



# COUNTRYSIDE

Places People Love

14 March 2019

[REDACTED]  
Policy and Delivery  
Solihull Council  
Council House  
Manor Square  
Solihull  
West Midlands  
B91 3QB

Dear Sir/ Madam,

## **Solihull Draft Local Plan Review Representations**

### **Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Solihull MBC - 24 - January 2019: Lavender Hall Farm, Balsall Common - Site 23**

Representations are made by Countryside Properties (UK) Limited in relation to land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm, Balsall Common, identified by the Council within their Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Document as Site 23-Lavender Hall Farm. Countryside Properties have an active interest in the promotion of the land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm for housing development, which is supported by the landowner.

These representations respond to **Question 9** of the Supplementary Consultation Document. Question 9 asks "**Do you believe that Site 23 Lavender Hall Farm should be included an allocated site, if not, why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?**".

As an initial point, it is noted that an error has been made in the supporting Site Allocations Local Plan - Masterplans Document (2019), which identifies the Lavender Hall Farm housing allocation as Site 21 rather than Site 23 as referenced within the main Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Document 2019 (with the Pheasant Oak Farm housing allocation identified as Site 23 within the supporting Masterplan Document 2019). This will need updating and clarifying in any subsequent stages of the Local Plan Review process.

#### ***Lavender Hall Farm Allocation (Site 23)***

Countryside Properties supports the Council's inclusion of land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm (Site 23) as a housing allocation within the supplementary consultation document which supplements the earlier round of consultation on the Draft Local Plan Review which was undertaken by the Council in December 2016.

The identification of Lavender Hall Farm as a 'green site' falling within site hierarchy 'priority 3' (brownfield site in an accessible Green Belt location) as part of the Council's most recent site



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selection process, is considered to be justified and is fully supported. Land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm forms only a small parcel of land falling within a much larger parcel of Green Belt which will be significantly impacted upon by the construction of HS2, including the construction of a viaduct some 250meters long and 10meters high to the east of the site. Furthermore, the site which comprises of previously developed land and is identified within the Council's Brownfield Land Register is also bound to the south by the west coast mainline railway, enclosing the site by clearly defined physical features.

Furthermore, the 'Proposed Approach' taken by Solihull MBC to amend the existing green belt boundary to accommodate the level of housing growth required for the settlement is supported. In terms of land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm there is no functional reason for the land to remain in the Green Belt. Its removal will not harm any of the five purposes for Green Belt designation as identified at Paragraph 134 of the NPPF and Section 14 of the Supplementary Consultation Document, particularly given the changing context of the site with the construction of HS2, whilst the development of the site will meet with the requirements of Paragraph 138 of the NPPF which gives priority to land which has been previously developed and/or is well served by public transport in ensuring sustainable patterns of development come forward. Although land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm sits within a broader parcel of Green Belt identified as highly performing within the Council's Green Belt Assessment Report 2016, the Council have acknowledged that the HS2 line will provide a new feature separating this site from the wider Green Belt to the north east, which, in line with Paragraph 139 of the NPPF, will provide a clearly defined, as well as recognisable and permanent physical feature, which presents a logical boundary to the amended green belt.

Removing land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm from the Green Belt to assist in the delivery of a sustainable housing site which is able to contribute positively towards meeting the housing growth needs of Borough and the wider HMA is therefore supported. Land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm also offers the opportunity to provide a wide range of homes including a substantial proportion of affordable homes and to meet an identified need for smaller homes for young people wishing to remain within the area.

### ***Illustrative Emerging Concept Masterplan***

Land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm is identified within the Supplementary Consultation Document as having a capacity of 60 dwellings and within the accompanying Site Assessment 2019 document as having capacity for 63 dwellings. The development of the site for a minimum of 60 dwellings is therefore supported, however given the changing context of the site, as acknowledged within the Council's Site Analysis (Solihull Local Plan Site Allocations – Masterplans 2019), it is considered that a greater degree of flexibility should be given to the number of dwellings capable of being brought forward at the site to ensure that the efficient use of this sustainably located previously developed site is maximised. The supporting text at page 28 sets out that '*Medium and high-density development is proposed in order to maximise the efficient use of the land*' taking into account the changing context of the site, an approach which is supported.

It is noted however, that the Illustrative Emerging Concept Masterplan set out at page 28 is currently drawn to illustrate a mix of low and medium density housing rather than the inclusion of higher density housing provision to reflect the Council's recognition of the site's changing context with HS2 to be constructed immediately adjoining the northern boundary of land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm. This will alter greatly the site's immediate landscape context and



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in turn the landscape setting, whilst also having a significant impact on the setting of the Grade II\* listed Lavender Hall and Grade II listed Barn located immediately to the northwest of the site, presenting the opportunity for higher density development on a sustainably located brownfield site.

## Summary

Balsall Common is considered to be an excellent location for growth, a sustainable settlement offering a range a of services and facilities and well connected to accessible public transport links providing the ability to accommodate additional housing growth which is able to contribute towards the Council's housing requirements over the Plan Period up to 2028.

Land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm presents an ideal opportunity to provide much needed housing within the Borough whilst making the most efficient use of a previously developed site. Countryside Properties will also seek to deliver a significant proportion of affordable housing as well as much needed smaller dwellings which the Council are unable to accommodate within the existing settlement boundaries. Furthermore, although the site falls within the green belt, it forms only part of a much broader parcel of green belt land and the extent of land to be released from the green belt through the development of the land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm will not, as a result of the physical impact of HS2, have any fundamental impact on the five purposes of including land within the green belt. The need for significant additional housing across the borough alongside the construction of HS2 presents exceptional circumstances to justify a review of the existing green belt boundary.

In summary, land to the rear of Lavender Hall Farm is considered to be suitable, available and achievable for residential development with the ability to provide a minimum of 60 dwellings, including the provision of affordable housing to meet local housing needs. The Council's proposed allocation of Site 23 Lavender Hall Farm within the emerging Draft Local Plan is therefore fully supported.

If the Council require any further information in respect of the site this information can be provided on request.

  
**PAUL SHEPHERD**  
**Land Manager**  
**Countryside Properties**

