and nature.

2.7 In summary, both MBC and the DIO support the redevelopment of Invicta Barracks for:

1. Approximately 1,300 homes
2. Neighbourhood shops and services to meet local community needs
3. A community hub (flexible community space)
4. Site-wide system of paths and cycle routes linking to the town centre, surrounding residential areas, and nearby leisure routes (including the riverside path and parkland and trails to the east through Cuckoo Wood)
5. Preservation of the historic Grade II* listed Park House, Walled Garden and its parkland setting
6. Provision of on-site amenity green space, children's play space and natural/semi-natural open space

2.8 It is recognised that the Roadmap is not a fixed blueprint for development. Policy LPRSP5(B) has been formulated as a starting point; establishing critical elements which should be secured through the delivery of the strategic development location. The policy sets out the quantum of development of housing and identifies associated infrastructure so the provision of these is secured. This is done in a manner which allows flexibility within the parameters of the masterplans for these to be interpreted and developed through the production of the SPD.

2.9 As part of the Ministry of Defence document "A Better Defence Estate" (November 2016), Invicta Barracks has been scheduled for disposal by the Secretary of State. The current Army unit, 36 Engineer Regiment, are being relocated to another military site in the UK as part of a consolidation exercise.

2.10 The Armed Forces are currently undertaking an Integrated Defence Review. Part of this Review was the Army's Future Soldier announcement made on the 24th November 2021, which outlines the most radical transformation of the British Army in 20 years. To enable these exciting new developments, that will deliver a more lethal, agile, and expeditionary army, there will be some necessary changes to where units are based and operate from.

2.11 As part of necessary basing changes to deliver Future Soldier, and following detailed

assessment, the vacation of the Army from Invicta Park Barracks will now be from 2029. The evidence work prepared and referred to above concludes that the delivery of the Invicta Barracks site can occur over the plan period. It is likely that the phased drawdown of the site could allow development to commence prior to the formal closure and vacation of the site in 2029.

Land ownership

- 2.12** The Invicta Barracks site is currently owned and occupied by the MoD. All site promotion for Invicta Barracks undertaken by DIO is subject to the land shaded in pink below – All matters in this Statement of Common Ground between MBC and DIO relate to the pink shaded area.

