



# Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath



Draft Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2033

Pre-Submission Consultation, November 2017



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## Foreword

### Welcome to your Draft Neighbourhood Plan!

After a journey of over two years, we are very pleased and proud to have arrived at this crucial milestone in development of a Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan') for Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH).

If you live, work or run a business in KDBH, then this document affects you. It will shape what happens in the future to many important aspects of daily life locally - from schools and community services to housing, transport and shops. Once completed, the Plan carries legal force. It will be used in determining future planning applications within the KDBH Area - from extensions homeowners may wish to build to major new housing developments.

In short, it is worthy of your attention.

The whole point of a Neighbourhood Plan is to give local communities a greater say in planning decisions that affect them. Working on behalf of the whole community, a small group of residents that make up the KDBH Forum Team has consulted with, and listened to, KDBH residents, businesses and local organisations on a wide range of matters affecting the well-being, sustainability and long-term preservation of our villages.

Drawing on feedback received, this Plan sets out a vision for our villages and defines planning policies that will help deliver our community's aspirations and needs over the Plan period from 2018 - 2033. Underpinning Plan development is a desire, expressed loud and clear, to ensure that enhanced facilities and services are provided as part of any new housing development.

The KDBH Forum Team has sought to accurately represent all the feedback that 1,000's of you have contributed to the making of this Plan. Earlier drafts have been reviewed by, and reflect comments from, the KDBH Forum Membership and Solihull Council (SMBC).

BUT the Plan is still draft. Does it represent your views? As we start the final stages of consultation, time is running out to give your feedback. Our priority is to complete Plan development as quickly as possible so that the community benefits from the protections it provides. Receiving full, constructive feedback at this stage will really help speed the rest of the process.

It remains for us to thank all of you for your contributions, support and encouragement over a challenging two years. We look for your continued support to help us make it past the finish post.....!

# Thank You

And finally, as Chair, my special thanks go to the small and dedicated team of volunteers who have committed so much more of their time than anyone could ever have imagined to development of this Plan. The end is in sight!



Jane Aykroyd  
Chair



Bryan Hunt  
Plan Organiser

## Section 1: Introduction and Background

### 1.1. Purpose

In April 2012, the Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act). It introduced new rights and powers for local communities to shape future development in their neighbourhood by creating a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). An NDP establishes general planning policies governing development and use of land in a given neighbourhood.

This document is a Neighbourhood Development Plan, as defined in the Act, for the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) Neighbourhood Area.

### 1.2. Submitting Body

This Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) is submitted by KDBH Neighbourhood Forum, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### 1.3. Neighbourhood Plan Area

The Plan applies to the villages of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath which are part of the Borough of Solihull. Following several community meetings held jointly by the Knowle Society and the Dorridge and District Residents' Association (DDRA), a group of local residents came together to define a Neighbourhood Area and seek recognition as a Neighbourhood Forum qualified to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

On 13 July 2015, application was made to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) for designation of the Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum. On 1 October 2015, the Cabinet Member for Managed Growth agreed to designate the Neighbourhood Area and to formally designate the proposed Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum to act for that Area.

The Neighbourhood Plan Area approved by the Council is shown on the next page.

### 1.4. The Plan Context

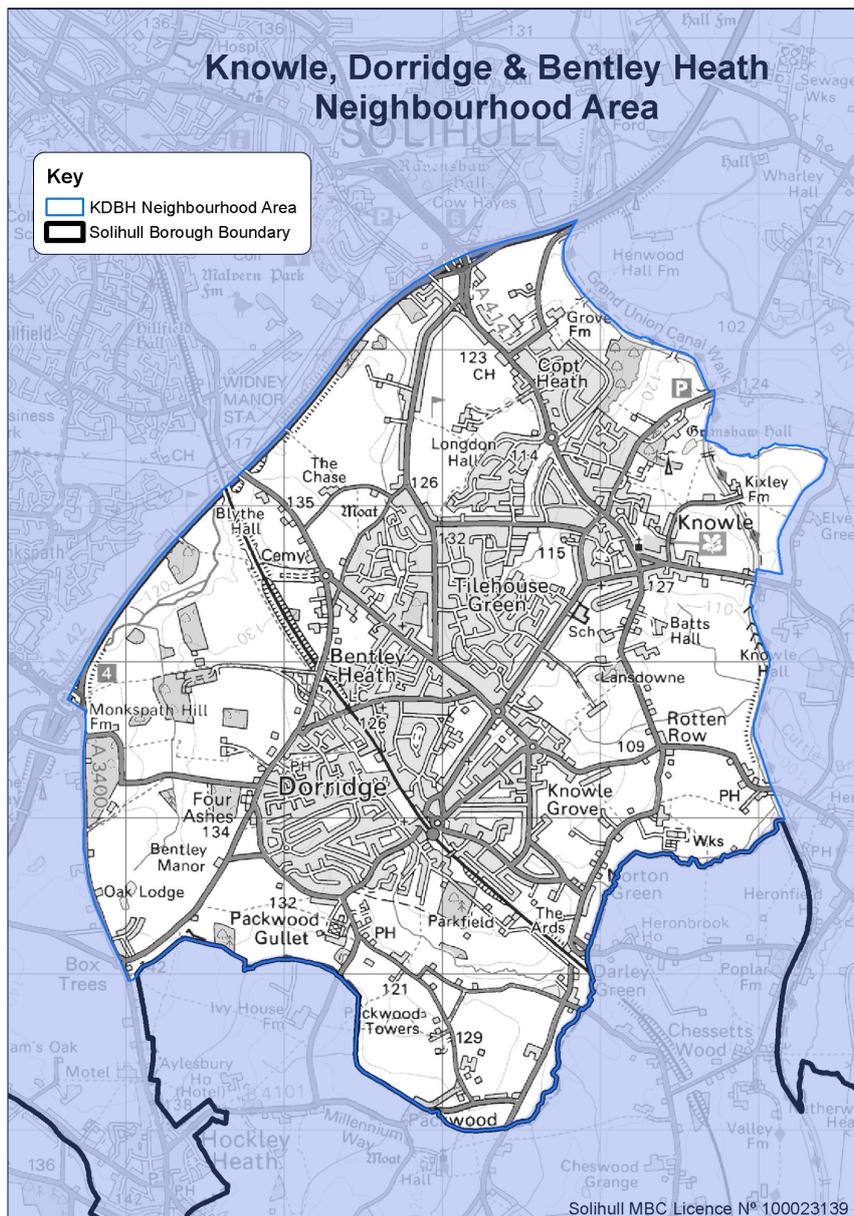
Amongst other things, the KDBH Neighbourhood Development Plan must

- have regard to national planning policies and advice
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
- be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

### 1.5. Plan Period, Monitoring and Review

Solihull Council's adopted Local Plan covers the period 2013 - 2028. The KDBH Neighbourhood Plan, and the emerging SMBC revised Local Plan, will cover the period through to 2033.

Once "made" (adopted), the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory Development Plan alongside the Solihull Local Plan. We expect to provide an updated version of this Neighbourhood Plan to SMBC for formal consultation to start in early 2018, with Referendum in summer 2018.



SMBC's adopted 2013 Local Plan is currently being reviewed. SMBC consulted on a revised Draft Local Plan (DLP) in November 2016. Further consultation on an updated Submission version of the DLP is planned for winter 2017/2018. This gives a likely date for adoption of the DLP in winter 2018/19.

The KDBH Neighbourhood Plan responds to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today. Challenges and concerns are likely to change over the Plan period. The Neighbourhood Forum will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery (within the lifespan of the Forum).

## Section 2: Process Summary

### 2.1. Governance and Process

KDBH Neighbourhood Plan Ltd was established as a private company limited by guarantee to create the Plan. A Steering Committee, comprising Directors and Officers of the Company and leaders of Focus Groups, has responsibility for planning and managing the process of Plan creation. However, all decisions on plan content are made by the community, acting as Members of the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum, and ultimately through local referendum.

During 2015 and 2016, three Focus Groups worked on the topics of Housing; Transport and Infrastructure (including Parking); and Leisure, Learning and Community Facilities. These three topics were selected as being the areas of concern most mentioned by local people in early community meetings that led to formation of the Forum.

Focus Group activities included: meeting key Council staff and other experts to gain knowledge and influence thinking; producing display materials for public meetings; being part of the organising and hosting teams for the visioning events and a Developer Showcase; devising questions for the Residents' and Business Surveys; and undertaking detailed analysis of survey responses. The Focus Groups also sourced data and information relevant to their areas from materials in the public domain and from Solihull Council.

In September 2016, the Steering Committee decided to form a Policy Planning Group and delegated to that Group the task of drafting Neighbourhood Plan policies for the Forum. The Policy Planning Group comprised a Chairman and six contributors - two representatives from each of the three Focus Groups. The draft Plan was then reviewed and agreed by the Steering Committee, before being put forward to Forum Members and Solihull Council for comment prior to starting this Pre-Submission Consultation for all residents and businesses in the Area.

### 2.2. Community Engagement

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan and must derive its objectives, actions and authority from the community. From the outset, the Steering Committee was determined that the residents and business community should be kept fully informed and given every opportunity to make their views known and discussed. Communication and consultation, in various forms, played a major role in formulating the Plan.

An extensive communication programme was established to promote a high degree of awareness of the project involving a range of methods of engagement including;

- inviting residents and local businesses to join the Forum via leafleting in public places and direct to households, poster campaigns and publicity through a wide range of local organisations and the local press
- holding monthly Forum meetings at Arden Academy
- holding workshops and community open events
- creating a dedicated website and Facebook page and a community event calendar
- enabling direct contact with members via e-mail and post using our membership database



- meeting individual clubs and organisations to brief them on the opportunities of a Neighbourhood Plan and issues raised by the community
- dialogue with local councillors.

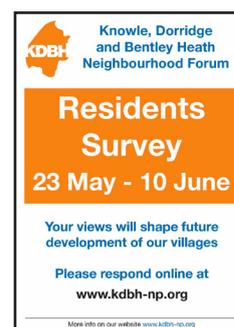
Underpinning the success of this communications programme was extensive publicity, having a regular presence at local public events and use of a wide range of local print and electronic media to provide regular updates. For those not able to attend meetings, our dedicated KDBH Neighbourhood Forum website ([www.kdbh-np.org](http://www.kdbh-np.org)) provides easy access to the extensive information created in the process of developing the Plan, as well as providing a way of seeking and encouraging community participation. Knowle Library provided an important resource for those not familiar with technology.

Further details of the communications and consultation process, events and how feedback has been managed can be found in our 'Consultation Statement', a separate and supporting document to this Plan that will be available on completion of this consultation stage. The Plan fully accords with the requirements for public consultation introduced under the Localism Act 2011.

### 2.3. Evidence Base Overview

The analysis, objectives and policies in this Neighbourhood Plan have drawn on a variety of sources as follows:

- the Residents' Survey in May /June 2016 that was distributed to 7,700 homes and received an outstanding 2,844 responses
- the Business Survey undertaken in November 2016 that was hand delivered to 332 premises and generated 65 responses
- data on population, employment, housing and car ownership largely obtained from the Office for National Statistics and Solihull Observatory
- the local Housing Needs Assessment, undertaken in spring 2017 by AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited, that provides independent analysis of KDBH-specific needs, including feedback from local estate agents
- KDBH Housing Density Map, created using the mapping database covering the KDBH Neighbourhood Area provided by Solihull Council
- the analysis of what makes our villages distinctive and the key issues to be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan were obtained from the survey results, public consultations, workshops and meetings with key service providers including the schools and Residents' Associations
- landscape data was obtained from Solihull Observatory
- flood risk data was obtained from the Environment Agency
- data on school places, retail outlets, businesses and sports provision was obtained from Solihull Council
- the Heritage and Character Assessment Study, along with the Masterplanning/Design and Design Coding Study, both undertaken in Autumn 2017 (currently being finalised)
- the Transport Study currently being undertaken by Solihull Council that will be reviewed by the Neighbourhood Forum
- Knowle Ward profile 2016 and Dorridge and Hockley Heath Ward profile 2016 prepared by Solihull Council.



*"You will be building the Plan on very accurate and robust data."*  
Simon Purfield, KDBH  
Independent Survey Manager,  
Stratford-on-Avon District  
Council

## Section 3: Our Villages Today

### 3.1. Location and Setting

KDBH is a rural settlement which lies about three miles south east of Solihull town centre.

It is four miles from Birmingham International Airport and the National Exhibition Centre and is separated from these by Green Belt, through which the M42 passes.

The villages are encircled by countryside and designated Green Belt which provides a green landscape setting. The countryside forms part of the historic Arden landscape and is described as ‘distinctly rural in character despite the close proximity to the urban edge’ (Solihull Landscape Character Assessment 2016).



### 3.2. Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath

The historic medieval core of Knowle is centred on the High Street and the church of St John the Baptist, St Lawrence and St Anne, at the junction of two historic routes. It is protected by Conservation Area status. Station Approach, with buildings from the later Victorian and Edwardian periods, and part of Granville Road in Dorridge are also protected by Conservation Areas. There are a number of listed buildings, of which Knowle Church and Grimshaw Hall off Hampton Road are Grade 1 Listed.



The Area experienced significant post-war development and there is now no obvious settlement boundary between the villages of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. They are linked by development along Station Road

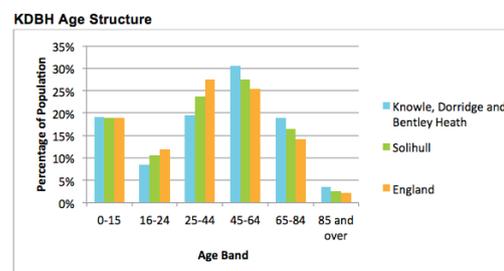
and Widney Road, to such an extent that they now form one built up area. However, each village has its own shopping centre, park, primary school, community/village hall and churches which underpin the sense of individual village identity.

### 3.3. Population Profile

The population of KDBH in 2011 was 18,958 (source: 2011 Census) living in 7,624 households. The latest estimate is almost 20,000 residents in 8,068 households. About half live in Knowle (Ward profiles 2016).

Other key statistics are\*:

- 56% of the population has lived in KDBH for over 20 years and a further 20% for between 11 and 20 years
- the age structure has a larger proportion of middle age and older people than Solihull Borough
- the average age has risen from 42.3 years in 2001 to 46.7 years in 2011
- the number of people aged 75+ is estimated to grow by about 500 over the Plan period.



