

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND
SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL
ST PAULS DEVELOPMENTS LTD AND
SMITHYWOOD BUSINESS PARKS
DEVELOPMENTS LLP
SEPTEMBER 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been produced in order to set out the areas of agreement between the Council and land promoter in respect of site allocation NES36, named as Land South of Junction 35 of M1 Motorway and South of Smithywood Business Park (Smithywood) in the emerging Sheffield Local Plan. The SoCG is between the parties consisting of Sheffield City Council (SCC) and St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP (the landowner and promoter with controlling interest of the site proposed allocation). A site location plan is attached in Appendix A showing the extent of landownership within the allocation.
- 1.2 Paragraph 36 of the National Planning Policy Framework, under which the Plan is being examined¹, requires that the Sheffield Plan is found 'sound' through the examination process. Critically, evidence must be provided that the land to be allocated in the Sheffield Plan is suitable for the proposed use(s) and is available and deliverable/developable at the point envisaged during the plan period. This SoCG addresses these issues with respect to site allocation NES36 and ensures any potential constraints/issues are identified and dealt with where possible, rather than deferred.
- 1.3 The statement sets out the confirmed points of agreement and disagreement between the parties regarding any issues of suitability, availability and deliverability of site NES36. A summary is provided in section 12 at the end of this statement.

2. Background and Governance

- 2.1 SCC is the local planning authority responsible for preparing an up-to-date local plan for Sheffield City Council's administrative area outside the Peak District National Park.
- 2.2 JEH Planning (consultant) is advising St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP (landowner/promoter) regarding the delivery of site NES36.
- 2.3 Site NES36 is identified as proposed allocation within the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations document (2025). The site comprises an extension of the existing Smithywood Business Park south and east towards the M1 motorway

¹ NPPF (Sept 2023).

and Jumble Lane/Loicher Lane. The gross site area is 16.37ha and the net developable area is 15.94ha.

- 2.4 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP has formally submitted representations that promote this site during the 2019 call for sites and during the two subsequent consultations on the Sheffield Local Plan, with the most recent being in 2023, on the Regulation 19 submission draft plan. These responses have been considered by SCC and, where appropriate, informed the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations (2025). St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP have supported the site's allocation within the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations 2025 consultation document.
- 2.5 This SoCG reflects the current position between SCC and St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP. It will be updated as and when required.
- 2.6 SCC and St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP will continue to meet to discuss the availability and deliverability of NES36 as the Sheffield Plan progresses through examination and beyond.

3 Site Ownership

- 3.1 Smithywood LLP, which is a joint venture between Fitzalan Estates and St Paul's Developments Limited, owns the access into the site from Cowley Way. Axis 1 Ltd owns the northern portion of the site allocation and this company is a wholly owned subsidiary company of St Paul's Development Limited. Mr Rhodes is a farmer who owns the southeastern portion of the proposed allocation. Whilst St Paul's Development Limited is the active lead promoter of the site through the Local Plan process, they are working collaboratively and constructively with Mr Rhodes. The representation by St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP during the most recent formal consultation period includes a letter of support from Mr Rhodes to the proposed site allocation NES36.
- 3.2 The southwestern area of the proposed allocation is owned by Mr Keen. At the time of preparing these representations he has confirmed that he does not wish to become involved in promoting his land for this development allocation. This has implications for the boundary of NES36.

4 Boundaries (allocation or other)

- 4.1 Whilst SCC and St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP agree that land within the ownership of Mr Keen is currently not available, agreement has not yet been reached regarding the allocation's boundary.
- 4.2 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP believe that Mr Keen's land remains an integral part of the overall allocation. Whilst currently unavailable, this may not remain so indefinitely. Land under the control of Mr Rhodes could come forward and be masterplanned, so that it does not prevent the development of Mr Keen's land at a later phase, should it become available.
- 4.3 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP also believe that land to the south, between the allocation and Loicher Lane should be included within the allocation. This land is within the ownership of Mr Rhodes and is therefore available. If included it would offset the loss of Mr Keen's land, resulting in an allocation of 15.07 ha (see Table 1 below). A map showing St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP proposed allocation boundary that would be available in the short to medium term is included in Appendix A of this SoCG.

Landownership Areas	St Pauls Developments Position (Ha)	SCC Council Position (Ha)
Axis 1 (included in NES 36)	6.638	6.21 (excludes woodland)
Rhodes (included in NES 36)	4.936	4.94
Rhodes (Additional Land to South)	3.497	-
Total Site Area	15.071	11.15

Table 1: Landownership and site areas

- 4.4 SCC did not include the two fields between the allocation and Loicher Lane due to the adverse impacts on the local landscape and the need to maintain the open character of the Green Belt along Loicher Lane. In SCC's view those fields are therefore not suitable for development. SCC propose that the allocation boundary remains as proposed with the removal of the land owned by Mr. Keen as this land is not available. This will result in the reduction in the allocation by 5.22 ha from

16.37 ha to 11.15 ha. SCC proposed allocation boundary is included in Appendix B of this SoCG.

