



Vision Document

Pheasant Oak Farm, Balsall Common

Prepared by BHB Architects on behalf of Barwood Land
March 2019

BARWOOD
LAND



Prepared for Barwood Land
by Brownhill Hayward Brown Ltd
in conjunction with
Peter Brett Associates & EDP



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A view of how development may come forward at Pheasant Oak Farm to create a varied area of public open space along its eastern perimeter.



An aerial view indicating the extent and character of the proposed development site.

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this document

The aim of this document is to describe how future development land at Pheasant Oak Farm, Balsall Common represents an opportunity for positive and beneficial growth. This document illustrates an indicative spatial framework which could inform the delivery of future residential development of the site.

The spatial framework has been prepared at the early, conceptual stages of planning for the site's redevelopment, and as such sets out a preliminary and high-level framework that will be refined going forward. Notwithstanding this, the document and the illustrated proposal have been prepared with a diligence and robustness to provide plan-makers with the confidence that the draft allocation is a credible and deliverable opportunity that will deliver meaningful benefits to the local area.

Whilst the spatial framework has been generated in response to both strategic and site-specific considerations and observations, detailed appreciation of constraints and their potential effect on the development will need further appraisal to guide the detailed layout of any development and the number of dwellings proposed upon the site. Nevertheless, at this stage, we believe the site is capable of providing around 350 new homes.

Scope

This document articulates:

- The Opportunity** - broad summary of strategic policy drivers
- The Place** - an appreciation of context and constraints.
- The Potential** - the spatial and placemaking opportunities presented by the site.

Executive Summary

This Vision Document responds to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation dated January 2019, which should be read together with the Draft Local Plan dated November 2016.

The Council has already recognised the sustainability of this location and its suitability for development by identifying a draft allocation in this location that includes the majority of Barwood Land's land, together with an adjoining field fronting Waste Lane, for 100 dwellings.

This Vision Document recognises and supports the Council's draft allocation but also builds upon it to show that a larger area should be allocated, for around 350 dwellings, which would result in:

- A more logical and defensible long term settlement and Green Belt boundary being established;
- A greater proportion of the Borough's housing needs being met;
- More efficient use of this largely brownfield land; and
- A site which is suitable, available and deliverable for the creation of a distinctive, high quality development which would have a wide range of significant social, economic and environmental benefits for Balsall Common and Solihull as a whole.





2.0 The Opportunity

Overview of Planning Matters

- There is an acknowledged need for substantial housing growth in Solihull in coming years, both to meet the Borough's own housing needs and to help meet the needs of the Greater Birmingham area;
- It is therefore necessary to identify and allocate sites for new homes in the most sustainable locations within the Borough;
- Balsall Common has been selected as one such location in view of its strategic position and wide range of existing services and facilities, including shops, primary and secondary schools, railway station and bus services; and
- Pheasant Oak Farm is one of a number of sites around Balsall Common identified as draft housing allocations.



KEY

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Barwood Land's Proposed Site Boundary |  | Other Draft Local Plan Allocation Sites nearby |
|  | Draft Local Plan Allocation Site 23: Pheasant Oak Farm |  | Previously developed land within the site |

Site Boundary Plan

NOT TO SCALE

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Why the Site is Ideal For Housing

- It is in a sustainable location close to the village centre, accessible by bus and for pedestrians and cyclists and well connected and related to existing development and other draft allocation sites;
- It largely comprises previously developed 'brownfield' land (included within the Council's Brownfield Land Register), the redevelopment of which for housing is encouraged by national and local planning policies;
- It will provide a strong, defensible boundary to the Green Belt and the settlement along its eastern edge, including an attractive, undeveloped 'buffer' between new housing development and the emerging route of a by-pass for the village;
- It is suitable, available and deliverable for development – the landowners are willing to remove or re-locate the existing uses from the site and Barwood Land, who control the site, are well-respected and have a good track record in delivering high quality development;
- It is of a size, form and topography which is suitable and deliverable for around 350 dwellings (at a net average density of some 38 dwellings per hectare) without the need for significant new infrastructure, other than normal provisions for access (which can be achieved from both Waste Lane and Hob Lane), drainage and utilities;
- It involves the removal of unsightly buildings and uses from the site, replacing them with a high quality development that will help to meet identified housing needs in the area and make the most efficient use of the land;
- It involves creating a better, more enjoyable and attractive route through new public open space along the Millennium Way public right of way;
- Its existing mature hedgerows and trees provide an attractive, semi-rural setting for development which can be further enhanced by provision of green infrastructure and open space, including children's play; and
- As shown in this Vision Document, it has no technical or environmental constraints which cannot be satisfactorily addressed in any future development.