Source: ONS, Census 2011 AECOM calculations

\* Sources-Housing Needs Assessment, AECOM 2017; Ward Profiles 2016

### 3.4. Housing Profile

The KDBH Housing Needs Assessment and the Residents' Survey provide a snapshot of local housing characteristics which include:

**Housing density:** the density of established housing areas is typically less than 20 dwellings per hectare, although some locations in or around the village centres have higher densities. More recent developments have densities around 35 dwellings per hectare. (See Appendix 1).

**Accommodation type:** 59% of houses are detached; 21% are semi-detached; 7% are terraced; 11.5% are flats. This is a higher proportion of detached houses than elsewhere in the Borough.

**Accommodation size:** the average number of bedrooms is 3.83, higher than elsewhere in the Borough.

**Tenure:** nearly 86% of residential property is owner occupied. 5% is for social rent.

**House prices:** are amongst the most expensive in the Borough.

**Affordable Housing:** there are about 58 social housing lettings across the Area, with about 150 people on the Council's waiting list.



### 3.5. Housing Growth

The Area has accommodated significant levels of housing growth over the years. In the last 5 years, planned development has delivered new houses at: Hampton Road, Knowle; Four Ashes, Bentley Heath; and Middlefield, Knowle (under construction). This, together with windfall developments such as those at Old Silhillians and Knowle High Street, has increased the number of houses and apartments by almost 500.

The Area continues to be under enormous development pressure. The graphic overleaf shows the sites put forward for development in KDBH in response to the SMBC's "Call for Sites" in 2016.

### 3.6. Economic Role

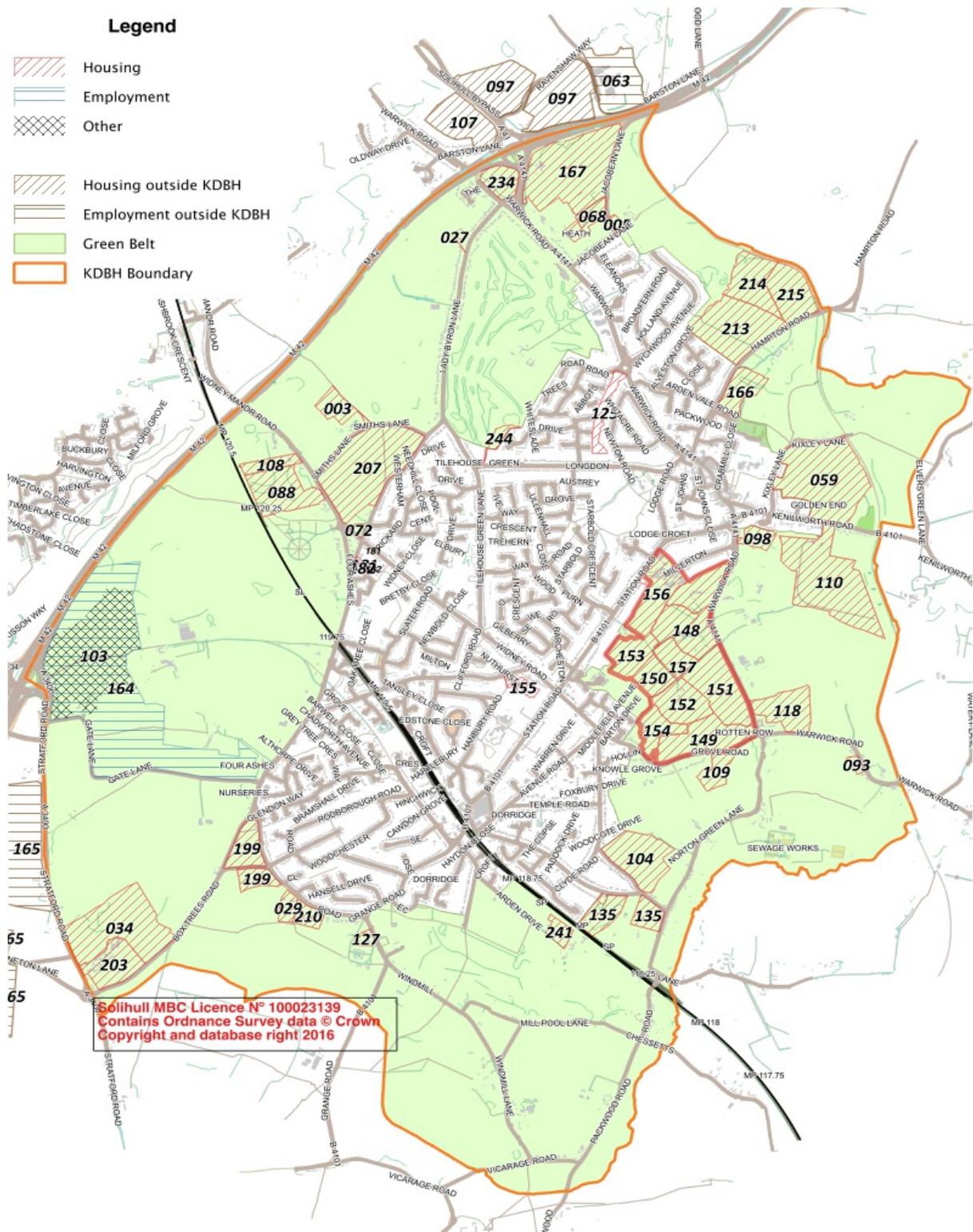
Employment in KDBH is mainly provided by the local shops, services, offices and schools. Most workers travel out of the villages to the main employment centres of Birmingham, Solihull and Shirley town centres, hospitals, Jaguar Land Rover, the airport and NEC and the business parks at Blythe Valley and Birmingham Business Park.

The Ward Profiles 2016 reveal that:

- there are around 4,000 jobs in Knowle and 1,900 in Dorridge (including Hockley Heath)
- over 44% of adults aged 16 to 74 are qualified to NVQ level 4 (degree level or above)
- 28% work in the public sector and above average numbers work in the finance and business sectors
- the self employment rate is higher than the Borough average and is increasing.

This economic data correlates with the housing data to indicate that KDBH provides homes and a lifestyle that attracts the skilled workers necessary to support the wider economy.

Land offered to SMBC for potential development in KDBH  
Call for Sites - January 2016



Plan showing the KDBH Neighbourhood Boundary Area (Orange)

Arden Triangle (continuous line)

Land along Gate Lane was offered for Employment and Other Uses

### 3.7. Transport

Access to the motorway network is good and only a short drive by car to Birmingham Airport and Birmingham International Rail Station.

Train services from Dorridge and Widney Manor stations to Birmingham and London are good and are heavily used by commuters.

The two main bus routes, the S2 from Solihull to Dorridge and the S3 from Wythall to Dorridge via Shirley, Solihull, Knowle and Bentley Heath are half hourly but stop early evening and there is no Sunday service.

Car ownership is high - 55% of all homes in Knowle and 59% in Dorridge own 2 or more cars.

### 3.8. Education, Community Facilities and Recreation

In addition to the three primary schools, the Area is served by Arden Academy and Sixth Form centre, and St George and Teresa RC Primary School.

Health services are provided by three doctors' surgeries and a number of dental and other health related practices.

Outdoor sports clubs and facilities include: Old Silhillians (football, hockey and rugby); Knowle FC; three cricket clubs; Knowle and Dorridge running club; Knowle and Dorridge Racquets Club; Copt Heath Golf Club; Four Ashes Driving Range; and Knowle Ramblers. Knowle and Dorridge each have a scout club housed in their own premises. The canal is also a popular source of recreation for boating, walking and fishing.

Indoor activities take place mainly at Arden Academy, the church halls and village/community halls.

### 3.9. What Makes KDBH Distinctive?

This snapshot of village life provides the background for an understanding of what makes KDBH distinctive. The Residents' Survey and the Heritage and Character Study reveal that the most important and valued characteristics are:

- easy access to Green Belt and countryside
- village atmosphere
- clear separation from Solihull and other settlements
- quality of property and pride in place
- good schools
- good transport links
- green and natural environment
- local amenities.



## Section 4: Opportunities and Key Issues

New development brings both opportunities and challenges that need to be identified, planned for and addressed through policies in our Neighbourhood Plan. Drawing on all the evidence base, the table in Appendix 2 summarises the opportunities and key issues facing KDBH. The key issues are highlighted in the red boxes below for clarity and ease of reference, along with some supporting commentary.

### 4.1. Housing Growth

#### Scale of Development

One of the biggest challenges facing the community is how to make provision for a proportionate amount of new housing without spoiling the character and setting of the Area and without exacerbating infrastructure problems.

#### Fear of Urbanisation

Maintaining separation of KDBH from Solihull and other settlements is a high priority for residents, together with minimising the loss of Green Belt and landscape in the adjoining countryside.

Housing in KDBH has expanded rapidly over a relatively short period of time but facilities and amenities have not increased accordingly. Residents have expressed strong concerns that additional housing will put pressure on already stretched amenities.

### 4.2. Housing Type and Size

#### Changing Housing Needs

There is a need to provide a more appropriate range of housing types and sizes in KDBH to meet future needs, whilst recognising that residents want to maintain a similar balance of styles (detached/semi-detached/terraced)

There is an emerging mis-alignment between the types and sizes of homes available in the Neighbourhood and the needs of the community. Demand is shifting towards relatively smaller housing - for older households who wish to downsize; for young families; and for growing numbers of people living on their own. This shift in demand away from very large houses to more 'average' 2-4 bedroom homes is reflected in feedback from the Residents' Survey. However, residents still want new houses to reflect existing styles with an emphasis on detached properties.

In short, there is a need to provide a better/more appropriate mix of housing types in KDBH to meet future needs.

**Downsizing:** Careful consideration needs to be given to the most appropriate type and design of accommodation in our Area - well-off, older residents do not want to move from spacious housing into shoeboxes. Where this need can be successfully met, it will 'free up' housing supply, releasing more family accommodation and reducing rates of under-occupancy.

**Specialist Accommodation for Older People:** KDBH's demographic means that the current and emerging needs of a growing number of older people are a priority for our Area. Policy needs to provide support for a significant increase in affordable market sheltered, extra-care and accessible housing as part and parcel of the delivery of new housing development.

**Young Families:** Many younger households in the Area can afford market housing to rent, but cannot afford to buy at full market prices. The affordability gap suggests that some could take advantage of discounted market housing and part-ownership models (intermediate housing).

The Residents' Survey shows strong support for starter homes.

**Single Households:** Policy should consider how to meet the needs of people who wish to live alone but remain in the Area to preserve local family and friendship ties. A bias towards smaller homes and making available forms of shared equity would offer a means of catering for these needs.

**Affordable Homes for People on Low Incomes:** Given the current low level of social rented accommodation in KDBH, consideration needs to be given to how any increase in this type of housing is well integrated into the community - for example, by pepper-potting it in a 'tenure blind' manner rather than concentrated in one location.

### 4.3. Design

#### Poor Design Standards in Recent Developments

Some aspects of the most recent developments have been out of keeping with the character of the Area, particularly in relation to higher densities, poor layout and design.

Recent developments have prompted strong criticisms from local residents. Our Plan policies need to place strong emphasis on scheme design to make sure future development is more in character with, and sympathetic to, the specific context of our Area.

Design considerations are an equally high priority for our local businesses. In our survey, 73% of businesses responded that commercial building design should be in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings; and 68% that business development should in harmony with the rural character of the Neighbourhood and sit well in the landscape.

#### Top 3 factors for the design and layout of new housing in KDBH:

1. Keep development in line with current housing design and streetscape (65%)
2. Adequate parking on premises (64%)
3. Reflect the current, generally lower than average, housing density (58%)

Source Residents' Survey

### 4.4. Traffic and Transport

#### Parking:

#### Lack of Parking in Village Centres

All village shopping centres have problems with a shortage of parking spaces. Local businesses are suffering because some shoppers, staff and customers cannot park and some shoppers are going elsewhere.

#### Commuter Parking at Dorridge Station

Over the last ten years, the huge growth in both in and out of Area commuters has not been met by commensurate additional parking provision.

In our surveys - and consistently in every form of consultation undertaken over more than two years of Plan development - residents and businesses alike highlight parking as a top issue.

71% of business survey respondents rated parking as 'poor'. An overwhelming 80% said parking was the top priority for infrastructure investment. Similarly, when asked what the Plan should consider in terms of allocating land for business use, 59% responded parking.

Business concerns relate to parking both for staff and for customers, and the two are inextricably linked. In the survey, over 75% of staff travel to work by car (partly due to inadequate public transport) but 57% of staff do not have parking on site. This lack of on-site parking has an adverse knock-on effect on traffic flow and road safety, where staff park on streets. There is also a view that shoppers' parking spaces are being taken by employees, causing displacement, although recent changes to charging are aimed at discouraging this.

*"None of our staff can use public transport, no service at needed times"*

*"Insufficient parking for employees - they take up shoppers parking spaces - so shoppers stay away"*

From a shoppers' perspective, all village centres have major issues with under-provision of parking, leading a number of residents to state that parking issues have caused them to travel elsewhere to access facilities.

The other major parking-related issue is at Dorridge Station, where, again, this affects availability of parking for local shoppers.

**Transport and Traffic Management:**

<p><b>Inadequate Public Transport</b></p> <p>Except for day time services to Solihull, public transport to other nearby population centres, employment, education, retail and leisure facilities are poor – which means that the vast majority of journeys are made by private car.</p>	<p><b>Need to Reduce Car Use</b></p> <p>More needs to be done to encourage walking, cycling and sustainable modes of transport.</p>	<p><b>School Run Congestion</b></p> <p>There are problems outside schools at peak times of drop-off and pickup, interrupting the free flow of traffic and compromising road safety.</p>
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**4.5. Village Character and Natural Environment**

**Protect Green Space and the Environment**

The Residents' Survey shows a strong desire to maintain village atmosphere and character, particularly of the conservation areas; to preserve existing publicly accessible parks, open spaces and green spaces within and surrounding the villages; to ensure that any new developments maintain public rights of way; and also to improve footpath networks to provide access to the surrounding countryside. The natural environment, particularly trees, landscape and ecology, needs to be protected.

**4.6. Education and Community Facilities (including Health Care, Sport, Recreation and Leisure)**

**Education:**

<p><b>School Places</b></p> <p>Residents are concerned that new housing growth may mean that their children may not be able to access places in local schools or in a school of their choice, particularly at primary level.</p>	<p><b>Lifelong Learning</b></p> <p>Beyond statutory education, there is a desire to improve access to education facilities within the Area across all age ranges.</p>
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The Residents' Survey showed there is currently a high level of satisfaction with the provision of statutory education, although some restriction on the choice of primary school for those moving in to the Area. This has raised concerns around the impact of new housing development.

