# Hearing Statement on behalf of Gleeson Land (Site Promoter)

# MM71: Land West of Ockley Lane, Hassocks

## 1.0 Introduction

*Background*

1.1 tor&co is acting on behalf of Gleeson Land (GL), who control land to the north of Ockley Park. The site has been identified by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) as a draft housing allocation capable of accommodating up to 250 new homes together with associated open space (Policy MM71: Land West of Ockley Lane, Hassocks).

1.2 This statement provides further background information about the site and responds to the Planning Inspector's specific questions set out in the Matter 7 hearing agenda.

*The site*

1.3 The site extends to approximately 21 hectares and lies on the northern edge of Hassocks, west of Ockley Lane. It comprises a large arable field. The surrounding area includes agricultural land, open countryside and Batchelors Farm Nature Reserve to the north, the London to Brighton railway line to the west, and the grounds of large residential properties to the east. The nearest boundary of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) lies approximately 300 metres to the east.

1.4 Immediately to the south is the emerging Ockley Park development, which is delivering 500 homes, a primary school and a community facility. A further 130 dwellings are currently under construction to the west of the site, on the opposite side of the railway line.

1.5 The site lies approximately 1.3 kilometres from Hassocks village centre, which provides a broad range of services and facilities, together with a railway station offering frequent connections to Haywards Heath, Brighton and London. The site is relatively unconstrained, with limited internal vegetation and boundary hedgerows and trees. Mature vegetation along the northern, eastern and western boundaries provides a degree of enclosure and screening from the wider landscape and the SDNP.

1.6 The site lies entirely within Environment Agency Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at the lowest risk of fluvial flooding.

*Proposal*

1.7 The site has the potential to provide a logical and well-designed northern extension to Hassocks that would provide a significant contribution to MSDC's housing need.

1.8 GL has prepared an illustrative masterplan, included as Appendix 1, which demonstrates how the site could successfully accommodate approximately 250 new homes, together with associated open space, landscaping and supporting infrastructure. The development would provide a mix of market and affordable homes across a range of sizes to help meet local housing needs.

1.9 The masterplan also incorporates a substantial landscaped buffer along the northern edge of the site, providing opportunities for both formal and informal open space whilst also creating a clear and defensible northern boundary to the settlement and separation from the SDNP.