- 4.5 Although Mr Keen's land is currently unavailable, SCC considers that it should, nevertheless, be removed from the Green Belt and designated as a General Employment Zone. This would create a more logical Green Belt boundary, avoiding the creation of a weakly performing area of Green Belt, and would provide a framework for considering future development proposals if they arise. As noted in paragraph 4.3 above, there is disagreement between SCC and St Paul's Developments Ltd regarding the field in Mr. Rhode's ownership that is immediately to the north of Loicher Lane.

5 Strategic matters

- 5.1 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP and SCC recognise that, because of the vehicle trips generated by the developments proposed in the Sheffield Plan, mitigation measures are likely to be required at the Westwood and Thorncliffe roundabouts on the A616, and Junctions 35 and 35a on the M1 Motorway. Any contribution to these mitigation measures owing to increased vehicle movements associated with the development of NES36 will be investigated further at the planning application stage as part of the Transport Assessment. Appropriate funding mechanisms for the mitigation will be agreed between SCC/ National Highways and the developer at that stage.

6 Employment matters

- 6.1 The Sheffield Plan: Proposed Addition Site Allocations identified NES36 for 16.37 ha of employment land for Class B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage and distribution) and E(g)(iii) (any industrial process suitable within a residential area) uses. The net site area is 15.94 hectares in order to cater for an environmental buffer between the development and the adjoining Local Wildlife Site (see paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7 below). As addressed in section 4 above both parties are however proposing amendments to the allocation boundary.
- 6.2 Both St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP and SCC agree with NES36's allocation for B2, B8 or Class E(g)(iii) uses. Employment development and associated infrastructure will be delivered during the plan period.

7 Green/Blue infrastructure and Environmental matters

- 7.1 The site is currently in agricultural use and the St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP has commissioned the following technical work:
- Topographical Survey
 - A Phase 1 Ground Investigation
 - Ecological and BNG Calculation
 - Initial Cut and Fill feasibility Assessment
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
 - Masterplanning Work
- 7.2 Informed by the above, SCC will continue to work with St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP to agree to an appropriate landscape framework for the site and a long-term management strategy for the open space assets, including buffers. However, SCC advises that this does not involve the Council taking management responsibility for the open space.
- 7.3 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP and SCC agree that the first condition on development for NES36 incorrectly requires the development of this allocation should comply with the 'Golden Rules' and provide new or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. Paragraph 156 of the NPPF (2024) requires the 'Golden Rules' are applied to major development involving *housing*, not employment.
- 7.4 As set out within the second condition on development, and in accordance with paragraph 142 of the NPPF (2023), the environmental impact of removing the land (NES36) from the Green Belt will be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land. SCC, St Paul's Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP agree that delivering compensatory improvements can be dealt with at the planning application stage, especially since the promoters control land immediately outside of the proposed allocation including the area of ancient and semi natural woodland to the northeast which could be considered for selective enhancement.
- 7.5 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) carried out and submitted for the Local Plan process in June 2021 confirmed that the grasslands associated with the farming activity are anticipated to be of low ecological value consisting principally of agricultural pasture which has been highly modified by re-sowing, fertiliser/herbicide application.

- 7.6 The eighth condition on development requires a buffer of 15m between the adjacent Local Wildlife Site designation and the employment allocation. St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP believe that the current limited habitat value of the LWS and the value of the woodland, as concluded in the PEA, suggests that the buffer is overly cautious and is too prescriptive. They believe the wording should be more flexible to allow these matters to be determined at the planning application stage and to ensure the site is developed as efficiently as possible.
- 7.7 SCC's view is that the buffer distance specified in the condition is appropriate and is consistent with Natural England's standing guidance on buffer distances for ancient woodland².
- 7.8 St Pauls Developments and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP and SCC have agreed an additional condition which seeks to maintain the ecological corridor which borders the north western boundary of the site, through which the access road from Cowley Way is proposed. This states that:
- "To ensure the safe passage of wildlife remains, a suitable means of ecological connectivity must be provided across the new site access road in proximity of the north-west boundary."*
- 7.9 If required by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 an Environmental Impact Assessment will also be prepared. This will be confirmed following the submission of EIA Screening and Scoping Request.
- 7.10 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP has not raised objections concerning the conditions addressing the overhead powerlines, safeguarding and enhancing landscape, agricultural land surveys, land contamination, historic landfill, and nearby waste permit sites.