Whilst small overall, concerns about the lack of sufficient facilities for pre-school and childcare are considered significant when related to the target group. Residents also expressed a desire for improved provision of (and publicity for) facilities for adult/older age lifelong learning.

**Community Facilities:**

**Strain on Community Services**

A major area of concern for residents is that new development will put even greater strain on vital community services, particularly health. Timely access to an appropriate practitioner is an issue for many residents, with concerns that access to a doctor of choice will become increasingly difficult with any further new development.

**Improve Wellbeing**

There is a high level of dissatisfaction with the suitability and availability of indoor and outdoor facilities in the Area for sport, leisure, exercise and recreation.

**Social Facilities**

There is a need for improved social facilities for the young (under 18's) and for the elderly to have better access to a range of facilities at appropriate times.

While there is a high level of satisfaction with the quality of healthcare, some existing GP services are already stretched due to the rate of recent developments prompting concerns about the impact of new housing development. Similar concerns have been raised in relation to the impact of additional housing on other community facilities.

Businesses also suggest an increase in premises available for leisure activity.

**4.7. Employment including Retail and other Commercial Uses**

**Protect Employment and Shops**

Residents and business are of one accord that the Plan needs to define policies that protect existing employment sites, promote appropriate opportunities for people to work in the Area, and maintain the mix, balance and vibrancy of local shopping facilities and services.

**4.8. Communications Infrastructure and Utilities**

**Improve Communications**

Improvement in the speed of broadband and resolving issues with patchy mobile phone coverage is needed to enable and improve business effectiveness and new, more sustainable, ways of working.

**Modernise Infrastructure**

Housing in KDBH has expanded rapidly over a relatively short time period, but the infrastructure has not increased accordingly - a view confirmed by 88% of business survey respondents.

Residents strongly support facilitating working from home.



### 5.3. Objectives

The analysis has led to the definition of a number of Objectives set out below and addressed in the following policy sections.

<b>HOUSING</b>	<p>Plan for proportionate growth in new, high quality homes without over-provision and without compromising what makes our villages distinctive.</p> <p>Plan for new homes to be well integrated into the existing community and built environment, sited in sustainable locations, and meet locally identified, changing needs for all life stages.</p> <p>Plan for an aging population.</p>
<b>DESIGN</b>	<p>Improve the quality and appropriateness of future new developments by focusing strongly on robust application of policies in the design stage.</p> <p>Require production of 'Concept Masterplans', in discussion with the community (through the Neighbourhood Forum), for any new development in KDBH of over 20 houses.</p>
<b>VILLAGE CHARACTER AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	<p>Prioritise local distinctiveness in every element of change and growth.</p> <p>Safeguard our natural environment, maintain a high quality landscape and enhance biodiversity through sensitive development that protects the setting of our settlements.</p> <p>Protect and enhance the Neighbourhood's heritage and open spaces.</p>
<b>TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT</b>	<p>Ensure adequate parking in all new housing developments, seek on-going improvements to roads and parking, and improve traffic management to facilitate flow at key locations.</p> <p>Target a range of measures to reduce reliance on car usage.</p>
<b>EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>	<p>Ensure sufficient capacity in local schools to accommodate any new housing proposed and to allow families in KDBH to access their choice of primary school.</p> <p>Ensure community facilities and services (including healthcare, sport and recreation) meet the needs of the diverse and growing community through protection of, investment in, and ongoing access to new and improved facilities in tandem with new housing growth.</p>
<b>EMPLOYMENT, INC RETAIL AND OTHER COMMERCIAL USES</b>	<p>Recognise the importance of local shops and businesses, support and maintain their presence, encourage retention of existing employers and promote appropriate new economic and employment opportunities in suitable locations.</p>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	<p>Seek on-going improvements to the utility infrastructure and digital connectivity - especially mobile phone reception and broadband.</p>

By implementing these objectives, this Neighbourhood Plan seeks to achieve the following;

- the community is more in control of future development in their Neighbourhood, and in particular, the boundaries of our Area are respected
- there will be sufficient housing of mixed types to meet the needs of the community, with an emphasis on increasing the availability of homes for local people, starter homes and homes for 'downsizing', as well as specialist housing such as care homes
- new development will contribute positively to the village atmosphere and will respect the design, appearance, scale, location and density of existing buildings and landscape

- car parking will have improved, with better availability and fewer restrictions. Issues relating to commuter parking, shoppers' parking and parking at or near schools will have eased
- local facilities, including village halls, schools, sports and leisure places will have been maintained and enhanced to promote a sense of community and encourage a healthy lifestyle
- there will be more businesses in the Area that will continue to offer a diverse range of local retail and service businesses and provide additional employment opportunities
- throughout the Area, historic and natural features - including landscape, trees and hedgerows - will have enjoyed enhanced protection. Key local habitats and wildlife biodiversity will have been protected and, where possible, improved
- open green space and recreational areas will have been maintained and improved, with increased provision for walking and cycling
- we will have worked with Solihull Council to establish defensible Green Belt boundaries to prevent excessive development expansion into surrounding countryside
- investment will have led to improvements in the condition of roads and pavements.

# KDBH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## POLICIES

The following sections of the Neighbourhood Plan (Sections 6 to 12) set out policies on a variety of different topics. They have been derived from the previous analysis in the 'Opportunities and Key Issues' and 'Vision and Objectives' Sections 4 and 5.

These policies relate to land use and new development (the legally defined remit of a Neighbourhood Plan). The text following the policies, which provides amplification, is to be treated as part of the policies.

In the course of preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, local residents and businesses have raised a range of issues that are not related to land use or new development. Where these are important local matters that require action – for example traffic management - they have been included as Community Actions. Although these Actions do not have statutory weight, they are matters the Neighbourhood Forum intends to pursue in collaboration with our Residents' Associations and other community groups.

Community Actions are listed in Appendix 3.

## Section 6: Village Character and Natural Environment

The policy drivers and target outcomes are to:

- safeguard Green Belt open countryside
- maintain and improve village feel and atmosphere
- ensure clear separation from Solihull and surrounding villages
- safeguard ease of access to surrounding open countryside
- avoid housing development on large Green Belt sites
- protect important trees, hedgerows and woodlands
- preserve and restore key biodiversity features
- promote the maintenance and improvement of green spaces
- protect the landscape and historic and natural features
- give the Community a meaningful say in the design and layout of new developments in respect of landscape and biodiversity impacts and their mitigation.

This gives rise to the following policy goal.

### 6.1. Village Character and Natural Environment – Policy Goal

Our policies aim to maintain separation of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath from Solihull, Shirley and surrounding villages by protecting the Green Belt from inappropriate development whilst ensuring easy access to the countryside. The character and feel of the villages, their historic cores and the natural environment will be protected. The provision of new features that enrich the quality of the natural environment will be supported. Existing and new assets will be carefully managed and improved.

### 6.2. Policy VC1: Green Belt and Landscape

National and local Green Belt policies will be applied to the area beyond the built-up area of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. In the limited circumstances where development may be permissible, the openness of the Green Belt will be safeguarded by the withdrawal of permitted development rights.

Any development must be in harmony with the rural character of the villages' surroundings and sit well in the landscape. Proposals shall have regard to the principles set out in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines: Arden.

The built-up area of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath is defined by the inner Green Belt boundary. It is anticipated that this boundary will be revised as part of the Local Plan Review to remove any sites currently in Green Belt that are allocated for housing by the Council. The area beyond this revised boundary will be subject to national and local Green Belt policies. Application of the policies will help achieve key aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan's Policy Goal.

Under the policies, there are a limited number of exceptions where new building may be permissible. One example is the replacement of a building provided that the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. The limitation of size is, in the main, directed at limiting the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. However, it would normally be permissible for the building to be extended again under permitted development rights. Where the cumulative effect would be unacceptable, such rights will be withdrawn.

The countryside surrounding the built-up area falls within the historic Arden landscape. Guidelines for maintenance and enhancement are laid out in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines: Arden. These guidelines date from the 1990's but the principles remain valid. <sup>1</sup>

### 6.3. Policy VC2: Conservation Areas

Within the conservation areas, there will be a presumption in favour of retaining existing buildings, gardens and green open spaces that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the areas. Development shall conserve heritage assets. Building design shall be in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings. The use of signage, advertising and street furniture shall be in keeping with the character of the area.

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and a finite resource. They are a fundamental component of local character and distinctiveness. Seeking positive improvements is important to sustainable development.

There are three conservation areas within KDBH – the Knowle Conservation Area; and, in Dorridge, the Station Approach and Granville Road Conservation Areas. In September 2007, Solihull Council adopted an appraisal of the Knowle Conservation Area. Various recommendations were made including recommendations that are equally applicable at Station Approach, Dorridge. However, the recommendations have not been given the weight of the development plan.

The recommendations are equally valid today. As such, the Neighbourhood Forum is taking the opportunity of including the key provisions relating to land use within this Neighbourhood Plan. Some of the recommendations cannot be addressed through development plan policies. As such, they are the subject of Community Actions as set out in Appendix 3.



Station Approach Conservation Area, Dorridge

<sup>1</sup> Other useful references include the Warwickshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Report 2010; Natural England's National Character Area profile: 97. Arden, 2014; the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment Report 2016; and the Solihull Borough Local Character Guide November 2016.

## 6.4. Policy VC3: Heritage Assets

Heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Area including listed buildings, conservation areas, locally listed buildings and positive buildings in conservation areas must be protected, conserved and enhanced when development proposals are brought forward.

Development affecting a locally listed building or structure, or positive buildings, will be resisted where this would include:

- demolition or part demolition;
- inappropriate alteration or extension; or
- a detrimental impact on the setting or context.

Proposals for the change of use of a building or structure on the local list, or a positive building, will be required to demonstrate how this would contribute to its conservation whilst preserving or enhancing its architectural or historic interest.

Applications proposing demolition will be required to demonstrate that the viability of continued beneficial use, restoration or conversion has been fully investigated and that there are no reasonable alternatives. Where demolition is unavoidable, provision must be made for an appropriate level of recording of the building or structure.

Heritage assets are to be protected in a manner appropriate to their significance. As indicated above, pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment.

Listed buildings and conservation areas are protected by statute. Historic England identifies that local lists (buildings of local interest but not on the statutory list) play an essential role in reinforcing a sense of character and local distinctiveness. There are a number of buildings in KDBH on the Council's local list. This policy seeks to give weight to the protection, conservation and enhancement of such buildings.

"Positive buildings" are buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. The term is used in the Council's Knowle Conservation Area Appraisal where relevant buildings are identified. However, the concept is equally applicable in the other conservation areas within the Neighbourhood.

## 6.5. Policy VC4: Green Space

The Neighbourhood Plan designates land at St John's Close, Knowle and land at the front of Arden Academy, Knowle as Local Green Space. Together with Village Greens, these areas are shown in Appendix 4. New development will be permitted only in very special circumstances.

Other areas of green space will be protected against significant loss or harm to their character, setting, accessibility, appearance or amenity value except where the community would gain equivalent or greater benefit from provision of a suitable replacement.

This policy covers various types of green space that are to be found within the KDBH Neighbourhood Area. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Neighbourhood Plan designates areas of Local Green Space at St John's Close and in front of Arden Academy where new development is ruled out other than in very special circumstances.

St John's Close, Knowle is special to the community as an oasis of green in the heart of the village. Its greenery, mature trees and pathways act as a focal point linking parts of the village centre. It is locally important as it adds to the character of the village centre and merits protection. The green space at the front of Arden Academy provides an attractive open setting with mature trees and water features. It is significant for the memorials to two former pupils and a deputy headmaster. It also contains a young oak tree planted in 2012 as part of an initiative by schools and colleges linking the town of Much Wenlock in Shropshire to the Olympic Park in London.

Other candidate sites include the Solihull MIND Garden, off Station Road, Knowle; land at and adjoining Conker Lane, leading to Manor Road, Dorridge; land off Pool End Close/Bridge Meadow Drive; and land at Wychwood Roundabout. Where justified, these will be included in the Submission version of the Plan.

The Local Green Space and Village Greens are shown in Appendix 4.

Appendix 4 also shows two areas that enjoy Village Green status. These are land at the rear of Knowle Park and land off Starbold Crescent. "Restricted works" (such as the erection of fencing or the construction of buildings or other structures) cannot be carried out except with the consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Given this protection under the Commons Act 2006, no related Neighbourhood Plan policy is needed in relation to those two areas.

In addition to the above, there are many other areas of green space that contribute to the quality of the environment. These will be protected from any significant loss or harm as set out in the policy.

Although the development of green space is generally precluded, works that would enhance the green space experience are to be encouraged. These include the provision of walking routes; also wildlife areas, hedgerows, wild flower meadows and bird and bat boxes. The provision of new green space is also encouraged particularly where this can be linked to green corridors.

The matter of a full Green Spaces Plan is addressed under Community Actions.



St John's Close, Knowle is special to the community as an oasis of green in the heart of the village.

## 6.6. Policy VC5: Green Streets

KDBH is characterised by green streets. New development must respect, maintain and, so far as is reasonably practicable, enhance the green character of residential roads. Where loss of frontage planting is unavoidable, applicants shall include, in their proposals, details of replacement planting that is in keeping with the green character of the road.

Examples (in a non-exhaustive list) of roads where the Green Streets policy would apply are Station Road, Tilehouse Green Road, Widney Road and Warwick Road. These are all key village routes. However, the policy will be applied to all streets where their green nature can be recognised as a characteristic feature. The use of native species is to be preferred except where this would be out of keeping with the local planting.

## The Natural Environment

### 6.7. Policy NE1: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

On sites with mature or important trees or hedgerows, groups of trees or woodland, the protection of such features shall be promoted through the scheme.

Where such features make a significant contribution to the street scene but are not protected within the proposed development, such proposals will be resisted.

Promoting the protection of trees, hedgerows and woodland is a priority for residents. Such features are a valued amenity and an integral part of the Neighbourhood's green character and appearance.

This policy applies not just to features subject to a Tree Preservation Order but also to all reasonably healthy features that have an amenity or screening value. On all sites, there will be a presumption that a tree survey will accompany the planning application and that the provisions of this policy are relevant. Amongst other things, the tree survey must plot accurately positions and crown spread and identify the species and comparative age and health. Steps to protect trees and hedgerows during site clearance and building operations shall be detailed in planning applications where applicable.

