



KDBH Neighbourhood Forum

Representations on Solihull Council's Submission Draft Local Plan:

Policy KN1 - Hampton Road, Knowle and Justification

1 Summary

These representations address firstly, an 'in principle' concern about the lack of evidence to demonstrate the deliverability of this allocation: and secondly a raft of measures that are needed to add to or strengthen policy provisions in relation to site KN1: Hampton Road, Knowle. They concern densities; Grimshaw Hall; trees and hedgerows; footpaths; engineering works; community use; primary health care; highway improvements; and concept masterplans.

2 Representations

2.1 Policy KN1

These representations are in two parts. The first part addresses the Forum's concerns around the deliverability and effectiveness of the KN1 proposals, including the relocation of the existing pitches and facilities of Knowle Football Club.

The second part addresses the measures that are required to add to and strengthen the policy provision in relation to KN1 in the event that evidence is produced to demonstrate that the deliverability issues can be satisfactorily resolved.

2.2 Part 1: Deliverability and Effectiveness Representations

The Forum welcomes the reduction in housing numbers on this site from 300 to 180. This is positive in terms of protecting the setting of Grimshaw Hall, reducing the visual impact on the Hampton Rd approach into Knowle, creating a green setting and a development more in keeping with local character. The Neighbourhood Plan also contains policies (ECF3 and ECF5) that support the provision of new or improved sports facilities subject to criteria. Policy ECF 6 seeks Community Access Statements to provide for access by the community.

The Forum's concerns stem from the lack of credible evidence to demonstrate that this site allocation will be viable and deliverable. Such concerns should be addressed primarily at the Local Plan stage¹ rather than be left to potential pressure to significantly amend the extent and quantum of housing in an unacceptable manner at the planning application stage. Worse still would be the inability to provide the new sports provision. This is a fundamental point because the original rationale provided by the Council for selecting two large development sites in Knowle was the ability to deliver significant community benefit in the form of new education and sports facilities². The delivery of such benefits, to offset the loss of large areas of Green Belt, is therefore of critical importance to the local community.

¹ www.gov.uk/guidance/viability p2

² "...new pitches and clubhouse could be a community facility", Michael Davies of Savills on behalf of the Knowle Football Club, recorded in the minutes of the KDBH Forum meeting of 7 December 2016.



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The National Planning Policy Framework requires³ that plans shall be deliverable. A key element is ensuring that necessary development contributions do not undermine deliverability.⁴ Further advice is provided in the Government's guidance "Viability and plan making".⁵ Proportionate evidence is also required.⁶

The Council's approach has been to examine the viability of various typologies. These include a Rural Greenfield (>200 dw) typology which is based on the Hampton Road site. However, the assessment ignores the fact that the proposed number of dwellings has now been reduced (from 300 to 180) and the site no longer fits into this typology.

It could be argued that a different typology should be applied, that relating to Rural Greenfield (<200 dw), based on a site at Frog Lane, Balsall Common. However, the site at Hampton Road, Knowle is subject to a large number of site-specific considerations, development requirements and abnormal costs.⁷ In addition to the physical constraints, there are land ownership and financial considerations which may impact on deliverability. The typology approach is not appropriate in this case and a bespoke assessment should be carried out.

With regard to land ownership and financial considerations, the Forum understands that Knowle Football Club has no legal interest in the land it occupies and that it is subject to restrictive covenants. Whilst the Forum is sympathetic to the Club's desire to improve its facilities, these raise significant concerns about the Club's ability to deliver, and to subsequently maintain, such a large new facility.

Without evidence to demonstrate that this housing allocation and associated sports benefits is deliverable, the effectiveness of the Council's Local Plan is in doubt and the requirements of the test of soundness have not been met. **In the absence of such evidence, Policy KN1 - Hampton Road, Knowle and related text should be deleted from the Plan.**

A second aspect in respect of deliverability relates to the effectiveness of proposed health and transportation mitigation measures. These are addressed in more detail in the Forum's comments on the Settlement Chapter. In summary, residents are particularly concerned at the lack of any firm proposals to create additional local health care provision, particularly local GP services which are already under pressure: and also at the very modest proposals to improve local transport infrastructure, particularly as regards improvements to bus services. The Forum has called for a step change in the provision of local bus services but the Council's Highways Officer has indicated that this is unlikely to be achieved as a consequence of the new development.⁸ Without more positive proposals, the outcome will inevitably lead to an increase in car borne trips, congestion and pollution, contrary to the sustainability aims of the Local Plan.

³ See, for example, Paras 16 b) and 35 c).

