

Our ref. 10171. LPA1.HRW

Forward Planning
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
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9th December 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

Solihull Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Review Submission and Representations to the Solihull Local Plan Review Scope, Issues and Options Consultation: The Chase Field, Smiths Lane, Knowle B93 9AD.

We write in response to the current 'call for sites' (which seeks to identify land which may be suitable for allocation for development) and to the initial consultation on the Solihull Local Plan Review Scope, Issues and Options.

The Solihull Local Plan Review initial consultation document recognises the need to identify a significant amount of additional housing land to meet the objectively assessed need and cross-boundary requirement. The document accepts that suitable sites which currently lie within the Green Belt will need to be identified and allocated for development. As part of the evidence work a Green Belt Assessment will be undertaken which will provide a 'relative' assessment of sites to allow them to be compared against each other. It is understood that the assessment will evaluate the site's contribution towards the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

The conservative housing need estimate currently under consideration in the Local Plan Review consultation document is for approximately 4,000 new homes up to 2033 over and above those identified in the 2013 Local Plan. However, with the forthcoming publication of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Spatial Plan for Growth, the full implications of Birmingham's unmet need across the Housing Market Area (HMA) will be clearer and this figure may need to be revised upwards.

It is our understanding that a detailed assessment of all sites submitted in response to the 'call for sites' will be included within the forthcoming Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Review, an evidence document which will inform the policy decision making process. In turn, we anticipate Green Belt sites put forward in the 'call for sites' to be included within the Green Belt Assessment. We therefore enclose a submission, comprising this letter, site location plan and completed SHELAA form, on behalf of our Clients, the landowners of The Chase Field, Smiths Lane, Knowle B93 9AD.

We commend the site to you for removal from the Green Belt and allocation in the Local Plan Review for residential development as part of a significant expansion of the rural settlements – Balsall Common, Dorridge and Knowle – Growth Option G.

A location plan at scale 1:1250 forming part of this submission identifies the land being promoted by our Clients edged red. The total site area extends to approximately 2.77 hectares and comprises a roughly rectangular field with a 'finger' of land running from the south east corner of the field to Smiths Lane.

The site, which lies entirely within the Green Belt, is currently used to graze horses and has mature trees and hedging around its perimeter. The site is bounded on three sides by agricultural land with The Chase and Chase Lodge residential properties and ancillary buildings and grounds to the south east of the main field. The surrounding agricultural land was included in the SHELAA, 2012, site reference 69 'Land at Copt Heath Farm'.

Access into the main rectangular field area of the site could be achieved via a new road from the 40 mph Smiths Lane to the east of The Chase tennis court, across the 'finger' of land which forms part of this submission.

Environment Agency flood risk maps show that the site does not lie in an area liable to the risk of flooding. A public footpath runs along the north eastern boundary of the site.

The site is well served by public transport. It lies within a short walk to the junction with Widney Manor Road where there are bus stops and regular Diamond bus service (S3 and S4) into Solihull town centre and to Widney Manor railway station (S4 and S20). There are also regular buses departing from opposite the junction with Hawkeshead Drive to Dorridge and the railway station (S2) and Knowle village centre (S2 and S3W). The site lies approximately: 1.5 miles from Knowle High Street; 1 mile from Widney Manor Railway Station; 2 miles from Dorridge Railway station; less than 1 mile from Bentley Heath shops, services and community facilities; and just over 2.5 miles from Solihull Town Centre with its extensive range of services and facilities.

Whilst the site is not currently within the desirable accessibility criteria thresholds set out in Solihull Local Plan Policy P7 'Accessibility and Ease of Access', the 'Scoping, Issues and Options Solihull Local Plan Review' consultation document recognises that there will be a need to invest in improved and extended infrastructure to support the scale of growth required to meet the objectively assessed housing need and economic growth. Paragraph 68 of the consultation document states that the Borough needs physical, social and green infrastructure to enable and support the growth required. As part of the evidence base the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be

updated and a local transport strategy and investment programme is being drawn up, 'Solihull Connected', to set out a vision for transport over the next 20 years.

It is therefore anticipated that residential development adjacent to the existing residential properties on The Chase field would be part of a more comprehensive scheme. An extension to the sustainable large rural settlements of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath approximately mid-way along the western settlement boundary would afford the opportunity for a mixed use development with provision of social and community facilities, open space, Starter Homes, affordable housing and elderly care accommodation, as well as improvements to the already sustainable public transport links.

It is evident from the 2012 SHELAA that land surrounding The Chase field would also be available for development. We therefore contend that the M42 could provide a clear physical defensible permanent line for a revised Green Belt boundary, in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 85.

In summary, development for residential use on The Chase field would:

- Make a significant contribution towards the unmet housing need which can contribute towards establishing an 'exceptional circumstance' case to justify an alteration of the Green Belt boundary;
- Provide the opportunity to create a sustainable urban extension with a clear defensible physical boundary;
- Ensure the future viability of existing services and facilities and support higher frequency of public transport bus services;
- Enable development of a mix of types and size of homes to meet the social needs of the community to provide for a sustainable social cross section into the future, for example meeting the needs of the young and old by providing specialist and subsidised dwellings; and
- Be compatible with the existing adjacent residential use to the south east.

There are no known constraints which would prevent development on the land. The site is in the ownership of a single family who are all keen to bring the site forward for development. It is available now, offers a suitable location for settlement expansion and has a realistic prospect that housing could be delivered on the site within the next 5 years following allocation.

We contend that residential development at The Chase field would be in line with the objectives of Growth Option G which is supported by our Clients. We believe development here would be preferable to many other potential directions of growth and it would be an excellent location for future sustainable development, to contribute towards meeting the onerous development land shortfall.

We should be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter and confirm that the site will be included for consideration in the forthcoming SHELAA and the Green

Belt Assessment and that all comments will be considered when preparing the Preferred Options version of the Solihull Local Plan Review.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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