### 6.8. Policy NE2: Habitats and Biodiversity

On sites where there are key local habitats and biodiversity, developments shall promote the preservation and restoration of such features as part of the scheme. Developments which fail to do so will be resisted.

Promoting the preservation and restoration of key local habitats and biodiversity is a priority for residents in Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. Local Wildlife Sites are identified, surveyed and designated annually by the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Wildlife Sites Partnership. Such sites should be protected from direct and indirect impacts of development.

On all sites, there will be a presumption that an ecological survey shall accompany the planning application and that the provisions of the policy are relevant.

## Section 7: Housing

The policy drivers and target outcomes are:

- that new housing growth should not add to existing infrastructure pressures and should bring some wider community benefit
- that new housing development needs to be well integrated in terms of built form and community mix
- that the community has a significant say in the design and layout of new housing
- that new property is of a high standard and in keeping with its environment
- to keep development in line with established housing design and streetscape
- to reflect the current, generally lower than average, housing density
- to make provision for starter homes, sheltered housing, retirement homes and family housing
- to determine a mix of house sizes that meets the needs of the population
- to safeguard the quality of existing property.

This gives rise to the following policy goal:

### 7.1. Housing - Policy Goal

Our housing policies are directed at influencing the type, nature and occupancy of the new homes that will be built on allocated sites and through windfall developments. An appropriate mix of house types will be promoted in both market and specialist schemes. The emphasis will be on meeting the needs of the residents of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

### 7.2. Policy H1: Scale of New Housing

A total of about 500 houses shall be provided on allocated sites over the period of the Neighbourhood Plan. The final number will be confirmed when the Solihull Local Plan is adopted.

Solihull Council has allocated in the draft Local Plan Review two large housing sites to accommodate 1,050 dwellings. These sites are at Hampton Road (300 houses) and the “Arden Triangle” (750 houses). In addition, the Wychwood Roundabout site has an assumed capacity for 20 houses, with a further 31 houses at the St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School site.

**This scale of housing growth in the Neighbourhood Plan Area is not supported by local people and the Neighbourhood Forum has objected to the draft Local Plan.** Its preparation has been delayed and this Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in advance of the determination of those objections.

On the basis of evidence from the local Housing Needs Assessment, the Neighbourhood Forum believes that a sustainable amount of additional development, excluding windfall housing, would be in the range 440 to 540 dwellings (expressed as about 500 houses in the policy).

The following policies seek to provide an appropriate policy framework for any site allocations or proposals for 20 or more dwellings that may come forward through the Local Plan Review. These will apply alongside other relevant considerations such as national planning policies and Local Plan policies.

### 7.3. Policy H2: Housing on Allocated and Larger Sites

Housing on sites allocated in emerging and adopted development plans and on larger windfall sites shall address the matters set out below and amplified in the following text:

- setting, topography and design
- density
- movement by vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and, where appropriate, equestrians
- off-site traffic and transportation effects
- open space provision, landscaping and gardens
- refuse storage
- capacity in local services
- construction practices
- air pollution
- capacity in statutory utilities services.

It is expected that, for each of the allocated sites or for other proposals of 20 or more dwellings, a concept masterplan or design brief including design coding will have been prepared in consultation with the Neighbourhood Forum prior to the submission of a planning application. This shall be respected in the design and implementation of the project.

It is also expected that an independent design review will be conducted of proposals for strategic housing allocations at both concept masterplan stage and at the detailed design stage.

**Application:** This policy applies to housing on sites allocated, or proposed to be allocated, in the Solihull Local Plan. It also applies to any proposals for 20 or more dwellings, including land at Wychwood Roundabout and at the St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School sites, both of which have been included in the land availability calculations of Solihull Council.

**Setting, topography and design:** The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that design quality matters and that planning should drive up standards of design across all forms of development. It indicates that planning should, amongst other things, promote local character, including landscape setting, and stresses the importance of safe, connected and efficient streets, a network of green spaces and cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods. The Heritage and Character Study, together with the Masterplanning / Design and Design Coding study (Urban Vision CIC 2017) provide guidance on how this might be achieved in the local context.

All the matters in Policy H2 must be satisfactorily addressed when considering the setting and design of housing developments on allocated sites. Particular care must be taken to respond to local topography and to achieve a green setting with landscaping and design that reflects that of the existing villages. Any development on the edge of the built settlements should respect the low landscape capacity and include a sensitive transition between the built environment and the open countryside or Green Belt to avoid the appearance of overdevelopment.

National planning guidance supports the practice of independent design review to ensure high standards of design. This would be appropriate for any strategic allocations in KDBH and is given effect in this policy.

**Density:** Lower housing density is a key characteristic of KDBH, particularly as it reflects the semi-rural nature of the Area. No absolute figure or average is set for future housing in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, but it is essential that new development reflects the locality and that any suggestion of a cramped appearance is avoided.

All other things being equal, those sites or parts of sites close to village amenities and public transport corridors or nodes are likely to be more suitable for housing of a higher density.

**Movement by vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians:** Applications must address the safe and free flow of movement on site by vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians in a network connecting to the surrounding area, including village amenities and the countryside. Opportunities to improve linkages to the canal should be incorporated into layouts, where appropriate. Existing rights of way including bridle paths shall be maintained or, where this is impractical, diverted to an equally convenient alignment or new route.

**Off-site traffic and transportation effects:** Potential impacts on village car parks (including the Dorridge Station car parks), on-street parking, junctions and queuing traffic must all be considered and satisfactory mitigation measures proposed to ensure new development does not exacerbate existing issues.

**Open space provision, landscaping and gardens:** Residents in KDBH are keen to promote green space and gardens in new developments. Proposals must identify and include opportunities to meet this need, with links to green corridors wherever possible. Considerations will include:

- ensuring that main access routes into and through a development reflect the green character of existing key routes in the villages by incorporating tree planting and landscaping along frontages
- creating wide roads with houses set back behind private front gardens, except in village centres
- providing communal greens and recreational space (including play areas)
- providing generous landscaping that reflects and enhances the distinctive green nature and natural features of the Neighbourhood
- ensuring open space is designed and implemented at the early stages of development, where feasible.

Proposals must include practical arrangements for the maintenance and management of open spaces and landscaping in perpetuity.

**Refuse storage:** Convenient and discreet provision shall be made wherever possible for the storage of receptacles used for the collection of local authority collected waste. The receptacles shall be screened from public view and the storage space shall be of a capacity adequate to meet the Council's waste collection arrangement as in force at the time of any permission.

**Capacity in local services:** Where new development will outstrip the ability/capacity of the existing physical or social infrastructure (schools including nursery provision, health care etc), there must be a clear demonstration of proposed mitigation. Where necessary, this may involve a

financial contribution or other mechanism that will ensure the provision of expansion to meet the new demand, secured through a Section 106 planning obligation.

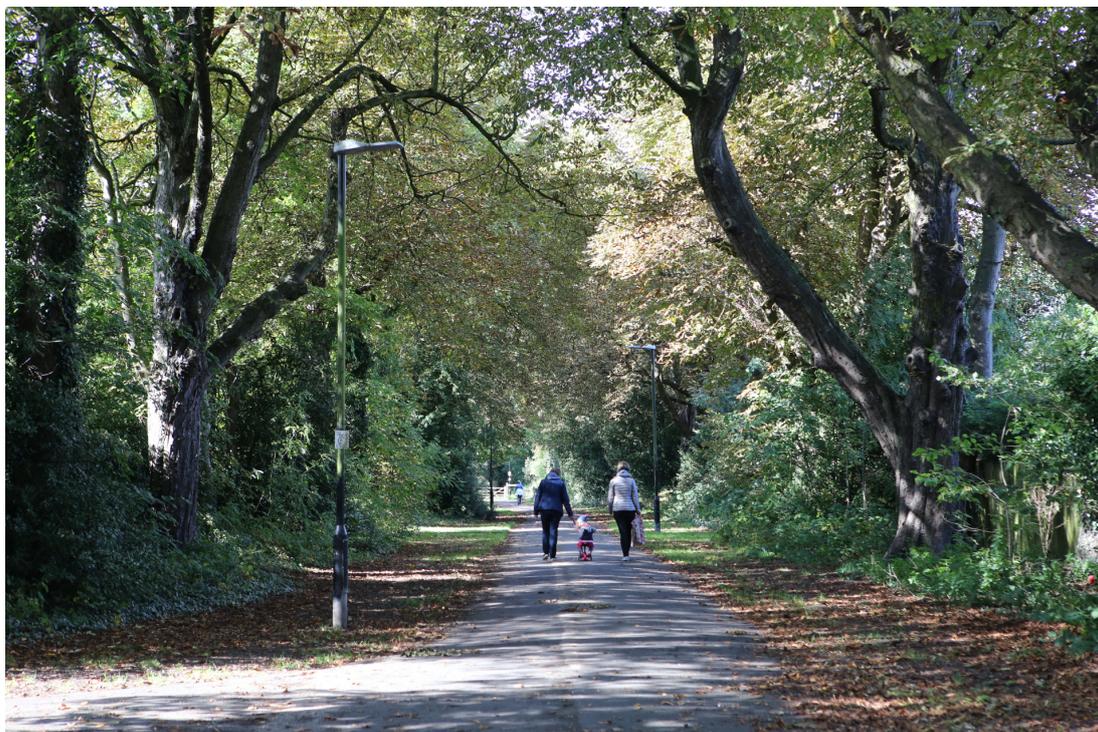
**Construction practices:** The construction phase of development can give rise to a number of negative impacts. Matters such as parking of contractors' vehicles, mud on roads, hours of working and suitable haulage routes for heavy lorries must be addressed through submission of a construction management plan.

**Air pollution:** Developments will be expected to demonstrate that they will not add to levels of air pollution, particularly on key vehicular routes such as the High Street, Station Road, Lodge Road, Tilehouse Green Lane, Longdon Road and Widney Road. The introduction of traffic lights at, for example, the High Street / Hampton Road junction would be likely to lead to queuing traffic on the High Street, with adverse impacts on air quality as well as on the character of the Conservation Area.

**Capacity in statutory utilities services:** Respondents to the Residents' Survey felt that infrastructure was not keeping up with new development and the provision of it was insufficiently planned – a sense that new homes were being built and that the existing utilities and foul water drainage infrastructure would not be up to serving the additional user population. A delivery plan to address capacity in utilities and drainage shall accompany planning applications and be implemented as approved.

**Other relevant Plan policies:** All other housing-related policies shall be taken into account in progressing schemes. These include, but are not limited to, Policies EN1 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland), EN2 (Habitats and Biodiversity), H4 (House Types), H5 (House Size), D1 (Character and Appearance) and policies on access and parking.

The recommendations of the Heritage and Character Assessment and the Masterplanning/Design and Design Coding Study should also be taken into account.



Open/Green space in the 1990's Four Ashes development: Conker Lane, Dorridge

## 7.4. Policy H3: Affordable Housing

All new affordable housing shall first be offered to households with a strong local connection to the Area, both when first built and at the point of any subsequent re-occupation. In this context, a strong local connection means applicants who:

- are current residents of the Neighbourhood Area who have lived in the Area for a minimum of 5 years
- are past residents of the Neighbourhood Area who lived in the Area for 5 years
- have close relatives (parents, children, siblings, grandparents or grand children) who are current residents of the Area and have lived in the Area for a minimum of 5 years
- are currently employed in the Neighbourhood Area and have been so for at least 5 years (employer reference required)
- need to reside in the Neighbourhood Area either to provide care/support or to be cared for/supported by another member of the family who has lived in the Area for a minimum of 24 months (medical reference required).

This definition is based on suggested criteria set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document "Meeting Housing Needs", July 2014.

New affordable housing will be constructed to be "tenure blind", meaning that such provision is well designed and indistinguishable in appearance from market housing. In larger developments, the affordable housing shall be well dispersed across the development.

Policy P4 a) of the Solihull Local Plan 2013 expects that 40% of the dwellings on qualifying sites shall be in the form of affordable housing. This is subject to viability and other considerations. The requirements of Policy H3 above will apply to the actual provision made and will be secured through a Section 106 planning obligation.

The policy seeks to address some of the matters of tenure and layout raised by residents.

The Council's policy seeks 65% of affordable housing to be social rented accommodation and 35% to be for shared ownership. Residents' views, supported to some extent by the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment, show a strong preference for a higher percentage of the affordable housing provision to be in the form of shared ownership to support more young people and families. This will be pursued with the Council as part of consideration of any planning applications that come forward on strategic sites.

## 7.5. Policy H4: House Types

### **Purpose built housing for older people:**

Market housing on allocated sites shall make a proportionate contribution to the need for purpose built housing for older people. The total contribution sought across all allocated sites is 60 sheltered housing units and 2 dementia homes. An exception may be made where there is a clear demonstration of other ways in which the requisite provision in KDBH will be met.

### **Market housing**

On those parts of allocated sites not to be developed for the provision of specialist housing for older people, or for affordable housing, market housing shall be provided in the following approximate proportions: 50% detached housing; 20% semi-detached housing; 6% terraced housing; 17% flats/apartments; and 7% bungalows.

The provision of a higher proportion of flats/apartments and bungalows, suitable for sale as starter homes or for downsizing by older people, will be supported where the homes are in keeping with local designs and streetscapes.

The local Housing Needs Assessment demonstrates a need for additional specialist housing to meet the needs of older people. Windfall sites may provide some limited opportunities to help meet this need. However, the main contribution will have to come from allocated sites.

The need for sheltered housing and dementia homes is intended to apply to allocated sites other than the land at Wychwood Roundabout and at the St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School sites. However, these sites (and the Catholic Primary School site in particular) may also be suitable for older people's accommodation should the developers choose to promote such a use.

In view of the extent of specialist provision for the elderly in the KDBH Area built since 2011, and the limited amount of land that is available, the extent of new provision is limited to that sought in the policy (the areas of greatest need). Provision shall be made in proportion to the size of the site compared with the total area of all the allocated sites. Those sites or parts of sites close to village amenities are likely to be more suitable for such provision.

Residents in KDBH are keen to see that new housing is in keeping with established housing design and streetscapes. One important element of this is reflecting the type of housing that exists at present. The future required size profile is also important. The proportions set out in the policy have regard to the results of the 2011 Census and to the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

## 7.6. Policy H5: House Size

Where market houses are to be provided, they shall be of the following sizes:

- about 10% shall have 2 bedrooms
- about 45% shall have 3 bedrooms
- about 35% shall have 4 bedrooms
- about 10% shall have 5 or more bedrooms.

For bungalows and flats/apartments, there is no requirement with regard to bedroom numbers.

