

Our ref. 9458. LPA2.HRW

Policy and Spatial Planning
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Council House
Manor Square
Solihull
B91 3QB

Email: psp@solihull.gov.uk

19th January 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

Representations to the Solihull Local Plan Review Scope, Issues and Options Consultation and Submission of Details for Inclusion in the Solihull Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Review 'Call for Sites': The Orchard, 79, Earlswood Road, Dorridge.

We write on behalf of our Client who owns The Orchard, 79, Earlswood Road, Dorridge as well as land between 39 and 79, Earlswood Road, Dorridge. You may recall that a letter has already been submitted in response to the current consultation on the Solihull Local Plan Review Scope, Issues and Options document and Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Review 'call for sites' in respect of land between 39 and 79, Earlswood Road, Dorridge. We now write to promote The Orchard, a partially previously developed site in the Green Belt, as a potential housing site.

It should be noted that the two sites within our Client's ownership are promoted independently and also jointly as a single larger site comprising land between 39 and 79 Earlswood Road and The Orchard, 79, Earlswood Road, Dorridge.

Our Client supports Growth Option G in the Local Plan Review document and requests that his sustainable and deliverable land be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development. A completed 'Call for Sites Proposal Form' together with a site plan with the site edged red and this letter, comprise the submission.



Background

The Solihull Local Plan Review initial consultation document recognises the need to identify a significant amount of additional housing land to meet the objectively assessed need and cross-boundary requirement. The document accepts that suitable sites which currently lie within the Green Belt will need to be identified and allocated for development. As part of the evidence work a Green Belt Assessment will be undertaken which will provide a 'relative' assessment of sites to allow them to be compared against each other. It is understood that the assessment will evaluate each site's contribution towards the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, in accordance with paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

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

It is our understanding that a detailed assessment of all sites submitted in response to the current 'call for sites' will be assessed within the forthcoming SHELAA Review document. In turn, we anticipate all Green Belt sites included within the SHELAA Review to be included within the Green Belt Assessment. We therefore wish to draw your attention to the suitability of our Client's land, The Orchard, 79, Earlswood Road, which lies adjacent to the site identified in the 2012 SHELAA as site number 285 – land between 39-79 Earlswood Road, Dorridge.

Merits of Growth Option G and Development on The Orchard, Earlswood Road, Dorridge

We commend the site to you for removal from the Green Belt and allocation in the Solihull Local Plan Review for residential development as an expansion of the rural settlement of Dorridge in line with Growth Option G. This Growth Option meets the sustainable development objectives of national and local planning policy. Expansion of the fairly large sustainable rural settlement of Dorridge which is well served by public transport, community, service and retail facilities would be in-line with sustainable development initiatives in the National Planning Policy Framework, the 'golden thread' running through all planning policy decisions.

The roughly rectangular site, which extends to approximately 1.2 hectares, is currently in residential use with built development comprising a substantial residential dwelling, detached associated service dwelling, leisure complex with swimming pool, and outbuildings. There is an extensive largely open grassed garden with perimeter trees and shrubs. The Orchard lies to the south west of Earlswood Road, opposite Hansell Drive. The site is bounded to the east by paddock land (owned by the Client and promoted previously for residential development 2012 SHELAA reference 285), and to the south and west by agricultural land. The opposite side of Earlswood Road is in residential use as is land to the east of 39 and 79, Earlswood Road.

Residential development on our Client's land would be a logical extension of the adjoining plot 39 to 79, Earlswood Road providing the opportunity to make the most

efficient use of a partially previously developed site, 'rounding-off' the village and continuing the existing line of residential development along the south western side of Earlswood Road on the edge of the settlement boundary. The north eastern side of Earlswood Road is already in residential use and therefore it would be entirely appropriate and compatible with existing uses for housing to be built on our Client's land. The existing garden/field boundaries could provide the new defensible Green Belt boundary as advised by paragraph 85 of the NPPF.