8 Flood risk matters

- 8.1 Due consideration will be given to any impacts of flood risk identified in the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. All mitigation matters identified in the

² [Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions](#)

'Recommendations, FRA requirements, and further work' section of the Level 2 SFRA site assessment will be addressed at or before planning application stage.

- 8.2 Both SCC and St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP agree that the draft allocation is not constrained by fluvial flood risk issues and a surface water drainage strategy incorporated within the masterplan and layout would manage the surface water runoff.
- 8.3 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP have commissioned a Flood Risk Assessment Drainage Strategy (Surface/Foul).

9 Heritage matters

- 9.1 The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) concludes that the site contains valued historic landscape characteristics and makes a positive contribution to the setting of nearby non-designated heritage assets. Areas of the site contain remains of known archaeological interest, with potential for associated remains to survive across a wider area. These remains are of at least regional importance. Historic landscape sensitivity varies across the site.
- 9.2 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP will undertake a detailed baseline assessment picking up the archaeological and historic landscape interest of the site at the planning application stage. It will establish the value and significance of these assets, the likely impact caused by the development and agree appropriate mitigation measures.
- 9.3 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP have not objected to the final condition on development which addresses this issue. SCC concludes that heritage matters do not prevent the allocation of the site and are confident that impacts on heritage assets can be avoided and/or mitigated at the planning application stage. There are no areas of disagreement regarding heritage matters.

10 Highway and transport matters

- 10.1 Section 5 above addresses potential contributions to the funding of strategic highway improvements.
- 10.2 NES36 will be accessed via Cowley Way, through the Smithywood Business Park. SCC are satisfied that, subject to further technical assessments, access design, and the maintaining of the ecological/recreational corridor, this access is suitable

and achievable, but note that the site is not currently abutted by adopted highway. The exact location of the access point will be assessed and confirmed within a Transport Assessment at the planning application stage.

11 Delivery timescales(s)

11.1 At the time of writing the site currently does not have planning consent for the proposed uses identified within the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations document (2025).

11.2 St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP has commissioned a range of technical assessments as part of due diligence and support the marketing of the site, including:

- Topographical Survey
- A Phase 1 Ground Investigation
- Ecological and BNG Calculation
- Transport Statement,
- Flood Risk Assessment Drainage Strategy (Surface/Foul)
- Utilities Capacity Study
- Initial Cut and Fill feasibility Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Commercial agent’s view of the future employment market
- Masterplanning Work

11.3 Once the Local Plan is adopted and the allocation is secured, St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP envision that an outline planning application will start to be prepared with approval achieved within five years (2031). This will provide the framework for individual reserved matters applications by specific businesses. Delivery on site is expected to start on 2033. The delivery strategy and timeline are agreed by SCC.

12 Areas of Agreement and Disagreement

12.1 Table 1 below sets out a summary of the areas of agreement and disagreement between the Client and Sheffield City.

Table 1: Areas of Agreement and Disagreement

Areas of Agreement

Employment uses	Both parties agree with NES36's proposed site allocation for Class B2, B8 or Class E(g)(iii) uses.
Availability	Both parties agree that the land within allocation NES36 controlled by Axis 1 Ltd and Mr. Rhodes is available during the plan period. In terms of Mr. Keen's land, it is recognised by both parties that it is not available. Suggested updates to the allocation boundary have therefore been proposed for consideration.
Highways/transport	Agreement has been reached that, subject to further technical assessments, and access design the site can be accessed via Cowley Way. This will be confirmed at the planning application stage.
Environment	Both parties agree that whilst the Golden Rules do not apply to this site, opportunities for appropriate compensatory improvements to the environment of the remaining Green Belt exist within land controlled by the landowners.
Ecology	Both parties have agreed an additional condition requiring ecological connectivity is maintained where the access road crosses the north western boundary's ecological corridor.
Flooding and surface water	The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk issues. A strategy to address surface water issues will be confirmed at the planning application stage.
Heritage	Whilst further archaeological works are required both parties are confident that impacts on heritage assets can be avoided and/or mitigated.
Delivery	Estimated early 2033
Treatment of Keens Land	The two parties agree that this land should still be removed from Green Belt and designated as a General Employment Zone. This will prevent the creation of a parcel of land that performs poorly against Green Belt purposes.
Areas of Disagreement	
Southern Boundary Extension	St Paul's Developments believe that the allocation should extend south to Loicher Lane.
LWS Standoff Distance	St Paul's Developments consider the proposed 15m buffer standoff distance with the LWS is too prescriptive and this matter should be considered at the planning application stage.