All schemes should pay particular regard to the character and appearance of that part of the Neighbourhood in which they would be located. There may be scope to include a higher proportion of smaller dwellings on sites that are close to village centres or in other highly accessible locations.

The types of new property considered to be most suitable for Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath, as evidenced in the Residents' Survey, are identified in this policy. Residents support the provision of more two and three bedroom homes (as apartments, bungalows or smaller houses), but are not supportive of one bedroom units, unless these are part of purpose built accommodation for the elderly. This is consistent with the expressed desire for the size of homes to be suitable for the needs of down-sizers and for young families where a minimum of two bedrooms is regarded as necessary.

There may be some windfall sites where their nature and location suggest a particular form of development, for example one and two bedroom apartments. The policy makes provision for such developments where the character of the area is not compromised.

The requirements also reflect the future size profile set out in the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

## 7.7. Policy H6: Apartments

Planning permission for new blocks of apartments in residential roads of a mixed nature will be granted where the development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area, protects living conditions and meets car parking requirements. In particular, developers are encouraged to provide apartments well suited to the needs of those seeking to down-size.

In many respects, residents in Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath feel that developments involving new blocks of flats or apartments are not suitable in the Area. This is certainly the case where the flats or apartments would be part of a larger residential scheme of conventional houses and bungalows. At the same time, downsizing is an important consideration with a small but significant percentage of residents looking to move within the Area in the next 5 years. Apartments could have a place in roads of mixed character where a variety of house types are to be found.

For many residents who are downsizing, a modern apartment block can be an ideal solution,

particularly where located close to shops, public transport and other amenities. Such developments should aim to reduce maintenance responsibilities, provide lift access and provide spatial standards better suited to the on-going needs of older occupiers. The provision of such accommodation is likely to release larger housing for family occupation.

## 7.8. Policy H7: Windfall Housing

Residential development on windfall sites will be acceptable where the resultant development respects the character and appearance of its surroundings; causes no material harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers; and provides satisfactory access.

Windfall sites could include previously developed land (brownfield sites), undeveloped infill sites (such as gaps in a built-up frontage) and, potentially, garden land. Historically, housing on such sites has made a significant contribution to the Borough's needs and the use of such sites is, in principle, supported and encouraged.

The design and layout of housing on windfall sites often provides a challenge, particularly where backland or tandem development is involved. In this regard, developments must comply with the Neighbourhood Plan policy on Character and Appearance in the Design Section. In particular, the layout must reflect local patterns of development. Vehicular access must be of a satisfactory design and not give rise to any material harm through noise or disturbance.

## 7.9. Policy H8: Extensions and Alterations

Planning permission for residential development within the boundary of dwelling houses will be granted if the design would respect the character and appearance of the area (Policy D1: Character and Appearance) and there would be no unacceptable harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers.

The residential development that is the subject of this policy is most likely to comprise enlargements, improvements and other alterations including extensions, garages, roof alterations, outbuildings and the like.

Development could affect nearby occupiers in a number of ways, for example through noise and disturbance (including hours of working during construction), loss of daylight or sunlight, light pollution or overlooking. Extensions could also be overbearing, intrusive or otherwise unneighbourly as a result of their size, positioning or choice of materials. Development that would be materially harmful is to be avoided.

## Section 8: Design

The policy drivers and target outcomes are to:

- safeguard the quality of existing property
- ensure that new property is of a high standard and in keeping with its environment
- keep development in line with current housing design and streetscape
- secure parking on the premises
- reflect the current, generally lower than average, housing density
- minimise pollution caused by development and transport infrastructure
- reflect the priorities of residents and the business community in protecting the quality of the built environment
- protect historic features.

This gives rise to the following policy goal:

### 8.1. Design – Policy Goal

Our policies aim to secure housing and other development of a high quality of design and layout which protects and enhances the character and appearance of the built environment, harmonises with the rural setting of the Area and sits well in the landscape.



Old and new in harmony, High Street, Knowle

## 8.2. Policy D1: Character and Appearance

Planning applications for a new development, including extensions, shall demonstrate that it would be of a high standard of design and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Area. In KDBH this means development shall:

- be in harmony with the village character and sit well in the landscape
- where on the edge of the built up area, achieve a sensitive transition between the built environment and the open countryside
- protect, enhance and maximise the value of key natural environment characteristics including the canal, mature hedgerows and large mature trees that define the natural landscape character
- reflect layouts characteristic of the surrounding area
- be of a density characteristic of the Area
- be in keeping with the scale, siting and appearance of nearby buildings
- preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the streetscene or the area within which it is located, taking into account matters such as building lines, established plot widths, parking, access and the arrangement of front gardens, walls, railings and hedges
- echo obvious local characteristics (such as the form and type of development, roof style, fenestration, materials, means of enclosure, landscaping and hard surfacing)
- use external finishes that respect local traditions in the use of brick, tile and render with wood for decoration or other materials of construction
- provide parking spaces and garages of a size capable of accommodating a modern family car
- feature green spaces
- provide good quality public realm with well maintained streets and spaces.

Extensions (such as side and roof extensions) must be proportionate in scale and respect existing style characteristics.

The policy is not intended to stifle innovative design where this would be appropriate in the local context.

This and other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan reflect on the features that make our villages distinctive and special. Policy D1 is intended to complement the policy on Housing on Allocated or Larger Sites (Policy H2) which seeks to further identify and promote locally distinctive characteristics. Although the emphasis is upon housing development, the policy is designed to apply to all developments and this is the intention.

The recommendations of the Heritage and Character Assessment 2017 and the Masterplanning Design and Design Coding Study 2017 by Urban Vision CIC should also be taken into account in scheme design.

Parts of the Area are particularly sensitive to change, most notably in the conservation areas in Knowle and at Station Approach and Granville Road, Dorridge. More exacting requirements shall apply in such areas (see Policy D2 below).

### 8.3. Policy D2: Design in Conservation Areas

A higher standard of design is expected for all development within the Conservation Areas.

In the Knowle Conservation Area, building design, shop fronts, signage and advertising shall be in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings and signage. This means that, where planning permission or advertisement consent is required:

- buildings will generally be of two storeys in height
- shop fronts and fascias shall address the six key principles for good shop front design set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Shop Fronts and Signs
- corporate identity should be tailored to suit the context of the building or street
- illumination shall be subdued and appropriate to the building. There shall be no backlighting of shop signs. Neon lighting will not generally be supported
- materials, lettering and colour shall be sensitively chosen and appropriate to the existing building and the area. Vibrant colours for shop fronts and signs will not be supported
- security safeguards shall be unobtrusive and of appropriate colour
- important vistas of key buildings, such as Knowle Church, shall be maintained
- street furniture and signage shall avoid cluttering the appearance of the area.

Except for building heights, these principles shall apply in the Dorridge (Station Approach) Conservation Area.

The Granville Road Conservation Area is residential; design of new development will be expected to comply with Policy D1.

The protection of village feel and character is a high priority for local residents and businesses alike and the Conservation Areas play a significant role in creating and maintaining that character. The design and appearance of new shop fronts and advertisements in particular can have a significant impact on character and appearance, for example where neon lighting is proposed. Not all new shop fronts and advertisements require planning permission but, where they do, this policy intends to strengthen the existing Council guidance, some of which is now quite old, by incorporating it into Neighbourhood Plan policy.

Further detailed advice on the principles to be applied in the design of advertisements and shop fronts in the Conservation Areas is provided in the following documents and summarised in Appendix 5.

- Knowle Conservation Appraisal, September 2007
- The Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 1, 2003 Solihull Council
- Shop Fronts and Signs Supplementary Planning Guidance, 1995 Solihull Council
- Policy P16 of the Solihull Local Plan 2013.

## Section 9: Traffic and Transport

The policy drivers and target outcomes are to:

- improve public transport and introduce new services
- provide more off-street parking in the centre of each village
- provide more off-street parking for rail users in Dorridge
- alleviate problems caused by on-street parking in all parts of KDBH, particularly at school pick-up and drop-off times
- relieve congestion from commuting and the school run
- improve identified roads and junctions
- improve provision for pedestrians and cyclists
- support sustainable means of transport
- future-proof transport infrastructure.

This gives rise to the following policy goal:

### 9.1. Traffic and Transport - Policy Goal

Transport infrastructure will be well designed and will respond to the needs of those living and working in KDBH. KDBH will be well connected to Solihull and the greater West Midlands, London and beyond.

Safe transport infrastructure will exist for all forms of transport and travel, both motorised and non-motorised.

Congestion and environmental harm caused by road traffic will be minimised.

Sustainable forms of transport and travel will be supported and encouraged.

Provision of off-street car parking will be supported, particularly for rail commuters travelling from Dorridge station and visitors to the centres of Knowle and Bentley Heath.



Welcome to Dorridge Station

## 9.2. Policy T1: Parking for Residents

Proposals that involve the creation of new units of residential accommodation shall make appropriate arrangements for the provision of off-street parking, situated within the development boundary if possible. For one-bed units, one parking space will be required. Two spaces will be required for two or three-bed units. Three spaces will be required for units with four or more bedrooms. In addition, there shall be a demonstration of adequate arrangements for visitor parking. An evidence-based approach will be followed where this indicates a different level of provision.

Off-street parking as defined above shall be in addition to integral garage spaces.

A reduced level of provision may be supported where appropriate to the target end-users of the accommodation.

It will not be permissible for residents' parking needs to be met on-street unless the applicant can demonstrate that there is clearly capacity and that there are no issues with traffic flow.

This policy is designed to avoid the necessity for parking on-street. Adequate parking on the premises is one factor that residents identified as most important with regard to the design and layout of new housing. It would be permissible for parking to be delivered in dedicated off-site parking areas but these would need to be suitably designed and proximate to the properties.

## 9.3. Policy T2: Parking for Non-Residential Premises

Proposals that involve any new non-residential development (including schools) or change of use shall make appropriate arrangements for the provision of parking for use by staff, visitors or customers/users.

Unless there are overriding considerations, such parking shall be provided off-street. All proposals for commercial development shall be accompanied by a travel plan showing how staff and visitor parking will be accommodated. New commercial development that generates additional pressure on existing car parks and on-street parking will be resisted.

Proposals that are likely to result in additional on-street parking in St John's Close will not be allowed.

St John's Close is an area of particular parking stress and congestion. Further on-street parking in this area would not be appropriate.

#### 9.4. Policy T3: Parking at Village Centres and for Rail Users

The provision of appropriate additional off-street parking in the centres of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath, including provision for users of Dorridge Station, will be supported.

At the time any such provision is brought into use, a minimum of 5% of the spaces shall be equipped for the charging of electric vehicles.

The new parking would have to be in a suitable position and appropriately designed so that it respects the character of the neighbourhood and does not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of nearby residents or compromise highway safety and the free flow of traffic.

#### 9.5. Policy T4: Contributions to Additional Parking or Road Improvements

At the time of the grant of planning permission for any major residential development, if the Transport Assessment or Travel Plan from Policy T5 below indicates that there will be significant impact on the traffic movements within the village centres and/or the parking demand in the locations set out in Policy T3, then the residential development shall make a proportionate contribution to the provision of traffic infrastructure improvements and/or additional parking capacity in any related scheme being proposed by SMBC. The contribution will be secured through a planning obligation.

If part of the development is within a 750 metre radius of the centres (defined below) of Knowle, Dorridge or Bentley Heath, then any parking provision can alternatively be made by allocation of proportionate off-street parking areas within that part of the development site itself.

The provisions must be sufficient to ensure that any unacceptable conditions regarding traffic congestion or parking capacity established at the beginning of the plan period are not exacerbated.

For the purpose of the 750 metre radius noted above, village centres are defined as:

- Bentley Heath - the junction of Slater Road and Widney Road
- Dorridge - the junction of Station Road and Station Approach
- Knowle - the junction of Kenilworth Road and the High Street.

#### 9.6. Policy T5: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

All planning applications that include proposals which may generate significant traffic volumes, or are likely to have a material impact on the highway network or parking demand in the village centres, shall be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan must demonstrate what those impacts will be and how they will be accommodated, including how the need to travel by motor vehicles will be reduced such that there is no significant impact.

### 9.7. Policy T6: Walking Infrastructure

Proposals that involve the creation of new units of residential accommodation or non-residential development that is to be open to visiting members of the public shall be required to demonstrate that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists have been considered.

Proposals which do not provide for safe and free flowing movement by pedestrians and cyclists will not be supported.

Where new streets are to be created and it is practicable or appropriate to do so, developments shall incorporate continuous and well-lit footways on both sides of the streets.

New footpaths for pedestrians should be separated from roads and, where practicable, from cycle paths/tracks. However, it shall be permissible for new shared footpaths/cycle ways to be provided if a developer can demonstrate that there is no practicable alternative way of accommodating the needs of both cyclists and pedestrians for safe and free flowing movement.

The creation of new roads with no footways for pedestrians will be resisted.

Proposals for the improvement of existing footways, footpaths or cycle paths/tracks or the creation of new ones will be supported.

Proposals for the provision of pedestrian crossings in key locations which have been agreed to be acceptable to the Highway Authority will be supported. These shall include in proximity to schools, places of worship, GPs' surgeries/health centres, recreation facilities and shops.

### 9.8. Policy T7: Cycling Infrastructure

All proposals for new major development shall incorporate continuous and well-lit cycle paths/tracks linking with village centres, schools, busy destinations and surrounding countryside unless a developer can show that such provision would not be appropriate for the development proposed. In any event, developers shall demonstrate how the design will support and promote an increase in safe and free flowing cycling.

Proposals that involve the creation of new units of residential accommodation or new buildings for employment use, or that will be open to visiting members of the public, shall incorporate adequate facilities for the secure storage of bicycles.

Where new streets are to be created and it is practicable to do so, they should include lanes which provide separation between cyclists and motor vehicles. However, it shall be permissible for new shared roads/cycle routes to be provided if a developer can demonstrate that there is no practicable alternative. New shared roads/cycle routes shall in such cases incorporate appropriate elements of design and traffic calming in order to reduce average speeds.

Proposals for the improvement or extension of existing cycle paths, lanes or tracks or the creation of new ones will be supported.

An example of an extension to existing cycle lanes could be the creation of a continuous route by connecting the existing cycle lanes on Warwick Road via the former route of the Knowle Bypass,

in conjunction with dedicated paths through Knowle Park to meet and cross Station Road and to connect with new cycle paths within the land bounded by Station Road, Grove Road and Warwick Road.