**Figure 1: Illustrative masterplan extract**



## 2.0 Movement

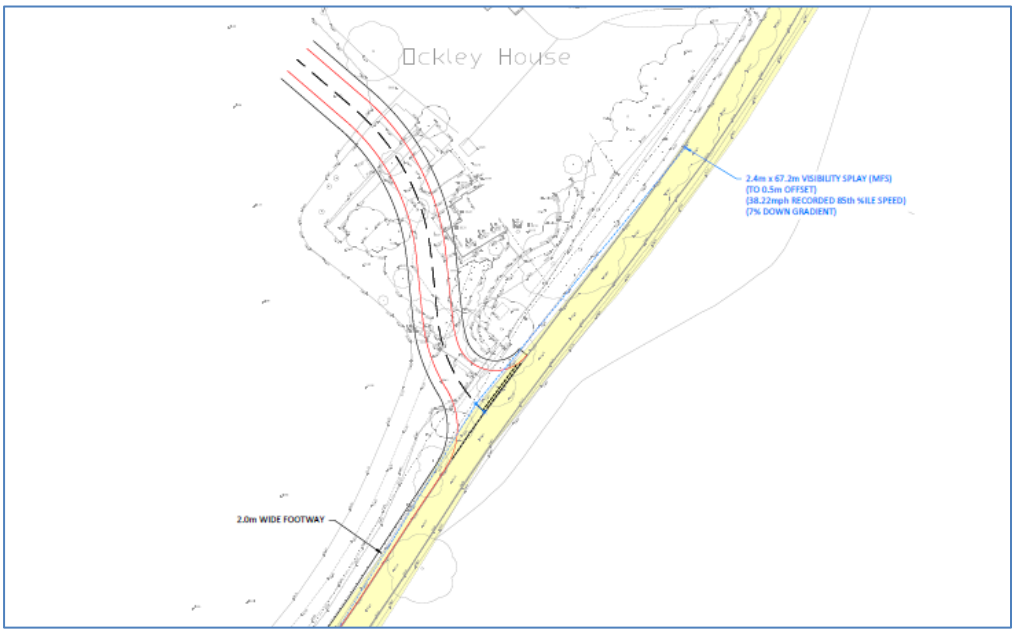
*Access*

2.1 Our client's Transport consultant, i-Transport, has confirmed that the proposed allocation can be accessed by a simple priority junction onto Ockley Lane in accordance with criterion 1 of the draft policy.

2.2 The proposed access would comprise a 5.5m-wide carriageway, sufficient to accommodate two large vehicles passing one another, with 2m-wide footways on either side. The southern footway could be extended southwards to connect with the existing pedestrian infrastructure along Ockley Lane. The junction would also provide visibility splays appropriate to prevailing vehicle speeds on Ockley Lane and would therefore accord with relevant design standards.

2.3 The current proposed junction design is included as Appendix 2, with an extract below.

**Figure 2: Priority Junction onto Ockley Lane**




2.4 Delivery of the allocation is not dependent upon unusual engineering works or third-party land to secure vehicular access. The precise access arrangements will be refined through the planning application process, but there is clear evidence that safe and suitable access can be achieved. There are therefore no in-principle highway constraints that would prevent the site from coming forward, supporting the conclusion that it is both developable and deliverable.

*Effect on the road network*

2.5 The Mid Sussex Transport Study: Scenario 7 assesses the cumulative impact of the additional 35 proposed site allocations on the Mid Sussex highway network.

2.6 Locally, the study identifies only one location where the impact is assessed as 'severe', at the Stonepound crossroads. In response, WSCC, as Local Highway Authority, has requested an amendment to Policy MM71 through its representations, requiring sustainable transport measures to benefit users of the junction. GL accepts the principle of this request.

2.7 A Transport Assessment submitted in support of any future planning application would provide a detailed assessment of the development's impact on the local highway network, informed by up-to-date traffic surveys and detailed junction modelling. This would be undertaken alongside a robust sustainable transport strategy aimed at promoting alternatives to travel by private car. Development of the scale proposed provides a genuine opportunity to deliver a range of sustainable transport improvements, as set out below. These measures could be secured through appropriate planning conditions and/or a Section 106 agreement, consistent with any future Policy Requirement.

2.8 Importantly, the site occupies a sustainable location adjoining Hassocks, providing future residents with opportunities to access local services, facilities, employment and public transport by a range of sustainable modes. The development would therefore support modal shift and reduce reliance on the private car, consistent with national and local planning policy.

*Pedestrian and cycling proposals and how they would be provided*

2.9 The emerging masterplan incorporates a comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes, connecting the site with the existing settlement edge and wider movement network. Particular emphasis has been placed on improving permeability and creating opportunities for active travel between the site and the two nearby centres of Hassocks and Burgess Hill. Each of these provides a range of local services and facilities, which include shops, schools and community facilities, along with employment and public transport services.

2.10 Criterion 2 of the draft policy requires connectivity to the existing pedestrian and cycle path alongside the railway line. GL confirm that there is potential to provide connections into this land, as illustrated on the masterplan (Appendix 1) and Concept Masterplan (Appendix 3).

**Figure 3: Concept masterplan showing pedestrian and cycle connections**



2.11 The details of such connections will be discussed with WSCC through pre-application discussions and can then be secured by planning condition.

2.12 Criterion 3 of the draft policy requires improved walking and cycling connectivity to Hassocks / Keymer and nearby bus stops by providing a walking and cycle path on Ockley Lane.

