

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND
SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL
RULA DEVELOPMENTS
DATE: 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 CH04, named as Hesley Wood in the emerging Sheffield Local Plan. The SoCG is between the parties consisting of Sheffield City Council (SCC) and Rula Developments (the promoter with controlling interest of the proposed Site allocation). A map of the proposed allocation can be found in Appendix A.
- 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 CH04 and ensures any potential constraints/issues are identified and addressed in a proportionate manner at this Local Plan stage.
- 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 CH04. 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 Spawforths (consultant) is advising Rula Developments (landowner/promoter) regarding the delivery of Site CH04.
- 2.3 Site CH04 is identified as a proposed employment allocation within the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations document (2025). It comprises the spoil material (tip) of the former Smithy Wood Colliery and is in an area between the edge of Chapeltown and the M1, north of the A629.
- 2.4 The Hesley Wood Site has a long and complex industrial history, which has significantly shaped its current condition. Over many decades, the land has been

¹ NPPF (Sept 2023).

subject to widespread mineral extraction and waste tipping activities, including underground mining, open cast operations and colliery spoil tipping.

- 2.5 Due to these historical uses there is a legacy of physical and environmental risks including buried voids, unstable ground and contamination that need to be addressed through the development of the Site.
- 2.6 Furthermore, due to the nature of the Site, it is subject to anti-social behaviour and nuisance issues which are attracted to the Site.
- 2.7 The draft Local Plan Site CH04 comprises a Green Belt release of 22.1 ha. The Strategic Employment Site designation is 15.61 ha and the Industrial Zone is 13.35ha.
- 2.8 Rula Developments 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 development of the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations (2025). Whilst Rula Developments have suggested changes to CH04, they support the Site's allocation for the uses that have been proposed.
- 2.9 This SoCG reflects the current position between SCC and Rula Developments.

3 Available

- 3.1 Rula Developments have a legal agreement with the landowner of Site CH04.
- 3.2 SCC and Rula Developments agree that the whole of Site CH04 as shown within the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Sites Allocations (2025) consultation document is available.

4 Employment/Allocation matters

- 4.1 The Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations document identifies CH04 for 15.61 ha of employment land with a net employment area of 13.35 ha specifically for Class B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage and distribution) and E(g)(iii) (any industrial process suitable within a residential area) uses.
- 4.2 Both Rula Developments and SCC agree that Site CH04 is a suitable employment allocation for B2, B8 or Class E(g)(iii) uses.

5 Highway/Transport matters

- 5.1 Both parties agree that, subject to further technical assessments and access design (undertaken as part the planning application), Site CH04 would be accessed via an access road (which follows the access track to the tip Site) off the nearby A629.
- 5.2 Rula Developments and SCC recognise that 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, but this will be investigated further at the planning application stage as part of the Transport Assessment. Appropriate funding mechanisms for the mitigation (including CIL) will be agreed between SCC/ National Highways and the developer at that stage.

6 Flood Risk matters

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

- 6.2 Both SCC and Rula Developments 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.

7 Heritage matters

- 7.1 No constraints have been identified, and both SCC and Rula agree that heritage issues do not prevent the allocation and delivery of this Site.

8 Geo-Environmental matters

- 8.1 Both Parties agree that suitable geo-environmental assessments have been undertaken at this stage of the Local Plan. Both SCC and Rula agree that geo-environmental issues do not prevent the allocation and delivery of this Site. This will be confirmed at the planning application stage.