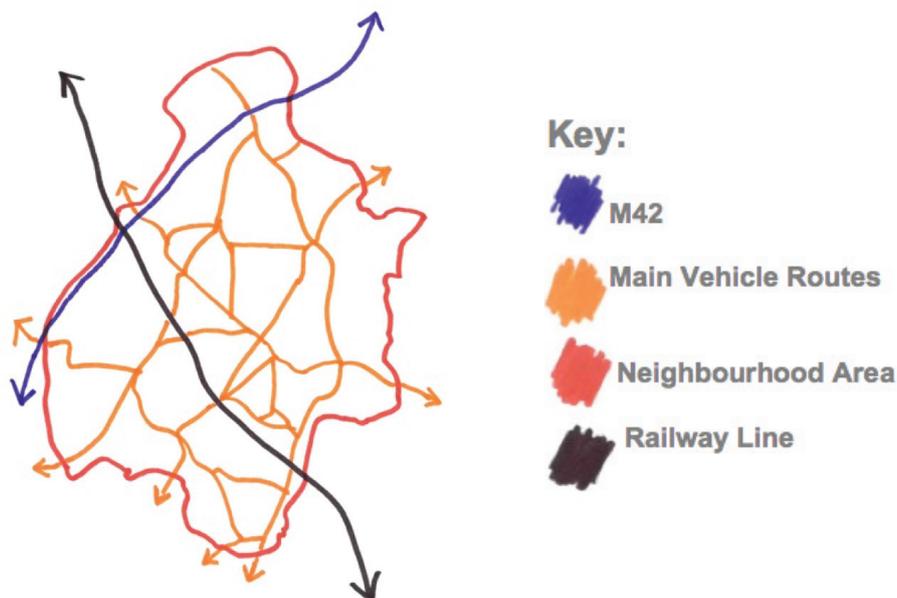
### 9.9. Policy T8: Road Infrastructure

Proposals for the improvement of the following roads/junctions will be supported provided that they take due account of the environmental sensitivities of the area within which they are located:

- junction of Station Approach / Avenue Road / Dorridge Road including the reinstatement of the former roundabout
- provision of a dedicated area for taxis/drop-offs at Dorridge station
- St John's Close
- junction of Hampton Road / Lodge Road / High Street / Warwick Road
- Gate Lane
- Poplar Road.

Any development that will be accessed from a major road shall incorporate appropriate measures on and off-site to ensure that the safety and free flow of local traffic is not compromised. Where appropriate and practicable, there shall be more than one principal point of access to the development.

“Major roads” are: Gate Lane, Earlswood Road, Grange Road, Four Ashes Road, Box Trees Road, Widney Road, Manor Road, Station Road, Tilehouse Green Lane, Mill Lane, Slater Road, Lady Byron Lane, Poplar Road, Warwick Road, Grove Road, Lodge Road, Longdon Road, Hampton Road, Kenilworth Road and Jacobean Lane.



Map of the movement and connectivity in KDBH Neighbourhood Area  
Source: Heritage and Character Report October 2017

### 9.10. Policy T9: Public Transport Infrastructure

The provision of bus shelters will be supported where they would have no adverse effect on the streetscape or the free flow of pedestrians.

Measures which facilitate Dorridge Railway Station remaining a staffed station with high frequency rail services to Birmingham and London will be supported.

Measures that facilitate the use of future forms of mass/sustainable transport infrastructure will be supported.

Measures that might facilitate the role of Dorridge Station could include the provision of additional retail/catering facilities and parking spaces as well as the lengthening of platforms.

### 9.11. Policy T10: Infrastructure for Cleaner Transport

The provision of charging facilities for electric vehicles will be supported.



## Section 10: Education and Community Facilities (including Healthcare, Sport, Recreation and Leisure)

The key issues raised and policy drivers are:

- that existing education and community services, including healthcare, are maintained and expanded to meet the needs arising from new development
- that facilities proposed in new housing developments are delivered and made available to the community as planned
- to address the need for new and improved sport, recreation and leisure facilities for local people, and in particular indoor leisure, sport and recreation
- to improve availability of facilities for the under 18's (eg meeting places / youth clubs)
- to expand the provision of outdoor sport, leisure and recreation facilities
- to provide facilities for sport, recreation and leisure appropriate for the elderly
- to improve access to, and availability of, facilities for the arts and culture, including library facilities
- to enable sufficient pre-school and childcare provision for those in the KDBH Area both now and in the future
- to address shortcomings in the current provision of lifelong learning and improve provision in the future.

This gives rise to the following policy goal:

### 10.1. Education and Community Facilities - Policy Goal

To maintain, enhance and extend education and community facilities to address the needs of existing and future local residents, including for the young and the elderly. New provision provided as part of housing developments should be well located for access, particularly by walking and cycling, and operate with formal management arrangements that ensure on-going availability to, and effective use by, the community.

### 10.2. Policy ECF1: Formal Education - Places for Local Pupils

Where funding from new housing development is used to sponsor the construction of new school buildings, these facilities together with the existing local schools' infrastructure, must have the ongoing capacity within the KDBH Area to accommodate the increased demand for places. New development must not adversely impact on the existing provision for local pupils.

Although there is a high level of satisfaction with the current provision for statutory education, there is considerable concern about the future. The main concern arises from KDBH residents wanting to be able to access places in local schools of their choice, particularly primary, where there is growing demand from new housing. A consequence of providing more housing suitable

for downsizing will be the release of more family housing, thereby potentially adding more pressure on school places from migration of pupils into the Area. All relevant parties need to work together to ensure that there always remains sufficient capacity within the local schools' infrastructure for the number of young people resident within the KDBH Area.

The intention of this policy also applies to pre-school and childcare provision, accepting that these are subject to additional commercial considerations.

Under this policy, "funding" shall mean not only direct funding from the public purse or from developer contributions, but also funding in kind through the use of public land.

The provisions of the policy will be given effect through the use of planning obligations.

### 10.3. Policy ECF2: Formal Education - Location of New Schools

Where the need for additional pupil capacity has been demonstrated, provision of new or expanded schools will be supported, provided that:

- the location is conveniently situated for pupils from within the KDBH Area and has adequate car parking, safe drop off and pick up provision and easy access by local public transport without any significant additional impact on traffic congestion. New or improved walking and cycling routes will be strongly encouraged.

Survey findings indicate relatively high levels of concern about existing traffic congestion and safety, notably that associated with the start and end of the school day. Roads affected include Station Road and Widney Road, both of which are key routes within and between the villages. This policy aims to ensure that this situation is not exacerbated.

The interpretation of "conveniently situated" will be assessed on a case by case basis, taking into account such factors as the expected age profile of pupils and the school's admission policy.

Proposals for new or extended schools should also comply with other relevant Plan policies



Arden Academy, Knowle

including, but not limited to, those in the Design and Village Character sections.

#### 10.4. Policy ECF3: Protection of Community Facilities and Services

Planning permission for the demolition or change of use of sites or properties used as community facilities will not be granted unless the applicant can clearly provide evidence that:

- the community facility or asset is no longer needed
- the development would not result in a shortfall of community facilities
- new facilities of equivalent or better quality/community value will be provided in an equally suitable and accessible location.

In the case of commercial premises, the applicant must also provide evidence that:

- the current use is not economically viable
- the site or property has been actively marketed over a period of 12 months or more and there is no realistic interest in its retention in its current use or for an alternative community use.

KDBH residents value the wide range of community services and facilities that they currently enjoy and use extensively and want to protect them from being reduced or lost. Community buildings include: local schools, Knowle Library, Bentley Heath Community Hall, Dorridge and Knowle Village Halls, Downing Hall, the Knowle and Dorridge scout huts, sports facilities, allotments, doctors' and dental practices, places of worship and their halls, and, potentially, commercial premises such as post offices, chemists and public houses that are a vital part of village life. The MIND garden (to the rear of Greswolde House, Station Road, Knowle) is also included. This policy seeks to safeguard assets valued by the community by applying the tests set out in the policy.



Dorridge Surgery, one of three GP surgeries in KDBH already feeling the impact of new development.

## 10.5. Policy ECF4: New Housing Development - Investment in Community Facilities

New housing developments will contribute to enhancing local community facilities to meet the needs of new residents. This can be achieved either by building new facilities or by expanding or improving existing facilities in a way that does not adversely affect current provision. This may be funded by financial contribution (Section 106 contribution or Community Infrastructure Levy, as appropriate).

Opportunities to create new facilities that enhance the range and quality of provision available to the KDBH community as a whole will be strongly encouraged. New or enhanced facilities will be expected to be available for use on a timely basis, in accordance with agreed plans. The phasing of provision will depend on the specific circumstances of each individual development.

This policy seeks to address the local concern that further large scale housing development will lead to unacceptable adverse impacts on community services, some of which are already under pressure.

New developments will provide capacity to meet the resulting overall increased or additional need in the KDBH Area in relation to, for example:

- new or expanded health services, particularly doctors' surgeries, dental practices and related local medical services;
- suitable venues for community activities, including new or improved existing venues such as halls and church halls, scout/guide huts, buildings for youth activities and adult learning venues; and
- recreation, leisure and sports facilities including indoor and outdoor sports to meet the needs of new residents of all ages.

The Neighbourhood Forum will expect these additional or enhanced community facilities to benefit the wider community.

In support of Policy ECF4, and subsequent Policies ECF5 and ECF6, the Neighbourhood Forum will work with other relevant bodies, residents, businesses and Solihull Council to ensure that a list is prepared of improvements that people would like to see made to local community facilities, services and infrastructure. This list might include, for example, improvements to village halls, the local environment, cycling or walkways. The items within this list will be candidates to be funded by the available financial contributions raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

## 10.6. Policy ECF5: Recreation, Leisure and Sport

The KDBH community will welcome applications for the provision and extension of both indoor and outdoor venues for recreation, leisure and sport and in particular facilities that would:

- widen the range of local sport, leisure and recreational facilities
- allow proportionate use by all groups, community sectors and individuals within KDBH
- be conveniently located relative to sustainable forms of transport
- cause no material harm to residential amenity
- satisfy other Plan policies including but not limited to those in the Design, Transport and Village Character sections.

This policy covers aspects that would provide benefits to all members of the community, including the young and the elderly.

## 10.7. Policy ECF6: Community Access and Management

Where housing allocations include proposals for new community facilities, a Community Access Statement will be required at the planning application stage setting out arrangements for providing and maintaining public access, as well as securing future management of the facility. The KDBH Neighbourhood Forum and local Residents' Associations will be consulted on the Community Access Statement as part of the planning application consultation.

Large scale housing allocations have been proposed on the edge of the KDBH built area that reference provision of various community facilities, including schools, a doctors' surgery, local shop and extensive sports facilities. At this stage of preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan (pending progress on the Draft Local Plan and the scale of new housing allocations), there is no clarity or certainty over the nature of such provision, or how and when it will be delivered.

Concept masterplans will be expected to clarify these matters before the planning application stage. In the absence of any certainty, however, this policy sets a framework for the delivery and improvement of new community services and facilities. The submission of a Community Access Statement, in consultation with residents' representatives, will provide transparency regarding how new facilities will be delivered and made available to local residents.

The Community Access Statement shall cover matters such as:

- the facilities to be provided, indicating those that are integral to the development and certain to be provided and those which may be aspirational, pending further feasibility and viability assessment
- the proposed arrangements for community access including significant but proportionate daytime availability to groups and individuals within KDBH, and
- the proposed management of the facility by means of a management plan to demonstrate how its long- term future will be secured.

## Section 11: Employment, including Retail and Other Commercial Uses

The policy drivers and target outcomes are to:

- protect existing employment
- maintain an appropriate balance of retail facilities within the three villages
- support creation of a business centre and other opportunities for employment/business uses
- promote and encourage working from home.

This gives rise to the following policy goal:

### 11.1. Employment - Policy Goal

To protect and enhance local employment uses, create places to do business together and maintain a range of shops and services that meet the ongoing need of all sectors of the community. Working from home and the safeguarding of employment sites will be supported, together with a new business centre.



Knowle High Street

## 11.2. Policy E1: Retention of Shops and Services

In respect of planning applications affecting existing shops, offices or premises for trade in services to the public, the maintenance of a balance of shops, services and premises will be a priority. The balance of uses will be assessed having regard to the impact of the proposed loss of a shop or service on the vitality of the frontage within which it is located, and on the mix of uses within the centre as a whole.

In relation to each village centre this means:

### **Dorridge:**

Proposals resulting in the loss of existing ground floor units on Station Approach, Station Road and Arden Buildings for use as shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, and hot food takeaways (within Part A of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning Act (Use Classes) Order 1987) will be resisted.

### **Bentley Heath:**

Proposals resulting in the loss of existing ground floor shop units (within Class A1) will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the use of the premises for that purpose is no longer viable. In such case, proposals for the change of use to other uses within Class A of the Use Classes Order, or to an alternative use that would provide benefits to the local economy or community of equal or greater benefit than the existing use, will be supported subject to there being no unacceptable impact on residential amenity or car parking.

### **Knowle:**

Within primary retail frontages, planning applications which would result in the loss of ground floor shop units (within Use Class A1) will be resisted. In secondary frontages, a mix of shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments and hot food takeaways and offices (within Use Classes A1 to A5 and B1a) will be supported, subject to there being adequate car parking, no unacceptable impact on amenity and no adverse impact on the character of the area. Primary and secondary frontages are shown in Appendix 6.

The use of upper floors above ground floor commercial units for residential or office uses will be supported, provided there is no unacceptable impact on residential amenity or car parking provision.

The findings of the Residents' Survey and the Business Survey showed support for retaining and supporting local employment. The local shops, services and offices within the village centres are an important source of local employment which the policy seeks to protect. At the same time, there is a degree of dissatisfaction with the range of retail outlets, although not a consistent view about what might be ideal. The retention and encouragement of independent shops is often mentioned in the survey feedback. There is also reference to the desire for a post office in Dorridge and improved supermarket facilities in Knowle. There is a strong view from businesses that high-street shops should be protected and the current mix maintained.

This policy seeks to maintain and improve local shopping facilities and services, including local offices, to safeguard their vitality and viability and provide a comprehensive range of shops and services for use by residents. The policy aims to reflect the differing size and role of each centre. The Heritage and Character Study recommended a policy for Dorridge to maintain village centre uses within the square formed by Arden Buildings to ensure that incremental change over time to residential use would be resisted. The policy aims to achieve this and extends the protection to the Station Approach and Station Road frontages.

The Bentley Heath centre is much smaller and the loss of existing shop units around the junction of Widney Road and Slater Road would impact on the provision of local convenience shopping. The policy therefore seeks to protect these uses.