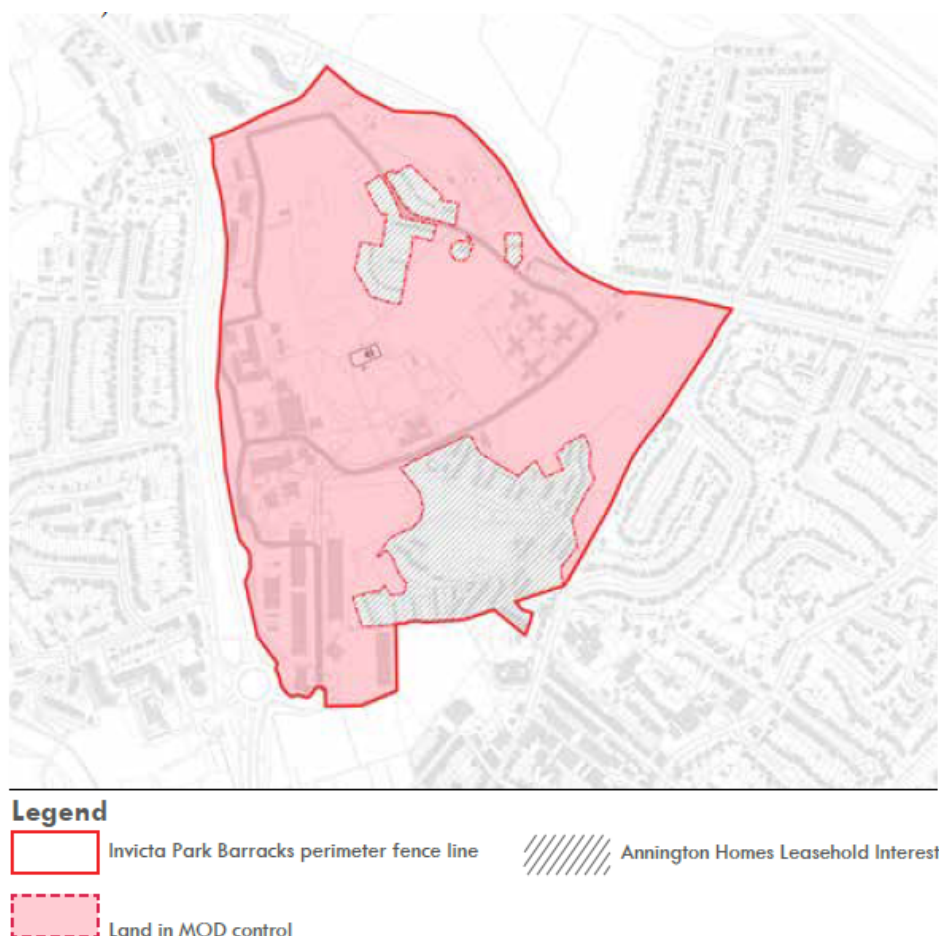


Figure 1: Invicta Barracks strategic development location LPRSP5(B)

- 2.13** It is considered that the areas shaded pink is most appropriate for residential-led development.
- 2.14** MBC have identified a separate requirement to identify a site to meet future educational need in the borough – this is demonstrated on the Land Use Plan below, but for the avoidance of doubt this is a separate matter not related to this Statement of Common Ground.



Figure 2: Invicta Barracks strategic Land Use Plan

- 2.15 A detailed masterplan is being progressed jointly by the DIO and MBC, looking at the site holistically, as a comprehensive redevelopment proposal. This is included as Appendix 1 of this document.

The Invicta Barracks Site

Site Description

- 2.16** The operational military site known as Invicta Park Barracks, is a 46.75 ha triangular shaped site located within the urban area of Maidstone, Kent. The site is located just 1.5km (10 minutes walk) to the north west of Maidstone Town Centre and sits within an urban context abutting a variety of residential styles reflecting the growth of Maidstone ranging from late Victorian terraces through to post war estate development. In recent years this urban context has been strengthened with the completion of several significant residential developments, the most recent, beyond the western boundary, where the construction of a large residential scheme, Springfield Tower by Weston Homes, and Springfield Mill by Redrow Homes is ongoing.
- 2.17** Royal Engineers Road (A229) runs along the western boundary, from which the primary access point to the site is located, this road is a modern dual carriageway linking central Maidstone to the M2 and M20, providing road access to London and the channel ports. Sandling Lane runs along the length of the eastern boundary, beyond which lies 'Cuckoo Wood' an area of ancient woodland. Sandling Lane was the historic main road into Maidstone and links the open countryside to the urban area, there is an existing secondary access to the site from this road. The site is close good bus services in and out of town and is within walking distance of all three Maidstone Railway Stations, all with direct services into central London stations.
- 2.18** The site has been subject to detailed surveys by DIO's consultant team, led by GL Hearn, including;
- Heritage Assessment
 - Archaeological Assessment;
 - Land Contamination Report;
 - Utilities Survey;
 - Ecological Survey;
 - Sustainability Strategy;
 - Topographical Survey;
 - Tree Survey;
 - Arboricultural Assessment;

- Transport Statement;
- UXO Assessment;
- Acoustic Report;
- Minerals Assessment;
- Planning Appraisal:
- Viability Assessment;
- Building Survey;
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment;
- Air Quality Report; and
- Flood Risk Report.

Summary of Opportunities

2.19 Having regard to the listed technical work undertaken, the associated with redevelopment of the Invicta Barracks Site are as follows:

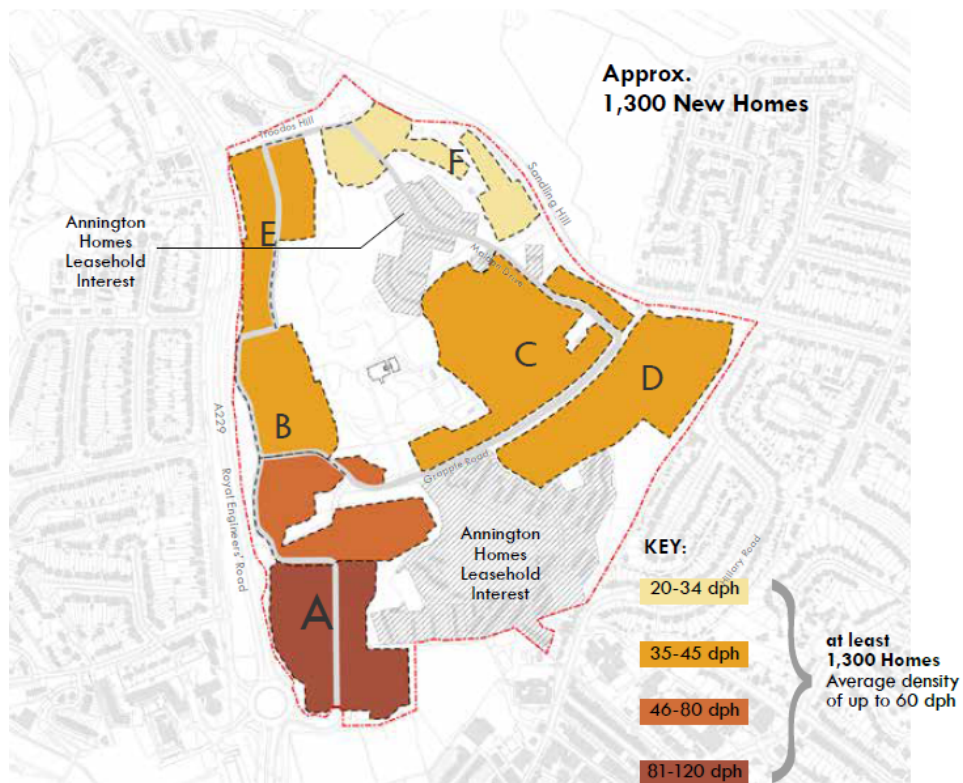
- Preserve and enhance existing parkland to support green corridors and biodiversity;
- Park House as a historic landmark and heart of the community;
- Take advantage of existing road network and access;
- Create alternative access points to open up the site for pedestrian and cycle access;
- Protect existing views;
- Respect the scale of surrounding development;
- Connect the site with context promoting permeability;
- Create a gateway and sense of arrival at the main access off the A229 Royal Engineers Road with a higher level of density.
- Provide a sustainable urban settlement that can deliver 1,300 new homes and associated social infrastructure.

2.20 The main constraints do not present any fundamental issues that undermine the principle of development of the site. The constraints will be addressed in planning terms through the development of an SPD.

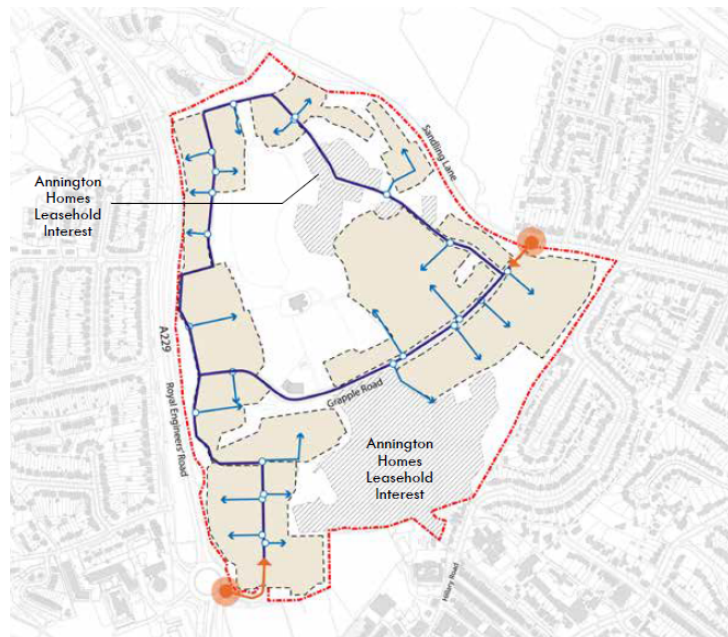
Delivery

Illustrative Masterplan

- 2.21** DIO and MBC have developed a high-level key diagram for the site in line with the parameters established within policy LPRSP5(B). This is enclosed at Appendix 1 and shows how the site could be delivered. This looks to provide up to 1,300 new dwellings, local shops and leisure facilities, and a community hub. In addition to the high-level land use plan (Figure 1), the distribution of the new 1,300 homes is likely to be as follows:



- 2.22** A circular bus route could be accommodated within the site, given the current proposed layout. Discussions will remain ongoing as to the suitability of this route and potential providers of such a service.



