Statement of Common Ground

MM82: Land East of London Road, Albourne

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Examination Between Mid Sussex District Council and Thakeham Homes Limited

Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") has been prepared between Mid Sussex District Council ("the Council") and Thakeham Homes ("Thakeham") in respect of proposed allocation MM82, Land East of London Road, Albourne.

2. The purpose of this SoCG is to identify those matters which are agreed between the parties and to clearly identify any matters which remain in dispute, in order to assist the Inspector and narrow the matters requiring discussion at the examination hearing.

Need for the Allocation

3. MM82 is proposed through the Main Modifications as an allocation for 250 dwellings, together with green infrastructure, play space, open space and outdoor sports provision. The emerging allocation also requires provision of a flexible community facility within the northern part of the Site.

4. The parties agree that the District Plan needs to make appropriate provision for housing over the plan period, including an appropriate contribution towards unmet housing needs arising from neighbouring authorities.

5. The proposed Main Modifications identify a housing requirement of 24,071 dwellings, including 3,753 dwellings towards Crawley's unmet need and 1,075 dwellings towards Brighton & Hove's unmet need. The modified Plan identifies supply of 24,949 dwellings, including the proposed MM82 allocation.

6. The parties agree that the allocation of MM82 would make a positive contribution towards meeting the housing requirement and maintaining a supply of housing over the plan period. Albourne is identified as a Category 3 medium village in the settlement hierarchy.

7. The Sustainability Appraisal considered MM82 alongside other potential sites at Albourne and the Site performed highly in the Housing, Community and Crime and Economic Regeneration categories.

8. The parties therefore agree that MM82 has an identified role in contributing towards the housing strategy of the Plan.

Deliverability

9. Thakeham controls the Site by way of Option Agreement and has promoted it through the emerging Local Plan process.

10. The proposed allocation identifies capacity for 250 dwellings.

11. The Council's housing trajectory includes MM82 within the anticipated housing supply. Thakeham's Main Modifications representations did not dispute the trajectory assumption that first delivery would occur in 2028/29.

12. An illustrative masterplan has been prepared for the Site and has informed consideration of the Proposed Development. Thakeham has engaged with MSDC by way of a formal application for pre-application advice (DM/26/0333), so the Council is familiar with the Proposed Development and the lack of barriers to delivery.

13. Development will need to address detailed technical matters including drainage, noise, ecology and highways through the design and development management process.

14. The parties agree that the MM82 is available and achievable and capable of delivering its proposed contribution to housing supply within the Plan period, including contribution to the five-year housing supply.

15. The parties agree that the technical matters identified through the evidence base do not, in principle, preclude residential development, subject to satisfactory detailed assessment and appropriate mitigation.

Access & Highways

16. Vehicular access to MM82 is proposed from the north via Albourne Road. The proposed access would also provide pedestrian connections to Albourne Road and the existing footpath network.

17. Existing pedestrian routes provide connections towards Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks to the east, Albourne to the west and Sayers Common to the north.

18. The development would provide pedestrian connections to existing public footpath ALB-41HU along the eastern boundary, connecting the site to the wider Public Right of Way network.

19. Thakeham proposes enhancement of the existing pedestrian connection (ALB/39-1HU) onto London Road.

20. Existing bus services operate in Albourne, with stops on London Road providing services between Brighton and Crawley and other settlements along the A23 corridor.

21. Safe and suitable vehicular access to serve the allocation can be achieved, subject to detailed design and technical approval through the development management process.

22. The site is capable of providing appropriate pedestrian and cycle connections into the surrounding network.

23. There is no strategic transport matter identified which renders the allocation inherently incapable of development.

Relationship to Albourne & Heritage

24. The Site lies east of London Road and opposite the existing defined settlement area of Albourne.

25. Existing dwellings and built form already extend along the eastern side of London Road, including development extending further south than the proposed development site.

26. The development of MM82 would alter the existing character of the Site through the introduction of residential development.

27. The southern part of MM82 is proposed to be retained for recreational/open space rather than developed for housing. The exact quantum of open space will be a matter for any future planning application.

28. Four listed buildings have been identified between the B2118 and MM82: Elm House, Mole Manor, Tipnoaks and Hillbrook House. Mature vegetation lies between these assets and the proposed site. Heritage considerations will inform the detailed layout and design of the development and appropriate mitigation through landscaping, open space and the disposition of development can be addressed through detailed masterplanning.

29. The development of MM82 would not result in an unacceptable impact upon the identity of Albourne. Future development proposals will be subject to detailed masterplanning, informed by supporting evidence, including design, layout and landscape considerations, to help it integrate with the surroundings.

30. There is no heritage constraint which, in principle, prevents allocation of the Site for residential development.

Community Infrastructure & Open Space

31. MM82 requires on-site provision of green infrastructure, play space, open space and outdoor sports provision, together with a flexible community facility within the northern part of the Site.

32. The allocation therefore provides opportunities to deliver publicly accessible green and recreational space alongside residential development.

33. The southern part of MM82 is proposed to be retained as recreational open space.

34. The parties agree that the nature, extent and detailed configuration of open space should be established through the detailed masterplanning and development management process.

Outdoor sports provision

35. The Council's proposed MM82 policy requires outdoor sports provision. Thakeham does not object to addressing sports requirements in principle but has questioned the requirement for on-site

provision and whether that provision can appropriately be accommodated alongside housing, drainage, access and biodiversity requirements.