Knowle village centre is much larger and a different approach to maintaining a balance of uses is therefore proposed, based on primary frontages where the retention of shops will be a priority. A greater mix of retail and non retail commercial uses will be supported in both primary and secondary frontages.

### 11.3. Policy E2: New Development in Village Centres

Proposals for the erection or change of use of buildings within the village retail centres will be granted subject to:

- the scale of development being proportionate to its location
- there being no unacceptable impact on the character of the area, particularly if located in a Conservation Area
- there is no material harm to residential amenity
- an overall mix of uses is maintained consistent with policy E1
- adequate provision is made for car parking and servicing.

This policy covers shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways, and business uses (within Part A and Class B1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended).

This policy intends to provide a positive framework to encourage new developments across a wide range of uses appropriate to the village centres to support their vitality and role as employment centres. It complements policy E1 in recognising the differing roles played by each centre and the criteria that new developments must satisfy. Whilst small units of a size similar to existing units would normally be appropriate in principle for such uses, subject to the above tests, larger development proposals will also be subject to the policies of the Solihull Local Plan, having regard to their status and role as retail centres within the Borough.



Sainsburys - new development in 2015 reviving the heart of Dorridge.

#### 11.4. Policy E3: Business Centre

Proposals for the erection, or change of use, of a building to provide a business centre will be granted provided that:

- adequate car parking and servicing is available
- the premises are in a suitable location in relation to neighbouring uses
- there are no material effects on residential amenity
- there is no material harm to the appearance and character of the area.

The preferred location would be in or adjoining an existing village centre.

Residents in Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath are supportive of a business centre which could include low-cost, flexible workspaces, meeting rooms, communications technology and managed services for local start-ups, small enterprises, freelancers and home workers.

#### 11.5. Policy E4: Working from Home

Planning applications that would enable working from home will be supported where there would be no unacceptable harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers or to the character and appearance of the area.

The residents of KDBH are in favour of working from home and see this as a form of employment to be promoted and encouraged. In most cases, working from home would not amount to a “material change of use” and would not need planning permission. However, there will be instances where running a business from home constitutes a new use requiring planning permission. In these circumstances, the main considerations are noise and disturbance. This could arise from the operation of any equipment or from the comings and goings, including parking, of people calling at the premises. Where no significant concerns arise, working from home is to be welcomed.

## Section 12: Communications Infrastructure and Utilities

The policy drivers and target outcomes are to:

- Improve broadband and mobile phone reception
- Ensure that the services and communications infrastructures meet the needs of the population, support businesses and are future-proofed
- Achieve high standards of water management and avoiding flooding.

This gives rise to the following policy goal.

### 12.1. Infrastructure - Policy Goal

Infrastructure and utilities for energy, communications and water drainage shall meet the needs of users and be secured in a way that is friendly to the environment. They shall be planned so as keep pace with advances in technology and innovation. Communications infrastructure will support the digital economy and facilitate working from home.

### 12.2. Policy U1: Mobile Phone and Broadband Infrastructure

The provision of mobile phone masts and other telephony or communications transmission or receiving equipment will be permitted provided that, either alone or in combination, they are not materially harmful to the character or appearance of the area within which they are located. Measures that allow for the provision of a good mobile phone service to every new home or business from more than one provider will be supported provided that this does not lead to an unacceptable proliferation of equipment above ground. Through the provision of ducts and draw pits, allowance shall be made for the installation of fibre optic cables to every new home and business.

Many residents in KDBH have recorded a poor mobile phone or broadband service. Good mobile telephony and fast broadband speeds are an essential aspect of modern living. They support working from home and make a vital contribution to the digital economy as well as reducing the need to travel. Measures that support improved provision will be encouraged and supported.

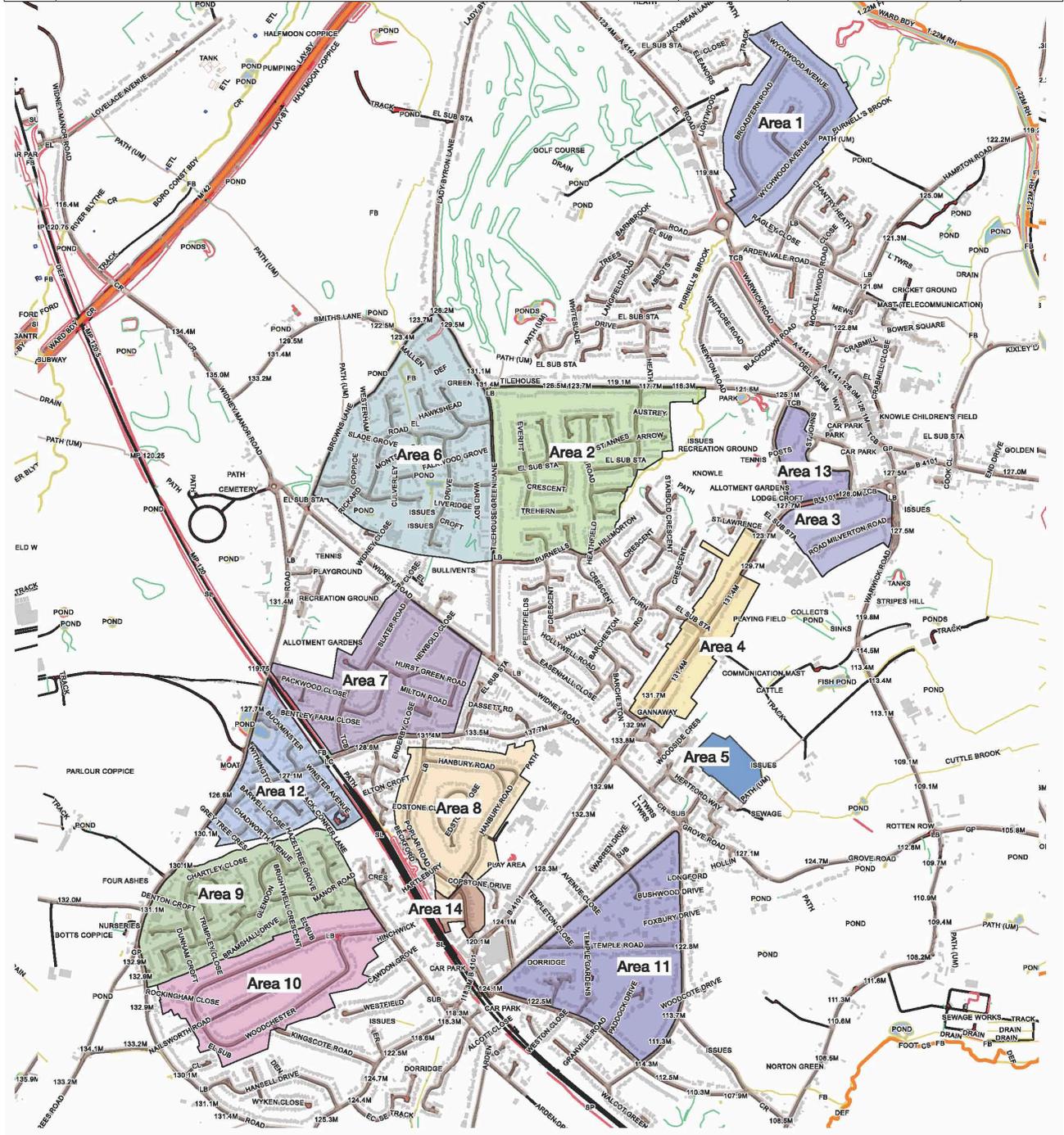
Providers will be expected to share equipment, where practical, but new and replacement transmission or receiving equipment will be approved in the circumstances set out in the policy. Multiple equipment in any particular area should be avoided as should the provision of equipment where it would result in or compound an unacceptable clutter of street furniture.

Issues raised in relation to water management, flooding and drainage are addressed in the Solihull Local Plan.

# Appendix 1: Housing Density Map

## KDBH Estimated Housing Density Examples 31/05/17

Area	Streets	Age	Dwellings	Hectares	Density/ha
1	Wychwood Ave/Broadfern Rd/Holland Ave	1950	193	15.90	12.14
2	Longdon Rd/Tilehouse Green La/Purnells Way	1950/70	520	26.74	19.45
3	Milverton Rd/Warwick Rd/Station Rd(from bus stop to Arden Achool)	1930	101	6.18	16.34
4	Station Rd (From Arden School to roundabout)	1950	97	9.31	10.42
5	Middlefield Development	2017	110	2.86	38.46
6	Tilehouse Green La/Browns La/Widney Rd	1980	461	30.37	15.18
7	Slater Rd/Packwood Close/Hurst Green Rd/Mill La	1950/60	446	19.15	23.29
8	Poplar Rd/Hanbury Rd/Edstone Close	1950/60	248	14.38	17.25
9	Glendon Way/Pembridge Rd/Chadworth Ave/Manor Rd (to Conker Lane)	1990	353	20.63	17.11
10	Rodborough Rd/Besbury Close/Woodchester	1950	202	18.82	10.73
11	Avenue Rd/Knowle Wood Rd/Dorrige Rd	1930/50/70	183	22.39	8.17
12	Mill La/Buckminster/Manton/Four Ashes	1930/50/51	294	12.13	24.24
13	St Johns/Lodge Rd/Station Rd		142	3.72	38.20
14	Fennis Close/Copstone Dr/Station Rd		74	1.91	38.70



## Appendix 2: Opportunities and Key Issues

Drawing on all the evidence base, the table below summarises feedback on the opportunities and challenges facing the KDBH community.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation of the villages from Solihull and other settlements</li> <li>• Village feel</li> <li>• Easy access to the open countryside</li> <li>• Conservation Areas</li> <li>• Low density housing</li> <li>• Open space in the built area</li> <li>• Green streetscape</li> <li>• Features such as low boundary walls/hedging</li> <li>• Excellent schools</li> <li>• Independent shops</li> <li>• Quality of property</li> <li>• Quality of built environment</li> <li>• Good transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of parking both on and off street</li> <li>• Commuter and school parking</li> <li>• Traffic flow at peak times</li> <li>• Infrastructure not keeping pace with new developments</li> <li>• Poor design of new developments (large and small) in relation to existing</li> <li>• Lack of design for practical elements such as bin storage, parking, garages</li> <li>• New developments not taking ground levels into account</li> <li>• Boundary treatments, particularly the edge to the open countryside</li> <li>• Over-reliance on car transport</li> <li>• Lack of cycling provision</li> <li>• Poor mobile phone and broadband coverage and its effect on business</li> <li>• Limited youth facilities</li> <li>• Housing market 'stickiness' due to lack of homes suitable for downsizing from large properties</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce the special character of the three villages</li> <li>• Deliver improved infrastructure (community, recreation and transportation)</li> <li>• Deliver better quality schemes</li> <li>• Schemes to be taken to Design Review</li> <li>• Build tenure blind developments</li> <li>• Retain hedgerows and boundary treatments and replicate in new development</li> <li>• Encourage retail uses</li> <li>• Deliver improved services and infrastructure for young people and the elderly</li> <li>• Address the need for dementia homes and starter homes</li> <li>• Protect and enhance community meeting places as hubs of village life</li> <li>• Enhance leisure and recreational facilities</li> <li>• Protect existing employment sites</li> <li>• Consider allocating land for creation of a business centre</li> <li>• Promote maintenance and improvement of green spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed scale and density of new development adversely affecting village character and infrastructure</li> <li>• Erosion of separation of the villages from other settlements</li> <li>• Community has no say in release/use of Green Belt</li> <li>• Loss of Green Belt and natural landscape</li> <li>• Lack of delivery of infrastructure or poor timing</li> <li>• Meeting local housing need for younger people starting out and for downsizing</li> <li>• Over development of both infill plots and large plots.</li> <li>• Poor design of development</li> <li>• Balancing land efficiency v green belt character</li> <li>• Inappropriate traffic schemes/junction works eg traffic lights</li> <li>• Existing rights of way/access to countryside being diverted and closed in by panel fences</li> <li>• Change of use affecting retail economy</li> <li>• Increased housing and external demand threatening capacity and community priority access to local schools</li> </ul>



## Appendix 3: Community Actions

In developing the Neighbourhood Plan, local residents and businesses have raised a range of issues not related to land use. Where these are important local matters, they have been included here as Community Actions.

Community  
Action



Community Actions do not have statutory weight, but are nevertheless matters that the KDBH Forum wishes to pursue in collaboration with our Residents Associations, local businesses, Councillors, Solihull Council, other community groups, and relevant organisations. The latter might variously include GP Practices and other healthcare providers, schools and their Boards of Governors, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Friends of the Earth, local ramblers' groups, cycling groups, transport user groups and infrastructure service providers.

The list is ambitious and needs community involvement to prioritise according to preferences and availability of resources.

### Village Character and Natural Environment

- 1** Measures to **protect and enhance Knowle Conservation Area**:
  - a. Review of "Article 4 directions" with a view to withdrawing further permitted development rights, where appropriate, in the Conservation Area. Consider whether this should also apply to Dorridge Conservation Areas.
  - b. Prepare development briefs for the opportunity sites identified in the Knowle Conservation Area Appraisal.
  - c. Consider opportunities for enhancement, particularly in the area between High Street and St John's Close.
  - d. Review the list of listed buildings (in partnership with Historic England) to include buildings of local interest.
  - e. Consider further work in the High Street area to include traffic calming, pedestrian priority and environmental enhancement.

- 2** Draw up a **Tree Management Plan** to provide a management regime for existing trees and plan ahead for future planting needs.

- 3** Promote a **Green Spaces Plan** directed at managing the future needs of existing green spaces, promoting new green spaces in new developments and providing more rigorous policing of littering, dog-fouling and fly tipping in and around green open spaces. Also review maintenance regimes to ensure that existing public sports, leisure and recreation facilities are maintained to their existing standard or, where possible, improved.

- 4** Explore the possibility of **measuring air pollution levels** on M42 Junctions 4 – 6. Use results to inform responses to new development proposals. Monitor the effects of new development on the local built and natural environments and on residents' living conditions over the Plan Period.

### Traffic and Transport

- 1** **Parking:** press SMBC to review the following:
  - a. On-street parking in selected streets with the overarching objective that major roads (see Policy T8 for definition) and bus routes should be free from on-street parking, with limited exceptions, to facilitate highway safety and free flow of traffic.
  - b. Resident/visitor parking permits in streets where off-street parking is not provided for residents.
  - c. Effective policing by SMBC of off/on-street parking to reduce unauthorised parking.
  - d. The need for Traffic Regulation Orders in key locations where on-street parking or traffic priorities need to be changed, especially at St John's Close and the adjacent car parks.