2.13 The development can facilitate a new walking route along Ockley Lane, which could be upgraded for cycling using highway land or land under the control of the land promoter. The specifications of any such design will be agreed with WSCC through pre-application discussions. The works can be secured as part of the access works, secured via planning condition and implemented via Section 278 agreement.

2.14 Criterion 4 of the draft policy requires integration for pedestrians to the development to the south. The illustrative masterplan shows potential connections being delivered in accordance with this requirement. Such works could be secured by planning condition.

2.15 The proposed allocation will achieve an appropriate level of sustainable connectivity.

*The availability and frequency of bus services*

2.16 The site benefits from access to existing public transport services, with bus stops located to the north on Ockley Hill and to the south on Ockley Lane. These stops are served by the 33 and 33A bus services. On weekdays, services operate hourly in both directions, with the first service towards Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill departing before 07:00 and the final return service arriving at approximately 18:30. Services towards Hurstpierpoint commence at approximately 08:30, with the final return service at around 18:00.

2.17 On Saturdays, services operate every two hours in both directions, with the first service towards Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill at approximately 08:00 and the final return service at around 17:30. Services towards Hurstpierpoint commence at approximately 09:30, with the final return service at around 16:00.

2.18 As part of the proposals, it is intended to facilitate improvements to the frequency and accessibility of these services; consideration will also be given to opportunities to improve accessibility to bus stops and, where appropriate, to work collaboratively with WSCC Highways and operators to enhance public transport provision.

2.19 In line with this approach, GL supports WSCC Highways' request to include a requirement for a proportionate financial contribution towards the improvement of local bus services within the final policy wording for MM71.

2.20 When considered alongside the site's walking and cycling connections, the current availability and potential to improve public transport further supports its suitability as a sustainable location for growth.

**3.0 Landscape and countryside**

*Effect on the separate identity of settlements*

3.1 Development of the allocation would not result in the coalescence of settlements or undermine the separate identity of Hassocks and surrounding communities.

3.2 Criteria 5 to 12 of the draft policy specifically seek to secure a landscape-led approach to development, including the creation of clear and defensible boundaries along the northern, eastern and western edges of the site. Together with the existing vegetation and separation from surrounding built development, these measures will maintain a clear distinction between the northern edge of Hassocks and nearby settlements.

3.3 Furthermore, criterion 15 would retain the three fields immediately to the north of the allocation, which are also within GL's control, in agricultural or public open space use. This would provide an additional and enduring buffer to further northward expansion of the settlement.

3.4 The allocation therefore represents a logical, contained and proportionate extension to Hassocks, rather than unrestricted development or encroachment into the wider countryside.

*Effect on the countryside and access to it, trees, woodland and wildlife*

3.5 The site can be developed while appropriately protecting and enhancing relevant landscape and environmental assets.

3.6 Any future planning application will be informed by detailed ecological, arboricultural and landscape evidence. Existing features of value, including trees, vegetation and ecological corridors, will inform the design and layout of the development and be retained and enhanced where appropriate.

3.7 The allocation also provides opportunities to improve public access to the countryside through the provision of new and improved walking and cycling routes, public open space and green infrastructure. Biodiversity enhancement and habitat creation measures can be incorporated within the development and secured through the planning process, delivering measurable environmental benefits alongside new housing.

3.8 The site therefore provides an opportunity to deliver much-needed housing alongside landscape, biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements and improved access to open space.

## 4.0 Infrastructure

*Social and community facilities*

4.1 The proposed allocation will contribute towards meeting identified housing needs while supporting investment in local community infrastructure.

4.2 The development proposals will incorporate appropriate community and recreational infrastructure, including sports and open space provision, reflecting identified local needs. Necessary on-site infrastructure and financial contributions can be secured through the planning application process, as appropriate.

4.3 The scale of the proposed development provides an opportunity to support improvements to local infrastructure and services while also helping to sustain existing facilities within Hassocks as set out within Policy MM71.

4.4 GL supports WSCC's request to amend the policy wording of MM71 to include a proportionate financial contribution towards waste management infrastructure, where necessary.

