

# CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT WITH HOMES ENGLAND IN RELATION TO LAND AT WOOLWELL



## Executive Decision made by a Cabinet Member Briefing Paper Part I

### 1.0 Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council owns approximately 29 acres of land at Woolwell, all of which is located within the administrative boundary of South Hams District. The land owned by the Council forms part of a 350-acre site allocated in the Joint Local Plan (JLP) for residential-led development in the order of 2,000 homes.
- 1.2 The majority of the rest of the allocated site (around 290 acres) is owned by the Maristow Estate, with around 28 acres in the ownership of the Hitchins family.
- 1.3 Homes England has expressed an interest in helping the Council to unlock the delivery of the Woolwell site and has suggested that the parties enter into a Co-operation Agreement, which would seek to accelerate the proposals for Woolwell.
- 1.4 Homes England and the Council share a number of strategic objectives, including to facilitate the delivery of good quality new homes at scale. Homes England may also be able to provide new infrastructure funding to help unlock delivery of the site.
- 1.5 As one of the largest allocations for residential-led mixed use development in the JLP, the development of the land at Woolwell is a strategic priority for the Council. It is hoped that the Council's agreement with Homes England will help to accelerate the delivery of this important site, which, in turn, will provide the following benefits:
  - The development of the site at Woolwell is intended to provide a sustainable urban extension and a defined edge to the north of the city;
  - New Community Park to be provided, which existing residents will be able to enjoy, including links to Plym Valley;
  - New sports facilities, including playing pitches;
  - New primary school, including the creation of new permanent jobs;
  - Unlock the delivery of new roads in the north of the city, including the Woolwell to the George highway improvements, which will generate 350 construction jobs; and
  - 2,000 new homes, of which at least 600 would be affordable.
- 1.6 The intention is that the agreement with Homes England will help to unlock delivery of the Woolwell to the George highway improvements before any new housing is built at Woolwell. It is acknowledged that the stretch of Tavistock Road between Woolwell and the George is one of the worst bottlenecks in the city and requires improvement in order to accommodate new housing and jobs in the area. The Council needs to make sure the rest of the funding for this project is secured and is currently exploring all potential sources available.

## 2.0 Purpose of the report

- 2.1 The report sets out details of the development proposed at Woolwell and explains the relationship that the Council proposes to establish with Homes England in order to accelerate delivery of the site and provide wider benefits for the City.
- 2.2 The report explains the nature of the agreements which the Council would be entering into and sets out the key terms that are proposed.
- 2.3 The report recommends that the Council enters into a Co-operation Agreement with Homes England, which could be the first stage of a potential longer-term working arrangement between the parties.