⁴ See NPPF Paras 34 and 57

⁵ www.gov.uk/guidance/viability

⁶ See NPPF Paras 31 and 35 b)

⁷ As before

⁸ Email from Walter Bailey, Highways Officer 27th November 2020



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2.3 Part 2: Measures Required to Address Issues and Strengthen Policy KN1

Policy KN1 – Density Matters

The representations on the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) settlement chapter (general matters) address the matter of densities on the allocated sites. So as to inform the design of future development, density constraints should be summarised in the supporting text. In addition, appropriate densities need to be set out in Policy KN1 as an important development principle. **(See Mod 1)**

Policy KN1 2i

Reducing harm to the Grade 1 listed building, Grimshaw Hall: Reducing harm is not an appropriate action. The Plan should refer to *significantly* reducing harm. The requirement to enhance the setting of Grimshaw Hall by providing landscaped amenity areas (Para 716) needs to be added to the policy. **(See Mod 2)**

Policy KN1 2iii

Retention of trees and hedgerows along Hampton Road: The important hedgerows that cross the site should also be retained. These are the double hedgerow along the public footpath and the hedgerow to the east-northeast of this.⁹ **(See Mod 3)**

Policy KN1 4ii

Appropriate facilities associated with the provision of outdoor sport in the Green Belt: There needs to be clear reference to the acceptability or otherwise of a replacement sports pavilion. **(See Mod 4)**

Policy KN1 2 – New Matter – Public Footpath

The public footpath should be retained along its current alignment. **(See Mod 5)**

Policy KN1 –2 New Matter – Engineering Works

Engineering works necessary in creating the housing and playing fields: There needs to be reference to the need for sensitivity in the related engineering works to minimise visual impact. **(See Mod 6)**

Policy KN1 - 4 New Matter - Community Use of Sports Facilities

Sports pitches and pavilion: delivery of, and access to replacement sports provision: There needs to be an explicit commitment to community use and to the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan policies ECF 5 and ECF6 - see above. **(See Mod 7)**

Policy KN1 - New Matter - Primary Health Care

There needs to be a commitment to use developer funding for related improvements to the local primary health care system. **(See Mod 8)**

⁹ See KDBH Masterplanning / Design and Design Coding, November 2017, p71



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Policy KN1 5iii - Highway Improvement

Traffic lights should be ruled out in the Conservation Area. There also needs to be reference to the junction of Arden Vale Road with Warwick Road. **(See Mod 9)**

Policy KN1 7 - Concept Masterplans

The reference to concept masterplans should not suggest that there could be a departure from the stated principles. **(See Mod 10)**

Policy KN1 - New Matter - Phasing of Development

The replacement sports provision needs to be closely related to the phasing of housing to ensure that housing does not take place on the site without the delivery of the playing pitches. A legal mechanism is required and should be a policy requirement. This would also cover funding and the nature of development. **(Mods 10a and 10b)**.

Justification of Policy KN1

Para 713 and 714 - Sports Pavilion

Regarding sports pitches and associated facilities, the Local Plan states, "the relocation proposals may contain elements that would amount to inappropriate development". This, presumably, refers to the pavilion and to any floodlighting, car parking and fencing. There needs to be explicit reference to the acceptability or otherwise of the sports pavilion and associated facilities (Para 714). **(See Mod 11)**

Para 714 - Very Special Circumstances

Reference to very special circumstances: It is not possible to say that very special circumstances *will* exist, rather they *are likely to* exist. **(See Mod 12)**

Para 715 - Site Characteristics

Reference to rounding off the settlement: This is a poor description. The allocation represents a significant incursion into the open countryside beyond the build-up limits of Knowle. Only existing development to the southeast is contiguous. **(See Mod 13)**

Para 716 - Hedges

Development to be confined to the area between the former hedge lines (now removed) and Purnell's Brook: The significant hedges are still in place (see above). **(See Mod 14)**

Para 718 - Accessibility

This site, particularly the northern site, does not perform very well in accessibility terms by walking or public transport. This should be amended. (see **Mod 15**)



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Para 719 - Spatial Option G

The reference to this allocation being consistent with Spatial Option G is incorrect. It should be Option F relating to the limited expansion of rural villages as set out in paras 62 and 69 of the Local Plan. **(Mod 16)**

3 Modifications

3.1 Policy KN1 - Hampton Road, Knowle

1. The site is allocated for 180 dwellings.

X Densities shall not exceed 35 dph other than in any care village or retirement complex developed on the southern part of the site. **(Mod 1)**

2. Development of the site should be consistent with the principles as shown in the concept masterplan, which include:

- i. Preserving the setting of the Grade 1 Listed Grimshaw Hall. Development should be set back from the immediate locality to avoid harm. The area between Hampton Road and the limits of the development shall be landscaped as amenity areas. Only if harm cannot be avoided should mitigation be considered, and then it should be fully justified and demonstrated to be successful in significantly reducing harm; **(Mod 2)**
 - ii. Provision of 1.4ha public open space. Any formal play features will need to be sympathetic to the historic setting of Grimshaw Hall;
 - iii. Retention of on-site trees and hedgerows and along Hampton Road to conserve the character of this approach into Knowle; **(Mod 3)**
 - iv. Retention of Local Wildlife Sites and provision of an appropriate buffer to Purnells Brook Woodland Local Wildlife Site. No development will be permitted on the Local Wildlife Site.
 - v. Provision of suitable SuDS and flood risk management. Development should be located outside of the areas identified as being higher risk flood zones.
 - vi. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity within and beyond the site boundary
 - vii. 5% of open market dwellings to be provided in the form of Self and Custom Build Plots in accordance with Policy 4D
 - viii. Relocation of the existing sports pitches and sports pavilion currently occupied by Knowle Football Club; **(Mod 4)**
- X Retention of the public footpath along its current alignment. **(Mod 5)**
- X Minimising harmful visual impacts as a result of the engineering works necessary to create the housing and playing fields. **(Mod 6)**