9 Green/Blue infrastructure and Biodiversity matters

- 9.1 The Site comprises the spoil tip for the former Smithy Wood Colliery. Both Parties agree that suitable ecological appraisals and surveys of the site have been undertaken at this stage of the Local Plan. Both SCC and Rula Developments agree that, in principle, it should be possible to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on-Site, but this will be agreed at the planning application stage.
- 9.2 The restored and remediated spoil heap offers clear opportunities to deliver environmental enhancements within the former tip area. The Site wide restoration of the tip will remove contaminants, stabilise the made ground and spoil heap, enhance the environment including addressing pollution in the lake and surrounding watercourses. Furthermore, the proposals will remove anti-social behaviour and unneighbourly uses, which are attracted to this derelict Site.
- 9.3 Rula Developments and SCC agree that the first condition on development for CH04 incorrectly requires the development of this allocation should comply with the 'Golden Rules'. Paragraph 156 of the NPPF (2024) requires the 'Golden Rules' and provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public is applied to major development involving *housing*, not employment.

- 9.4 At the planning application stage, Rula Developments will develop an appropriate landscape framework for the Site and a long-term management strategy for the open space assets, including buffers.

10 Allocation Boundary

- 10.1 SCC and Rula Developments have not reached agreement regarding the proposed allocation boundary.
- 10.2 The boundaries of CH04 which are proposed by SCC within the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Sites Allocations (as shown in Appendix A) do not extend into the neighbouring Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (Hesley Wood Tip 187). This reflects SCC's approach to the protection of LWS and their exclusion from other draft allocations within the Sheffield Plan.
- 10.3 Rula Developments consider the Site allocation boundary (as shown in Appendix B) should balance the existence of the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) with the approach required to deliver the site wide remediation and restoration. Due to buried voids, unstable ground and possible contamination that exist across the entire tipped area, restoration and remediation is required beyond the boundary of the proposed allocated Site shown in the Sheffield Plan: Proposed Additional Site Allocations (2025) document.
- 10.4 Rula Developments consider that the boundary of Site CH04 proposed by SCC does not reflect the site's mining legacy alongside the associated economic, environmental and amenity benefits and compensatory habitat measures.
- 10.5 Rula Developments considers that given the historical legacy of the Site a criteria based policy is better suited to guide a planning application on the balance between the need for comprehensive remediation, the potential to retain the current LWS and the creation of a suitable development platform.
- 10.6 Rula Developments proposes the following additional criteria alongside their proposed Site allocation boundary:

"This Site was formerly designated as Green Belt. The extent of Green Belt release includes the main earthworks and remediation areas necessary to address the contaminated land though additional remediation may be required within the retained Green Belt which will be determined at the planning application stage. Within the Strategic Employment Site boundary, a masterplan will be required at

the planning application stage to demonstrate how the employment development can be accommodated whilst also including replacement ecological / woodland areas to compensate for the area of Local Wildlife Site (LWS) that is to be lost within that area due to the need for a comprehensive remediation approach”

- 10.7 SCC recognises the complexities of delivering the Site and agrees that significant land remodelling and remediation work is likely to be required beyond the allocation boundary in order to deliver a safe development platform within the allocated Site. However, as this requires remediation work within the Local Wildlife Site, this should only occur where it is essential to the delivery of the allocated Site. Unavoidable harm should be kept to a minimum through design and layout and must be fully compensated through the provision and safeguarding of replacement alternative sites suitable for the creation of habitats of a similar character and quality and of sufficient size.
- 10.8 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.

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 (2025).
- 11.2 Rula developments have commissioned a range of technical assessments as part of due diligence, which will support a planning application, including:
- Ecology
 - Transport
 - Flood Risk and Drainage
 - Geo-Environmental, including land restoration and remediation
 - Coal Mining
 - Utilities
 - Landscape
 - Air Quality
 - Noise
 - Energy and Climate Change

11.3 An outline planning application could be submitted within 6 months of the Plan's adoption, following pre-application advice, and granted within 16 weeks of submission. This outline permission will provide the framework for individual reserved matters submissions to address the needs of specific businesses.

11.4 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 Sheffield City Council and Rula Developments.