## 3.0 Background

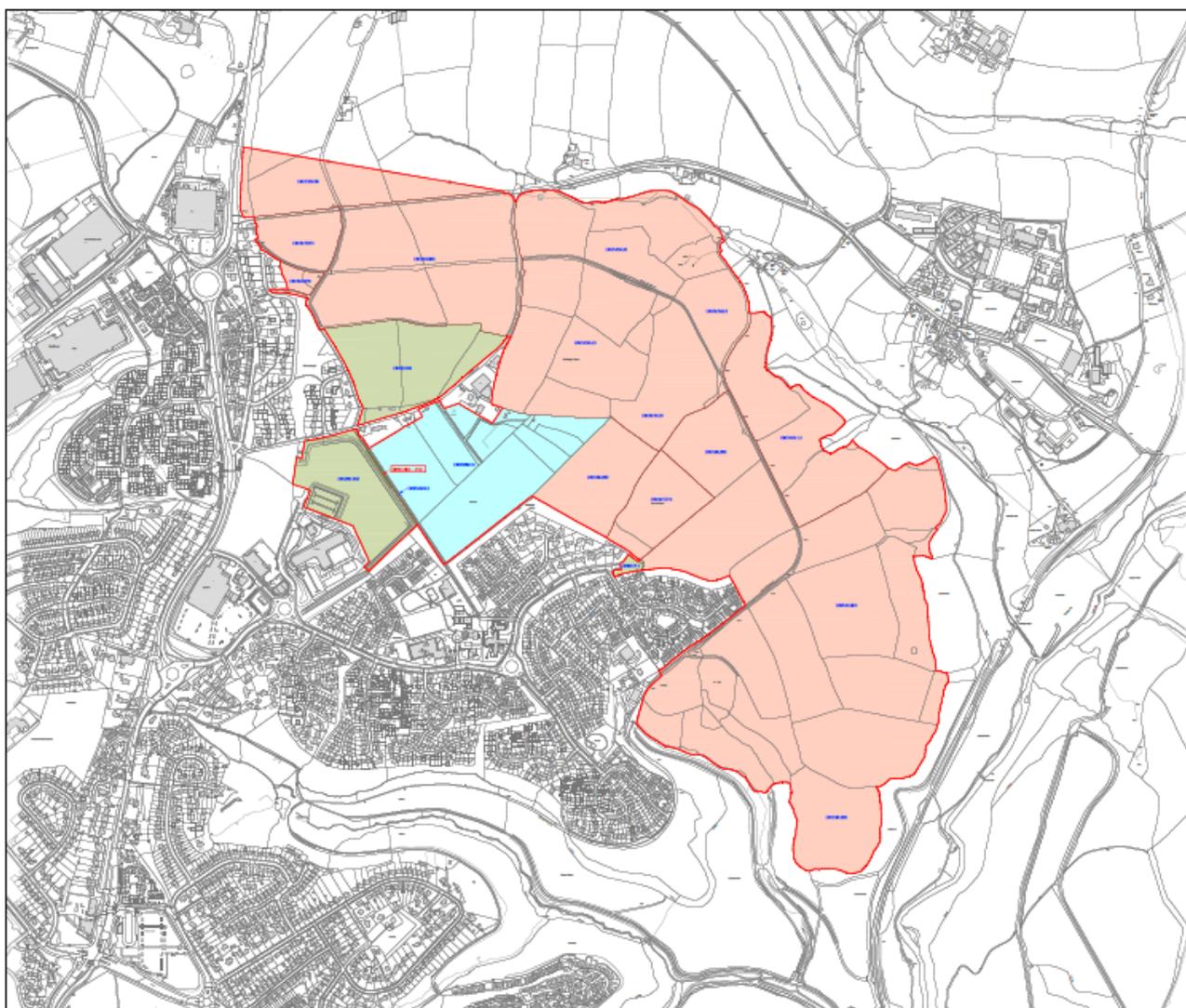
- 3.1 Land at Woolwell was allocated in the JLP for “comprehensive residential led mixed use development” and provision was made for “in the order of 2,000 homes”. Details of the site allocation are set out at Policy PLY44 in the JLP, which also requires the development to agree the main access arrangements including a second road access, deliver a new Community Park and primary school, and provide appropriate contributions towards the strategic highway infrastructure and secondary school provision in the area.
- 3.2 The extent of the JLP site allocation is shown below (shaded green with brown horizontal hatching). For context, the policies for the former airport (PLY42, shaded orange) and Marjon University (PLY43, shaded yellow) can be seen to the south.



3.3 The site extends over a total of 347.55 acres and is in three different ownerships: Plymouth City Council, the Maristow Estate and the Hitchins family. The amount of land owned by each party is shown in the table below:

PLY 44 - Site Boundary	140.65	347.55	
LAND OWNERSHIP WITHIN PLY44 BOUNDARY	Ha	Ac	%
Marristow Estate	117.51	290.37	84
Plymouth City Council	11.72	28.97	8
Hitchins Land	11.42	28.21	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140.65</b>	<b>347.55</b>	<b>100</b>

3.4 The extent of land owned by each party is shown on the plan below with Plymouth City Council land shaded green, Maristow estate land shaded peach and Hitchins land shaded blue.



3.5 Barwood Land, on behalf of the Maristow Estate, has submitted two separate planning applications: one for the Maristow land and one for the land owned by the Council. These applications were for up to 1,640 and 360 homes respectively and were submitted in January 2020.

## **4.0 Homes England**

4.1 Homes England has expressed an interest in working with the Council to help deliver the Woolwell scheme, as the agency has an interest in trying to unlock major, strategic development sites. Homes England has therefore suggested that the parties could enter into a Co-operation Agreement.

4.2 Under the terms of the Co-operation Agreement, the Council and Homes England would agree to work towards satisfying a number of pre-conditions. If these pre-conditions are all satisfied, the parties would have the option to consider other ways of continuing to work together to deliver the site.

## **5.0 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Leader of the Council:

- Approves that the Council enters into a Co-operation Agreement with Homes England in relation to the land at Woolwell.
- Delegates authority to the Strategic Director for Place to agree and sign the Co-operation Agreement (subject to due diligence) and any other related contracts or agreements, including but not limited to any Section 106 Agreement, collaboration agreement with other land owners, wayleaves or easements related to the site and any future Promotion Agreement for the site.