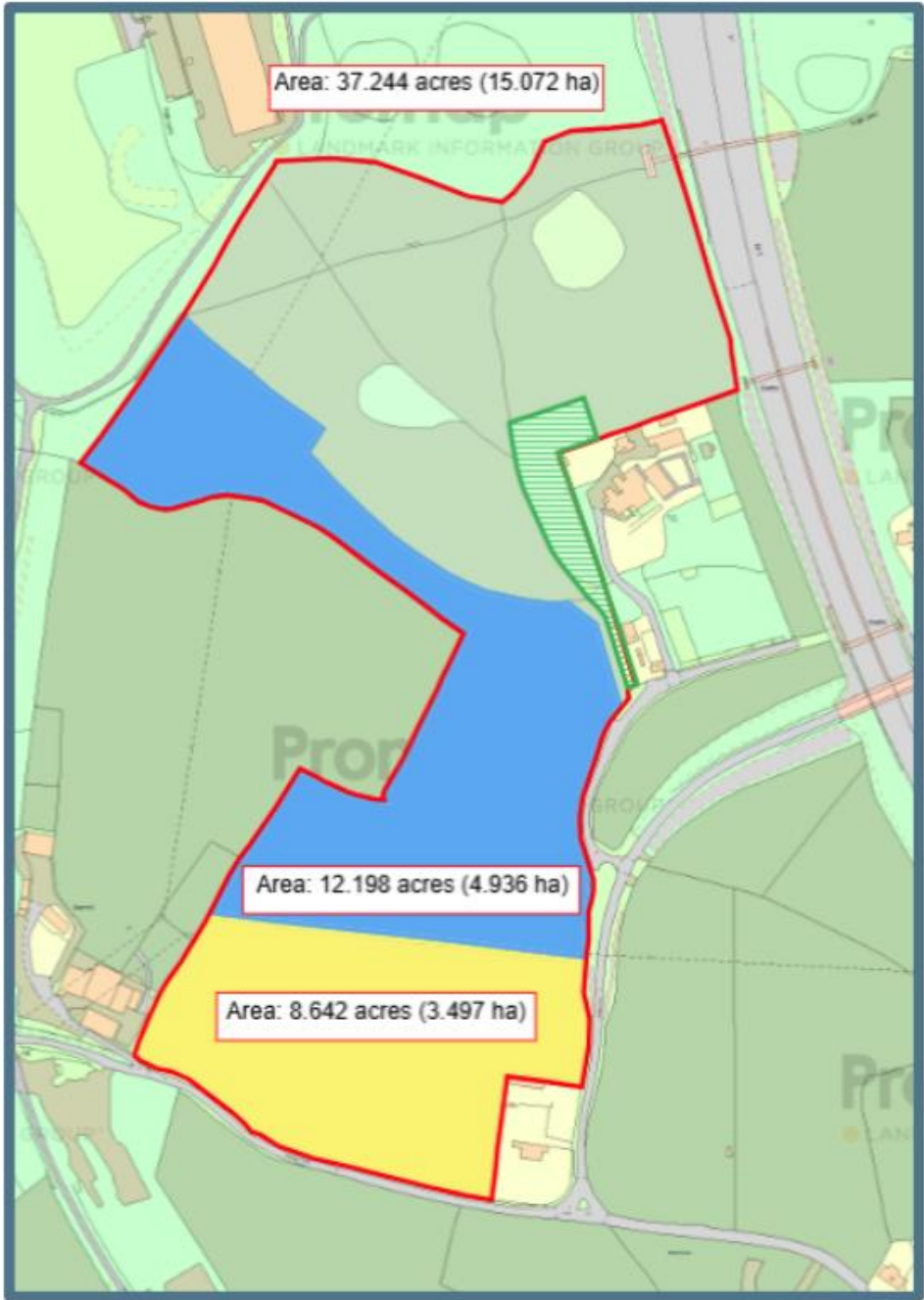
Signatories to the Statement of Common Ground

Name	Role	Organisation	Signature & Date
Mike Johnson	Head of Planning	Sheffield City Council	 25/09/2025
James Hobson	Managing Director	JEH Planning Ltd	

Appendix A: Proposed Allocation by St Pauls Developments

This identifies the additional land to the south (owned by Mr. Rhodes) and excludes the land in the southwest which is no longer available (owned by Mr. Keen)

Project:	Smithywood Phase 2 Allocation NES 36				
Client:	St Pauls Developments Ltd and Smithywood Business Parks Development LLP				
Drawing Title:	Site Landownership Details				
Reference:	JEH013- P00	Date:	25 August 2025	Scale	NTS



Appendix B: Proposed Allocation by Sheffield City Council

This identifies the land that is no longer available (owned by Mr. Keen) as General Employment Zone.

Recommended change to Policies Map