*Utilities and any potential impediment to delivery*

4.5 There is no evidence that utility infrastructure represents a barrier to the delivery of the allocation.

4.6 Utility capacity and servicing requirements will be assessed in further detail through the planning application process and through engagement with relevant statutory undertakers. GL is not aware of any abnormal infrastructure constraints that would prevent development from coming forward within the plan period.

4.7 The site has been consistently promoted through the District Plan process and remains available, suitable and achievable. There are therefore no known utility or infrastructure constraints that would undermine its delivery.

## 5.0 Conclusion

5.1 In summary, Policy MM71 represents a sustainable, suitable and deliverable housing allocation capable of making a meaningful contribution towards meeting housing needs while delivering associated green infrastructure, recreational provision and community benefits.

5.2 The evidence available demonstrates that there are no overriding technical, environmental, access or infrastructure constraints that would prevent the site from being developed. Any detailed matters can be appropriately addressed and, where necessary, mitigated through the planning application process.

5.3 GL therefore supports the allocation of Land West of Ockley Lane under Policy MM71 and considers that the allocation provides an appropriate, effective and deliverable component of the District's strategy for meeting its development needs over the plan period.

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# Appendix 1: Illustrative Masterplan

Site

# LAND NORTH OF OCKLEY PARK, HASSOCKS

Drawing

Illustrative masterplan

Scale

1:1250@A1

Date

09.03.26

Drawing ref

1378. **05**

0 10 20 30 40 50m

## KEY

- Site boundary
- Nature Reserve / Wildlife Area
- Proposed landscape / open space
- Woodland planting
- SuDS
- Proposed housing
- Strategic Cycle / Footpath links
- Informal footpaths
- Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Natural play / Play on the way element
- Approved location of community facility (Ockley Park)
- Approved location of primary school (Ockley Park)

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## Appendix 2: Ockley Lane Highway Access

KEY:

HIGHWAY BOUNDARY

Ockley House

2.4m x 67.2m VISIBILITY SPLAY (MFS)
(TO 0.5m OFFSET)
(38.22mph RECORDED 85th %ILE SPEED)
(7% DOWN GRADIENT)

2.0m WIDE FOOTWAY

2.4m x 62.7m VISIBILITY SPLAY (MFS)
(TO 0.5m OFFSET)
(39.8mph RECORDED 85th %ILE SPEED)
(3% UP GRADIENT)

2.0m WIDE FOOTWAY

TIE INTO EXISTING TARMAC SURFACE

i-Transport

The Square, Basing View,
Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4EB

Tel: 01256 898366

www.i-transport.co.uk

SCALE BAR @ 1-500

0 5 10 25 50

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| REV | DATE | BY | DESCRIPTION | CHK | APP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | 13.10.26 | SH | MINOR AMENDMENTS | MS | MS |
| C | 09.11.25 | JD | VISIBILITY SPLAYS UPDATED | LI | MG |
| B | 22.09.25 | MC | ARRANGEMENT UPDATED | MG | MG |
| A | 09.09.25 | JD | ARRANGEMENT UPDATED | LI | MS |

STATUS: FOR INFORMATION

TITLE: POTENTIAL SITE ACCESS ARRANGEMENT

PROJECT: RESIDUE OF EC MATTHEWS LAND, HASSOCKS

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&co

# Appendix 3: Concept Masterplan

Site

# LAND NORTH OF OCKLEY PARK, HASSOCKS

Drawing

Concept Masterplan

Scale

NTS

Date

26.02.26

Drawing ref

1375. **04**

## KEY

- Site boundary
- Ockley Park approved housing
- Ockley Park approved 2 FE school site
- Ockley Park approved community building
- Contours
- Surface water flood risk area
- Proposed housing area
- Proposed sports pitches
- Children's Play Area
- Proposed 25m wide landscape buffer
- Proposed SuDS basin and swales
- Proposed vehicular access
- Existing / proposed pedestrian and cycle links

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