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3. The land currently accommodating Knowle Football Club has been identified as a potential site for the development of a care village or retirement complex. Subject to other policies in the Plan, the principle of older persons' accommodation in this location would be supported.
4. Replacement sports provision:
 - i. The current site of Knowle Football Club will not be available for redevelopment until the existing pitches have been re-provided and are ready for use, within the vicinity of the existing site.
 - ii. Appropriate facilities associated with the provision of outdoor sport will be permitted in the Green Belt, provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with purposes of including land within it.
 - iii. The preferred site for the relocation of the existing playing pitches is between the new development and the canal, as shown on the concept masterplan.
- X Community access shall be in accordance with terms agreed in accordance with Policies ECF5 and ECF6 of the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan. (Mod 7)
- X Developer contributions will be required for related improvements to the local primary health care system. (Mod 8)
5. Infrastructure requirements should include:
 - i. Financial contribution to new and improved education provision in Knowle, as proposed on Site Allocation KN2 South of Knowle (Arden Triangle);
 - ii. Reprovision of the existing sports pitches;
 - iii. Highway improvements as required including speed reduction measures and access improvements along Hampton Road, and highway capacity improvements at the A4141 junction and at the junction of Arden Vale Road with Warwick Road; **(Mod 9)**
 - iv. Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Knowle village centre and the Grand Union Canal towpath.
6. Green Belt enhancements should include:
 - i. Woodland planting;
 - ii. Improved landscaping;
 - iii. On site green and blue infrastructure that is multifunctional and accessible;
 - iv. Public open space;
 - v. Access improvements to the wider Green Belt beyond the site boundary;
 - vi. Delivery of, and access to replacement sports provision;
 - vii. Biodiversity enhancements;
 - viii. Any other compensatory improvements that are considered acceptable.



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7. The Concept Masterplan document should be read alongside this policy. Whilst the concept masterplans may be subject to change in light of further work that may need to be carried out at the planning application stage, any significant departure from the principles outlined for Site KN1 will need to be justified and demonstrate that the overall objectives for the site and its wider context are not compromised. there shall be no departure from the principles and other requirements applying to Site KN1 as set out in this policy. (Mod 10)
8. There shall be no commencement of development until a planning obligation has been executed governing the nature of the development; its timing and phasing; and the funding of all aspects. No more than 20% of the housing shall be occupied before the playing fields and sports pavilion are brought into use. (Mod 10a)

Justification

Paras 710 - 712 No change

Para 713 The current playing pitches will need to be re-provided and available for use prior to the redevelopment of the existing football club. The "nature of the development" referred to in the planning obligation shall include the number of houses, details of the proposed sports facilities and provision for use by the community. The funding provisions shall show how the housing will pay for the development of the sports facilities. (Mod 10b)

Commence para 714 'The preferred area of relocation is.....'

Para 714 (cont) The Council therefore believe that 'very special circumstances' will are likely to exist to support the relocation of the sports pitches and associated facilities and a sports pavilion of proportionate size. Notwithstanding this, development proposals should be sympathetic to its Green Belt location, local context and character, in accordance with other policies in the plan. **(Mod 11)**

Para 715 Delete **(Mod 12)**

Para 716 The northern part of the site is located immediately opposite the front elevation of the Grade I listed Grimshaw Hall. Evidence from the Council's Heritage Impact Assessment recognises the significance of this important heritage asset and identifies potential harm to its setting as a result of development in the immediate vicinity. It is therefore recommended that development should be confined to the western part of the site (as shown on the Concept Masterplan) between the former existing hedge lines (now removed) and Purnell's Brook. The areas between Hampton Road and limits of any new development should be landscaped as amenity areas to enhance the setting of the Hall. In making the recommendations, the guiding principle is to ensure that development cannot be seen from within the grounds of Grimshaw Hall and the concept masterplan for site 8 seeks to reflect this. **(Mod 13)**



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Additional para after Para 716

Given the need to respect the setting of Grimshaw Hall, and the density characteristics of the surrounding area, low and medium residential densities (up to 35dph) will be appropriate on the northern part of the site. The southern part of the site is closer to the amenities of Knowle village and to higher density development at Wootton Close. Given also the prospect of a care village or retirement complex on the site of the existing football club, a higher density would be acceptable in this location for such a use. (Mod 14)

- Para 718 The site performs very well in overall accessibility terms and there is good access to all key facilities in Knowle.
Amend to: the site is accessible to all key facilities in Knowle. (Mod 15)
- Para 719 Amend to: Development of Site 8 at Hampton Road is consistent with Option F of the Spatial Strategy for the limited expansion of rural villages. **(Mod 16)**