Table 1: Areas of Agreement and Disagreement

Areas of Agreement	
Availability	This statement establishes that the Site is available.
Employment uses	Both Rula Developments and SCC agree with Site CH04's allocation for B2, B8 or Class E(g)(iii) uses and that it is suitable for such uses.
Highways/transport	SCC and Rula Developments are both satisfied that, subject to further technical investigations at the planning application stage, the Site can be accessed off Cowley Way.
Flooding and surface water	Both SCC and Rula Developments agree that the draft allocation is not unduly constrained by fluvial or surface water flood risk issues.
Heritage	Both SCC and Rula agree that heritage issues do not prevent the allocation and delivery of this Site.
Geo-Environmental	Both SCC and Rula agree that geo-environmental issues do not prevent the allocation and delivery of this Site.
Green/Blue Infrastructure and Biodiversity	Both SCC and Rula agree that there are no ecological constraints within the proposed allocation that cannot be adequately avoided/mitigated/compensated. This will be confirmed at the planning application stage.
Delivery	Both Parties agree that the Site is deliverable. Rula considers an outline planning application can be submitted within 6 months of plan adoption and determined in 16 weeks. Subsequent reserved matters submissions on behalf of specific businesses/occupiers will follow.
Areas of Disagreement	

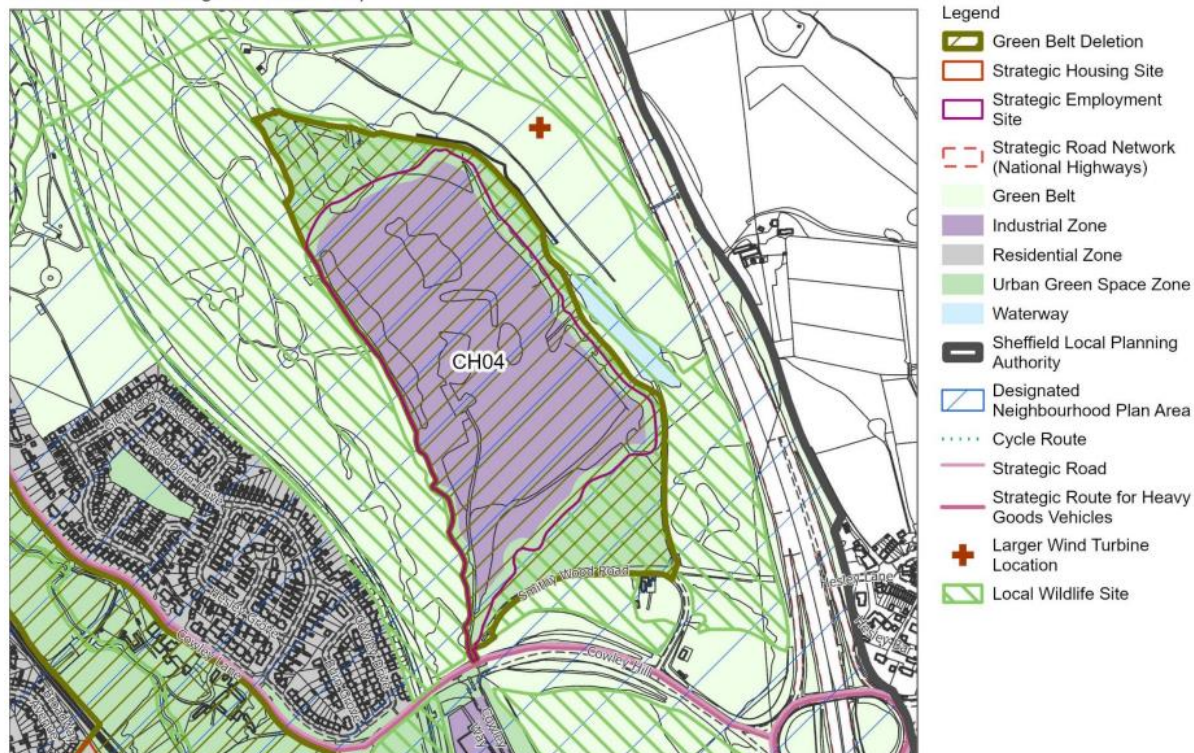
Allocation Boundary	Rula propose an alternative Green Belt boundary alongside a criteria based policy which addresses impacts on the LWS.
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Signatories to the Statement of Common Ground