- 2** **Walking:** Review the condition of all footpaths and pavements/footways in KDBH and call for SMBC/landowners (as appropriate) to repair defects.

- 3** **Cycling:**
  - a. Review the condition of all cycle paths/lanes/tracks in KDBH and call for SMBC/landowners (as appropriate) to repair defects.
  - b. Lobby for the creation of separate cycle routes in appropriate places, that may include in public parks, to encourage cycling.



## Appendix 3: Community Actions

### Traffic and Transport (continued)

#### 4 Roads:

- a. Review the condition of public roads and road signage in KDBH and call for SMBC to repair defects and to clean/clear obscured signage.
- b. Identify roads that lend themselves to one-way systems, draw up proposals and consult on their introduction.
- c. Identify roads that lend themselves to traffic calming measures, draw up proposals and consult on their introduction.
- d. Identify roads where speed needs to be reduced, draw up proposals and consult on their introduction.
- e. Consider the feasibility and desirability of a route to take through traffic out of the centre of Knowle.

#### 5 Public Transport: campaign for improvements to include:-

- a. Increased frequency of bus and rail services, and introduction of additional routes, to provide a more efficient and effective service to more destinations.
- b. Sufficient bus shelters and real time bus information at bus stops.
- c. Good value public transport and easier ways to buy travel tickets - e.g. Oyster style cards, contactless card payment on bus/train
- d. Creation of sufficient off-street parking spaces in Dorridge for rail users.

#### In addition, residents wish to:

- e. Ensure that Dorridge station remains staffed and continues to enjoy high frequency direct services to Birmingham and London
- f. Make KDBH's voice heard inside the West Midlands Combined Authority and other regional transport bodies.
- g. Explore the possibility of KDBH hosting a pilot/trial of driverless vehicles e.g. for school run, or an "Uber" style on-demand taxi/bus service (could be useful for certain user groups such as pensioners.)

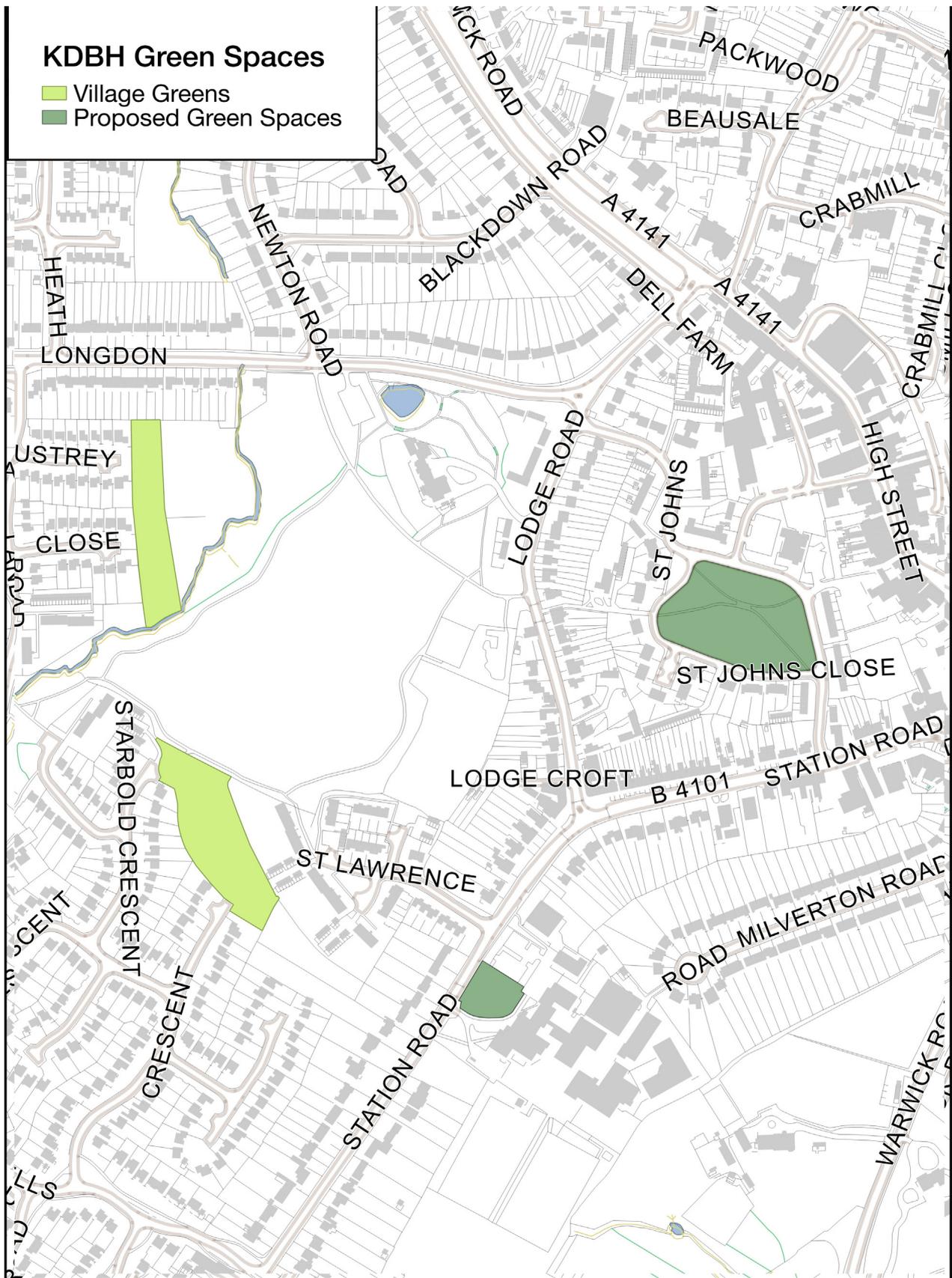
### Communications Infrastructure and Utilities

- a. Identify areas where mobile phone and broadband coverage is poor and lobby providers to improve their infrastructure.
- b. Campaign for essential fibre to become possible for every home in KDBH.
- c. Identify areas where flooding has occurred in the past, or where surface water tends to collect during periods of wet weather, and lobby SMBC or STW as relevant to carry out remedial work for which they are responsible (e.g. clearing roadside ditches).

### Education and Community Facilities

- a. Press for ongoing appropriate access to schools within the KDBH Area for local young people within the Area.
- b. Support initiatives that improve the planning and coordination of, and additional provision for, local pre-school and childcare.
- c. Support schemes intended to increase the number of healthcare professionals working in the Area providing services to the KDBH population.
- d. Support schemes intended to increase the consistency of healthcare services in the Area and/or reduce the need for travel.
- e. Encourage the establishment of a local base, or bases, for lifelong learning opportunities.
- f. Encourage provision of additional resources, including voluntary staffing, to maintain and further develop learning centres, libraries and other points of community access to information, knowledge and cultural resources.

## Appendix 4: Local Green Spaces and Village Greens



## Appendix 5: Policy D2 Design in Conservation Areas

This Appendix provides a summary of the key principles that apply to the design of shop fronts and advertisements in Conservation Areas as referred to in Policy D2.

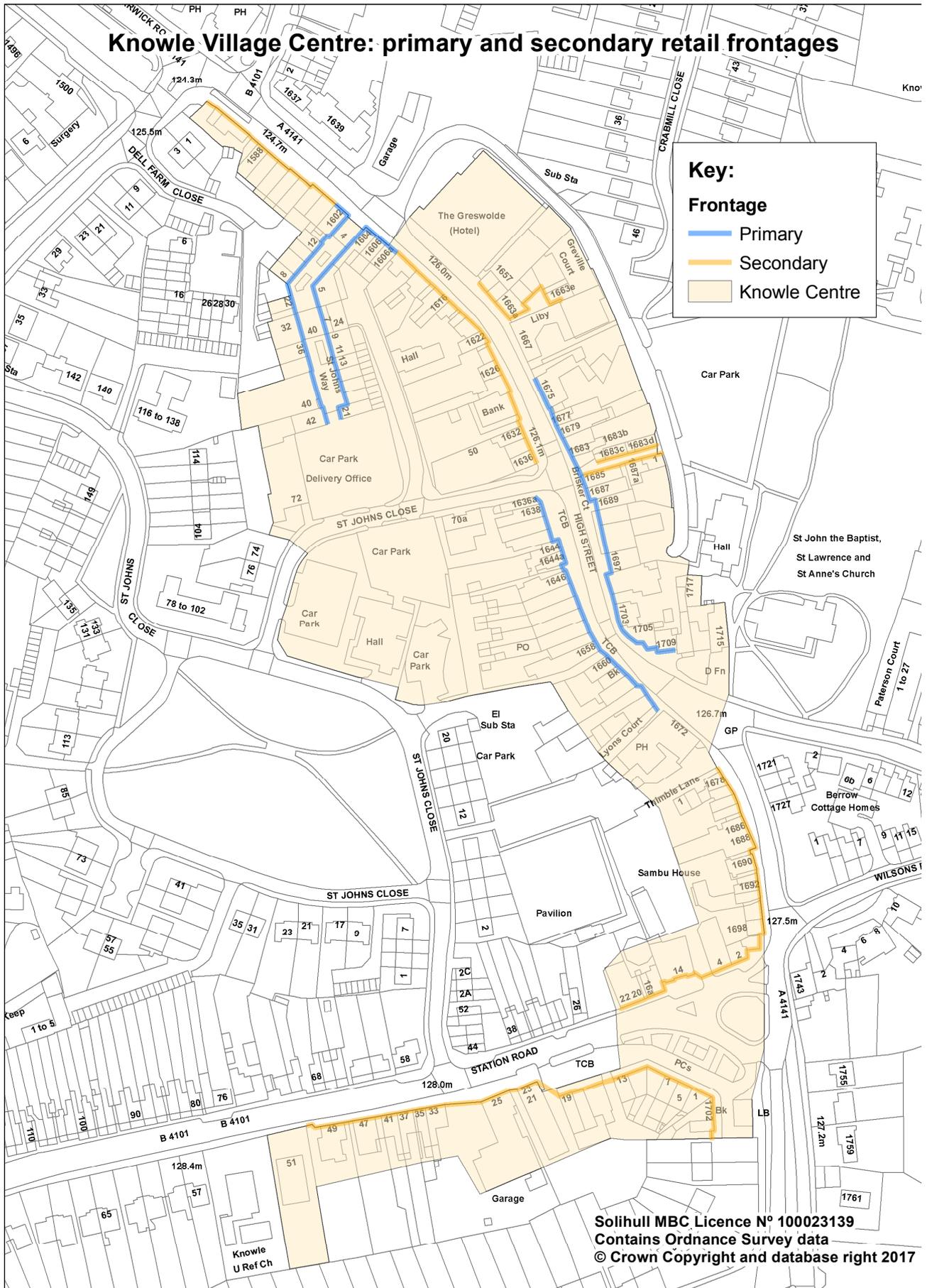
### Advertisements

- Advertisements in conservation areas should be restrained in terms of their size, colour materials and appearance and should relate well to the design and appearance of the building upon which they are to be displayed.
- Any proposed method of illumination should be either internal or very discreet in its design. Fascia-length internally illuminated box signs and any plastic blinds will generally be considered inappropriate in an historic context. Such applications will be refused.
- Free standing poster-type signs will generally be considered inappropriate in conservation areas; if allowed, they should not compromise the setting and appearance of the area and should be located discreetly.
- Lettering on new signage should ideally be no more than 300mm in height in sensitive conservation area settings or where displayed on listed buildings, although the Council will consider each proposal on its individual merits. The Council will encourage the use of non-illuminated individual letters in very sensitive locations, such as on listed buildings.
- Projecting illuminated signs in plastic or metal will not generally be allowed in conservation area settings.
- In some circumstances, small, well designed and non-illuminated hanging signs, made of wood and with an appropriate bracket, may be judged to be more sensitive to the setting and will be considered more favourably.

### Shop Fronts and Display Windows

- Surviving shop fronts of merit should be retained where possible. Early 20th century shop fronts can be as unusual as 18th or 19th century examples. Features of value include blinds in blind boxes, shutters in shutter boxes against an upright, recessed doorways and stall-risers and are sometimes concealed behind later facings.
- Shop Blinds and Security Grills: Retractable apron blinds in canvas are often characteristic features of historic shop fronts and should be retained. Modern plastic canopies are not acceptable in conservation areas. External steel roller shutters are not appropriate for historic shop fronts. Traditional wooden shutters give protection and laminated glass and internally set chain-link screens are modern alternatives. Traditional stall risers are an effective deterrent to “ram raiders”, as are small shop windows between masonry piers.
- New shop fronts should be designed to be in sympathy with the rest of the elevation and should incorporate any ground floor details of interest. Large inserted plate-glass shop fronts without any visual support for the upper parts of the premises can have an unfortunate effect and shop fronts should not extend into the storey above or alter the proportions of first floor windows. The fascia board should be in scale with the building as a whole, and should be finished at the top with console brackets and a cornice or other capping. Not only is this traditional, but the cornice provides an architectural division between the modern shop front and the older upper floors.
- It is often unnecessary to provide display windows and thus alter a ground floor that is otherwise intact. Alterations should be minimal. Standard corporate shop fronts are seldom appropriate for historic buildings, nor are internally illuminated fascia boxes, although some forms of restrained halo-type illumination to fascia signage may be more acceptable.

# Appendix 6: Knowle Retail Frontages



## Appendix 7: Glossary

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
KDBH	Villages of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath	
	Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It does not include low cost market housing.
	Biodiversity	The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	A flat rate levy that is non negotiable. If a development is CIL liable, then 25% of that money raised will be made available by the Council to be spent on local projects of the community's choosing.
	Conservation Area	An area designated by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
	Green Belt	Designated land around a town or city to be kept permanently open and where there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development.
	Infill	The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.
	Infrastructure	All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, etc.
	Intermediate Affordable Housing	Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents. These can include shared equity products (e.g. Home-Buy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.
	Listed Buildings	Buildings and structures which are listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural and historic interest and whose protection and maintenance is the subject of special legislation.
	Major Residential Developments	Ten or more dwellings or sites of 0.5 hectares or more for residential development.
	(Open) Market Housing	Private housing for rent or for sale, where the price is set in the open market.
NP	NP Neighbourhood Plan	A plan forming part of the development plan prepared by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	A document setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
	Social Rented (Affordable) Housing	Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.