36. Thakeham's position is that sufficient flexibility should be retained to determine through the development management process whether identified sports and other required infrastructure requirements are most appropriately addressed through on-site provision and/or an appropriate contribution. The Council is proposing the following minor modification to the infrastructure list within the policy for clarity and consistency:

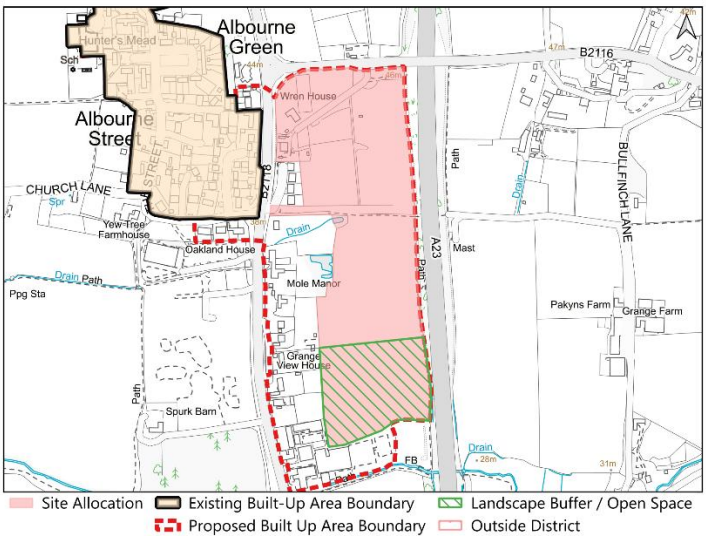
    Amend the infrastructure list:

    On-site:
    - Natural, semi-natural and amenity green space
    - ~~Outdoor sports~~
    - ~~Play area~~
    - Parks and Gardens

    Financial contributions towards the provision of:
    - Sustainable Transport
    - Education
    - Library
    - Community buildings
    - Local Community Infrastructure
    - Emergency services
    - Health
    - Other outdoor provision
    - **Outdoor sports**
    - **Parks and Gardens**
    - Improvements at Hassocks Station

    Provision of:
    - Highway works
    - Sustainable transport measures
    - **Sewerage network upgrades**

37. The parties agree that the detailed extent of land to be retained as recreational open space requires clarity. Thakeham's illustrative masterplan identifies approximately 100m of open space northwards from the site's southern boundary, whereas the Main Modifications material does not currently define the extent relied upon by the policy. The Council is proposing the following minor modification to the inset map to the policy for clarity:



Site Conditions

Ecology

38. MM82 criterion 10 requires enhancement of the adjacent priority habitat, comprising deciduous woodland, having regard to the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

39. The relevant priority habitat lies outside MM82's boundary but directly adjoins the western boundary.

40. Thakeham's position is that criterion 10 should clarify that obligations relating to habitat management and enhancement should relate to measures capable of being delivered within the site boundary. The Council is proposing the following minor modification to criterion 10 for clarity and consistency:

    Amend criterion 10:

    Provide an appropriate buffer to ~~Enhance~~ the adjacent priority habitat (deciduous woodland) having regard to the objectives of the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Surface water and flood risk

41. The parties agree that surface-water drainage represents a matter requiring detailed assessment and an appropriate site-wide drainage strategy.

42. Thakeham has undertaken pre-application engagement with the LLFA in relation to surface-water drainage. Thakeham's current development strategy records that the LLFA accepted the principle of a pumping-station solution, subject to further requirements. These are matters for any future application for planning permission and will be detailed accordingly in any future submission.

Noise

43. The Site's proximity to the A23 gives rise to a noise consideration which will need to inform the layout and design of the development.

44. Detailed noise assessment and any necessary mitigation will therefore be undertaken as part of the planning application process. Thakeham's development strategy identifies the need for noise surveys and for resulting recommendations to be incorporated into the Proposed Development.

Foul drainage

45. Foul drainage will need to be addressed through the detailed servicing strategy for the Proposed Development.

Overall position sought

46. Subject to appropriate detailed assessment and mitigation, the parties agree that no site condition has presently been identified which establishes that the proposed allocation is incapable of development.

Matters Agreed

47. The parties agree that:
    a) MM82 forms part of the additional housing supply proposed through the Main Modifications and would contribute towards meeting the housing requirement.
    b) MM82 has an identified capacity of approximately 250 dwellings.
    c) MM82 is available for residential development and is capable of contributing housing within the plan period, including five-year housing supply.
    d) Albourne is identified as a Category 3 settlement within the settlement hierarchy.
    e) MM82 lies directly opposite the existing defined built-up area and existing built development is present along the eastern side of London Road.
    f) Vehicular access is proposed from Albourne Road and the development can provide connections to existing pedestrian and Public Right of Way networks.
    g) Existing bus services operate from London Road.
    h) The development will incorporate substantial green and recreational infrastructure, including retention of the southern part of MM82 as open space.
    i) The identified ecological, drainage, noise and other technical considerations can be subject to detailed assessment and appropriate mitigation through the development management process.
    j) The technical matters identified do not, in principle, establish that residential development of MM82 is incapable of being delivered.

Conclusion

48. The parties agree that MM82 is available and achievable; that it would make a material contribution towards meeting identified housing needs; that appropriate access and sustainable transport connections can be provided; and that the environmental and infrastructure matters identified can be subject to further detailed assessment, mitigation and resolution through the development management process. MM82 is capable of delivering its contribution (in full) to housing supply within the Plan period.

49. The principal planning judgement remaining for the Inspector concerns the effect of the scale of development proposed at MM82 upon the character of Albourne and the weight to be attached to any resulting harm when balanced against the allocation's contribution towards meeting housing needs and securing a sound Local Plan.

Signatures

Signed for Mid Sussex District Council

Name:  (Eric Owens)
Position: Interim Assistant Director of Planning and Sustainable Economy
Date: 22 October 2026

Signed for Thakeham Homes Limited

Name:  (Christopher Brake)
Position: Planning Director
Date: 22 October 2026