Indicative Phasing

- 2.23** An indicative high level phasing plan has been produced and illustrates one way of sequencing development. The main considerations to the phasing of the site will be balancing delivery of new homes with associated infrastructure. Work on detailed schedule of infrastructure delivery, including key trigger points, remains ongoing, however at this point in time, it is envisaged that the Character Parcels indicated in the Roadmap would be delivered as follows:

Parcel	Phase	Delivery Timescale
Site Setup	Phase 0	2027
Early release plot to be determined *	Phase 1	2028 - 2030
Barrack Village (Plot A1)	Phase 2	2029 - 2032
Parkside (Plot E)	Phase 3	2031 - 2032
Sandling Ridge (Plot F)	Phase 4	2031 - 2032
Gurkha Square (Plot B)	Phase 5	2033 - 2037
The Campus (Plot C)	Phase 6	2033 - 2035
Barrack Village (Plot A2)	Phase 7	2034 - 2037

Trajectory

- 2.24** DIO anticipate completing its first units on site from 2028, in line with the following delivery trajectory:

	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	36/37	37/38
Number of units						50	75	75	100	100	150	150	150	150	150	150

- 2.25** This trajectory has been considered as part of the overall housing trajectory for the delivery of the Local Plan as set out in the Housing Delivery and Land Supply Topic Paper.

Invicta Barracks SPD

- 2.26** An SPD will be progressed through joint working with all parties, with MBC as the lead. This is set out as a requirement in Policy LPRSP5(B). The purpose of this SPD will be to set out in guidance how the policy requirements together with other policies within the Local Plan Review should be delivered on the site. At this stage it is anticipated that the SPD will include a comprehensive Masterplan Framework, setting out detail on layout, land uses and housing mix, green and blue infrastructure, heritage, movement, development character, placemaking, energy and sustainability. It may include design codes. Integral to the SPD will be how the site broadly delivers on garden settlement principles.
- 2.27** The Council's adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timeframes for the preparation of this SPD. It is anticipated that the SPD will be developed immediately after the Local Plan Review and will be adopted prior to the planning application being submitted.

Summary

- 2.28** This sub-section demonstrates that the Invicta Barracks site is a developable site which can deliver circa 1,300 homes before the end of the plan period to support the housing growth within the Borough. The site has several constraints, as typical for development sites of this size. However, none are fundamental constraints that

cannot be addressed via infrastructure investment and appropriate mitigation.

- 2.29** Invicta Barracks is suitable and available, and developable within the plan period. All parties are committed to preparing an SPD which will set out how the development will be brought forward, and how it will integrate with Maidstone Town Centre and the wider area in a holistic manner.

3.0 Agreed Matters

- 3.1 The previous section sets out the shared position statement on the development of the Invicta Barracks strategic development location. This section seeks to summarise the key areas of agreement on the Local Plan Review.

Invicta Barracks Strategic Development Location (LPR Policy LPRSP5(B))

- 3.2 The parties agree on the principle of allocating Invicta Barracks to accommodate 1,300 new homes in close proximity to Maidstone Town Centre, to be delivered in broad accordance with Garden Settlement principles.
- 3.3 The parties agree that the site has the potential to play a key role in delivering the housing need for the Borough over the plan period. It is strategically well located, close to two existing mainline railway stations with direct connections to London.
- 3.4 The parties agree that the site is located in the Urban Area, less than 500m from the Maidstone Town Centre boundary, but importantly, not within the Town Centre. It is further agreed that the site is not located within a Conservation Area, or any locally designated archaeological priority area, and is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites.
- 3.5 It is a shared position that the site is developable in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is a suitable location, it is available and could be delivered within the new Local Plan period.
- 3.6 The parties commit to working together to ensure the redevelopment of Invicta Barracks responds to the opportunities which are presented through providing growth of this scale in terms of creating the infrastructure to benefit the wider community.
- 3.7 The parties agree that in line with the housing trajectory in Section 2.0, that DIO will be able to deliver around 1,300 new homes over the new Local Plan period.
- 3.8 The parties agree that further work is required to better understand the educational requirements / future contributions generated by the delivery of 1,300 new homes. In

addition, both parties agree that the proposed education provision to address the Town Centre need, as part of the Education Authority's 'borough-wide requirement' and delivery timeframes is subject to a data-driven 'education need' and will require further Local Authority evidence base review. Any education requirement and or contribution relevant to Invicta Park Barracks will be subject to ongoing discussions with the key stakeholders and if necessary, will be set out with appropriate wording within the SPD, in association with the land use plan set out in Figure 2 above. Further information on how this will be achieved is set out in Section 4.

