1. **Introduction**

1.1 Dartford Borough Council is a local planning authority responsible for producing the Local Plan within its administrative area. Dartford Borough Council has published a Development Policies Plan Development Plan Document to help achieve the objectives of its adopted Core Strategy and to prepare up-to-date development management policies for planning applications in the Borough.

1.2 Gravesham Borough Council is a neighbouring local planning authority. Both Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils' operate within the area of Kent County Council, which is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority as well as the Transport Authority. Both Councils are responsible for each producing Local Plans that will apply within the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation's (EDC) administrative area. The EDC is responsible for development management within its boundaries.

1.3 Both Councils are engaging in dialogue co-ordinated by the Greater London Authority on 'policy collaboration across the wider south east, that commenced in November 2014, with Gravesham being involved from June 2016.

1.4 Both Councils are subject to the Duty to Cooperate, as defined in the Localism Act 2011, in plan-making. The Duty to Cooperate is a legal test that requires co-operation between local planning authorities and other public bodies to maximise the effectiveness of policies for strategic matters in Local Plans.

1.5 The purpose of this Statement is to confirm to the Inspector examining the Development Policies Development Plan Document ("the DP Plan") the common ground between Dartford Borough Council and Gravesham Borough Council ("The Parties").
2. **Common Ground**

2.1 The Parties agree they did play an active role in the consultation and examination processes of their respective adopted Core Strategies, making representations, submitting matter statements, and appearing at Examinations.

2.2 The Parties agree that documents (including Examination reference DPP-07/07A/07B) illustrate that discussions have occurred between them since the adoption of their Core Strategies (Dartford in September 2011, Gravesham in September 2014). This has resulted in positive outcomes through a number of channels, including:

- The Ebbsfleet Planning Liaison Group (from May 2014);
- The Dartford, Gravesham & Sevenoaks Planning Policy Group (from October 2015);
- The Crossrail to Gravesend Group (from March 2015);

2.3 It is agreed face-to-face discussions and other direct communication, including on the topics of the DP Plan or strategic issues, has occurred between the Parties in 2013 and in the subsequent years.

2.4 Outcomes of these, with greatest relevance to the DP Plan Examination, include:

- Strategic Retail Group meetings, with input from the Parties and others starting in May 2016;
- The Duty to Co-operate: A Protocol for Action and Communications (agreed by Dartford’s General Assembly of Council in December 2015) with input from the Parties. Gravesham has not been asked to endorse this document.

2.5 It is agreed these can add to existing on-going cooperation channels, and inform the preparation of future strategic Local Plans in preparation/commencing to be prepared collaboratively by the Parties.

2.6 Both Parties are committed to engaging actively, constructively and on an on-going basis, in order to address strategic matters in the production of their Local Plans.
3 **Uncommon Ground**

3.1 Dartford Borough Council believes that its Development Policies Document is National Planning Policy Framework compliant and that it has been prepared with effective co-operation with local planning authorities on strategic matters.

3.2 Gravesham Borough Council believes that the Development Policies document on certain strategic matters is not National Planning Policy Framework compliant and that the Duty to Cooperate has not been effectively carried out.

4 **Signatories**

4.1 On behalf of Dartford Borough Council

4.2 On behalf of Gravesham Borough Council

- Date: 17th October 2016