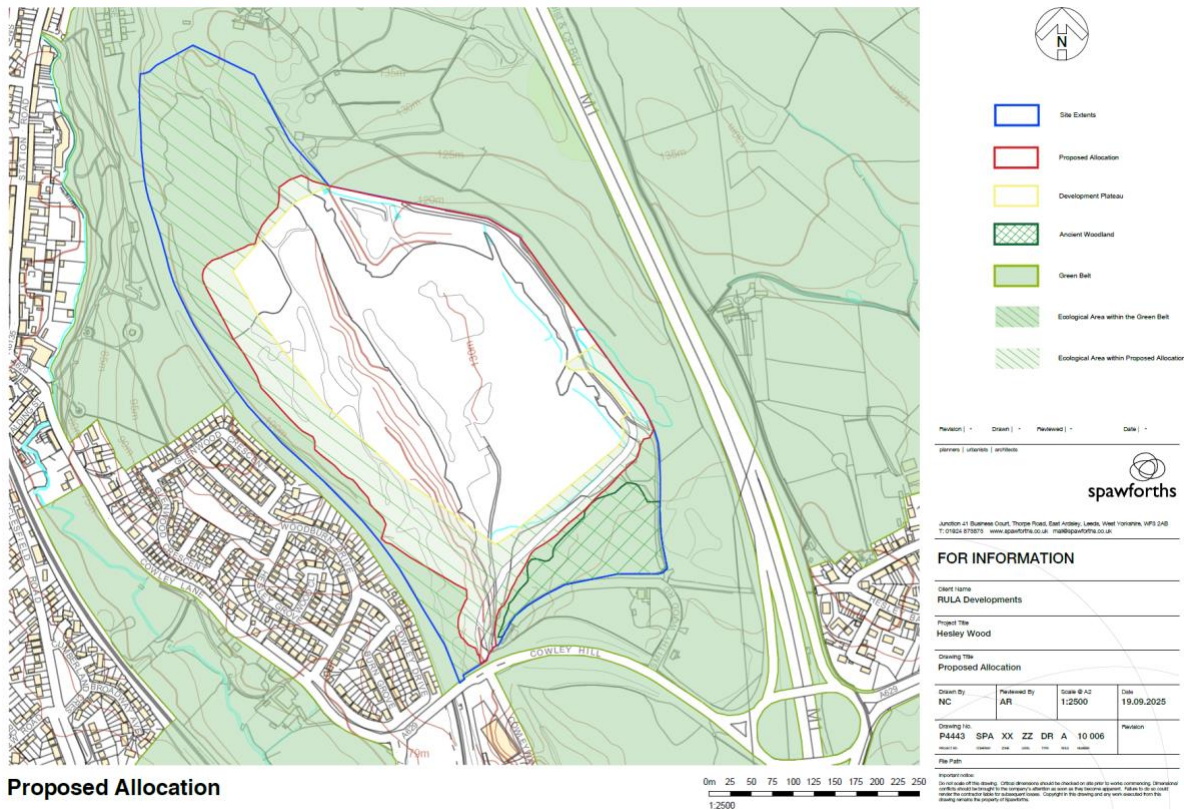
Name	Role	Organisation	Signature & Date
Mike Johnson	Head of Planning	SCC	 25/09/2025
Andrew Rose	Planning Director	Spawforths (on behalf of Rula Developments)	 25/09/2025

Appendix A: Green Belt, Allocation and Policy Zone Boundaries Proposed by Sheffield City Council

Recommended change to Policies Map



Appendix B: Proposed Allocation Boundary by Rula Developments



Proposed Allocation