The site is well served by public transport with the nearest bus stop within a 4 minute walk at the end of Hansell Drive and Dorridge railway station only approximately 0.7 miles from the site. Since the 2012 SHELAA site assessment was undertaken, a large Sainsbury store has opened, along with a number of smaller retail units, adjacent to the station to complement the restaurant, retail and service units already on offer in the village centre. Dorridge now benefits from a much wider selection of goods and services making it a more sustainable location to direct further residential development.

Environment Agency flood risk maps show that the site does not lie in an area liable to the risk of flooding.

Development at a density of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare would enable a capacity of about 36 to 60 dwellings on this 1.2 hectare site. However, taken together with the adjacent paddock site between 39 to 79 Earlswood Road which extends to approximately 1.52 hectares, the two sites could accommodate approximately 81 to 136 dwellings. Either as an independent allocation or joint allocation of both plots, our Client's land would not only make a valuable contribution to the Borough wide shortfall in housing land supply, but it would also make a significant contribution towards the Government's most recent starter home initiative.

Although the site is not currently within the desirable accessibility criteria thresholds for primary schools - as set out in Solihull Local Plan Policy P7 'Accessibility and Ease of Access' - it does lie within the thresholds for secondary schools, health, fresh food etc. Sustainability is not an absolute concept and covers a wide range of topics. It would be unrealistic to consider a potential development as being sustainable only if it complied absolutely with every facet of sustainability. The creation of local construction and supply chain employment would be a sustainable benefit. In addition there would be continued economic benefit arising from the general uplift in the local economic base. Development on the site with a mix of types and size of dwellings would meet social sustainability objectives.

It is also important to note that the 'Scoping, Issues and Options Solihull Local Plan Review' consultation document recognises that there will be a need to invest in improved and extended infrastructure to support the scale of growth required to meet the objectively assessed housing need and economic growth. Paragraph 68 of the consultation document states that the Borough needs physical, social and green infrastructure to enable and support the growth required. As part of the evidence base the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be updated and a local transport strategy and investment programme is being drawn up.

It is anticipated that residential development adjacent to the existing residential properties on the opposite side of Earlswood Road and close to the ribbon of

development along this side of Earlswood Road, would be easily integrated into the village, a logical extension adjacent to the settlement boundary.

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

Summary

In summary, development for residential use on The Orchard, 79, Earlswood Road would:

- Make a significant contribution towards the unmet housing need which can contribute towards establishing an 'exceptional circumstance' case to justify an alteration of the Green Belt boundary;
- Provide the opportunity to create a sustainable settlement extension with a clear defensible physical boundary;
- Ensure the future viability of existing services and facilities and support higher frequency of public transport bus services;
- Enable development of a mix of types and size of homes to meet the social needs of the community to provide for a sustainable social cross section into the future, for example meeting the needs of those aspiring to have their own home with starter homes and affordable housing;
- Provide sustainable local construction and supply chain employment and continued economic benefits arising from the general uplift in the local economic base;
- Be compatible with the existing adjacent residential use to the south east, north west and north east;
- Be deliverable; and
- Be in accordance with the sustainable development objectives of the NPPF.

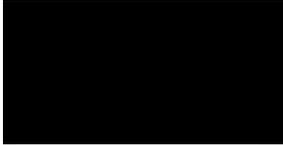
We contend that residential development at The Orchard, 79, Earlswood Road and on land between 39 and 79 Earlswood Road would be in line with the objectives of Growth Option G which is supported by our Client. We believe development here would be preferable to many other potential directions of growth and it would be an excellent location for future sustainable development, to contribute towards meeting the onerous development land shortfall.

We should be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter and confirm that the site will be included for assessment in the forthcoming SHELAA and the Green Belt Assessment and that all comments will be considered when preparing the Preferred Options version of the Solihull Local Plan Review.

We should also be grateful if you would confirm that our Client's two plots of land (The Orchard, 79, Earlswood Road and land between 39 and 79 Earlswood Road) will be assessed both independently and as a single larger site comprising both plots of land.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Helen Winkler Bsc (Hons), DipTP, MRTPI
Senior Planning Consultant
h.winkler@tyler-parkes.co.uk