- 3.9** Policy LPRSP10(B) within the LPR, sets out targets for affordable housing provision on qualifying sites across the Borough. Development in the low value zone and brownfield development in the mid value zone will not normally be expected to deliver affordable housing, however where opportunities exist to provide affordable housing the council will seek to secure this. MBC and DIO will continue discussions on viability and phasing ahead of examination and provide an update to the Inspector.
- 3.10** The parties agree that the broad conclusions of the viability work carried out by Aspinall Verdi means there is a reasonable prospect of the site, including the requisite infrastructure, being delivered without external funding being necessary. Notwithstanding this, the parties agree that if there are funding opportunities available to help deliver the site, they could be explored.
- 3.11** The parties agree that the Invicta Barracks site and its potential impacts on the road network has been assessed within the Jacobs transport and air quality modelling work. This modelling work is robust and demonstrates that suitable mitigations are achievable to enable the delivery of the development.
- 3.12** The parties agree that the development could potentially be served by a suitable bus route to connect the site to key locations including Maidstone town centre and Maidstone East railway station, and other local centres. Further, the parties agree that suitable walking and cycling routes can be provided to connect the site to surrounding areas, including connecting to Cuckoo Wood and leisure trails. It is agreed that the development of Invicta Barracks has the ability to deliver pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. All parties agree with this approach to integrate sustainable travel infrastructure in existing and proposed settlements to drive modal shift away from the private car.
- 3.13** The parties agree that the identified constraints in terms of landscaping, trees and

heritage can be properly mitigated against and addressed through the development of a detailed masterplan and future planning application. In addition, land-use and viability work relating to Park House and the Walled Garden is on-going and most appropriate use of this heritage asset will be confirmed during the SPD preparation process.

- 3.14** The parties agree to work together in the delivery of a Masterplan SPD in line with the policy requirements of LPRSP5(B).

4.0 Joint working

- 4.1** The parties are committed to constructive joint working to bring forward and deliver development at the Invicta Barracks site. Joint working has already been a large factor in informing the policy position in the LPR (LPRSP5(B)).
- 4.2** The parties will continue to work together, including in producing a SPD for this site, which will set out the principles for the development and provide a comprehensive masterplan for the site.
- 4.3** The parties are committed to public consultation, community involvement and stakeholder liaison in respect of the development. This will include engaging with elected Members, Parish and Ward councils, associated Neighbourhood Plan groups and other local groups. Both parties are aware of local concerns about the development site and, whilst it is a shared position between the parties that none of these concerns fundamentally make the site unsuitable for development, the parties will seek to work with those stakeholders and ensure the development is designed to seek to minimise impacts upon the existing communities.
- 4.4** There will be continued joint working with statutory consultees, building on the constructive discussions undertaken to date.
- 4.5** For the avoidance of doubt, the DIO's outstanding comments to the LPR are:
- a) Quantum of Education provision generated by the proposed 1,300 new homes, and the proposed location of the education facility within the site allocation policy wording.
 - b) Site viability, relating specifically to the housing product mix.
 - c) Policy wording relating to demolition of housing at the Crescent (north of Park House).
 - d) Any redevelopment at Invicta Barracks having to contribute to a 20% Bio-diversity Net Gain, as the site already provides a multitude of mature woodlands and habitats, meaning that this will be difficult to achieve without provide fewer homes.

- 4.6** These comments do not alter DIO's commitment to working together with MBC.
- 4.7** There are some amendments proposed to the policy as set out in DIO's representations to the Regulation 19 consultation. A number of these are set out as proposed Main Modifications to the submission policy, such as the removal of c) listed above.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The above is agreed as a shared position and both MBC and the DIO look forward to preparing a joint SPD to facilitate the delivery of a vibrant and sustainable new community at Invicta Barracks.

6.0 Signatories

6.1 This statement has been prepared and agreed by the following organisations;

Maidstone Borough Council	Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Signature	Signature
Date:	Date:

Appendices

Appendix 1: Invicta Barracks Key Diagram