Existing development within the site - farm buildings



Existing development within the site - caravan park

3.0 The Place

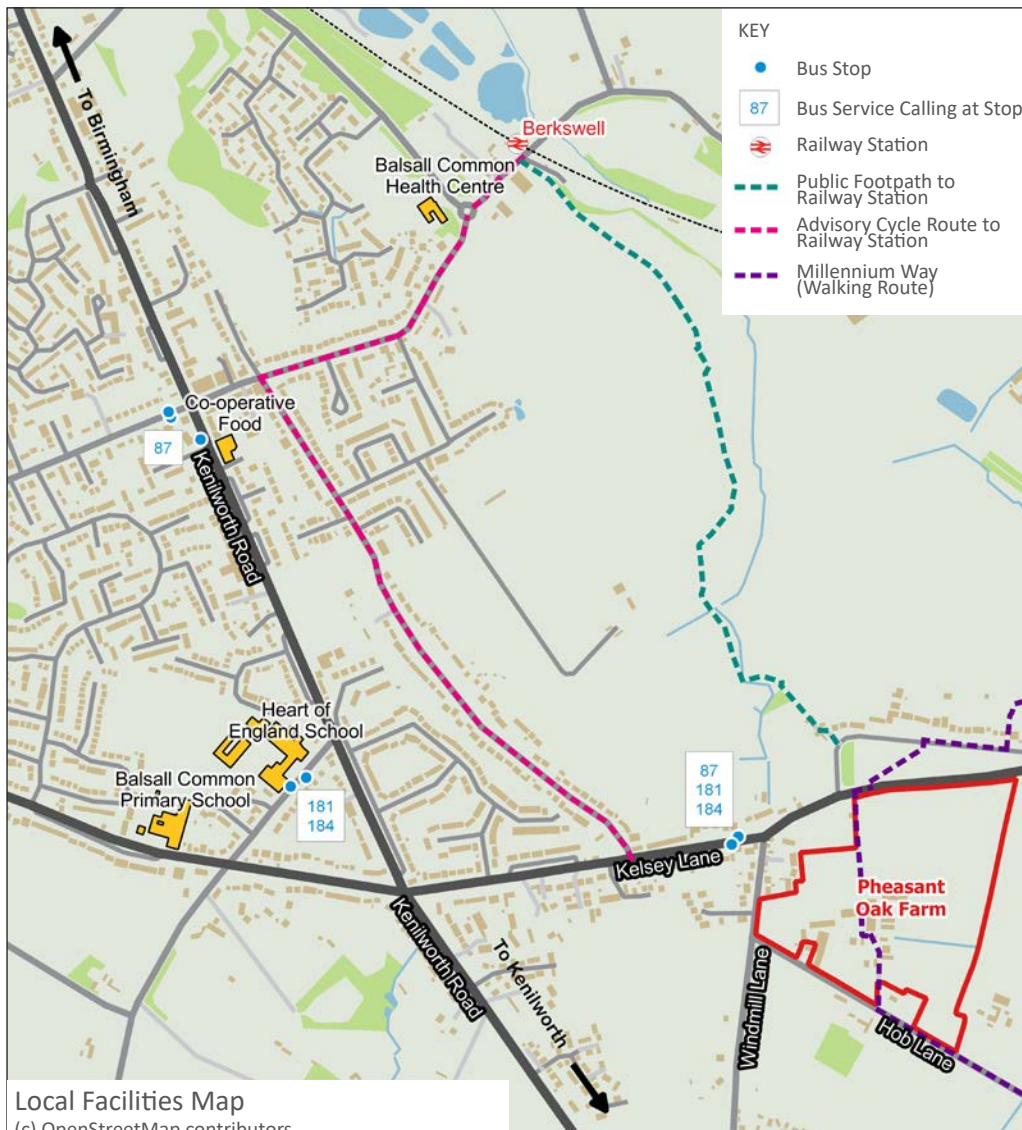
Site Location

The site is at the south-eastern edge of Balsall Common, bounded by Waste Lane to the north and Hob Lane to the south. It is well connected to the surrounding area being 8.5km from Coventry city centre, 6km from Kenilworth and 10km from Solihull. The site has excellent highway links including the nearby A452, which runs south to Warwick and north to the M42, M6 and Birmingham.

Sustainable Transport Accessibility

The site benefits from the following:

- Footways along Kelsey Lane/Waste Lane and Windmill Lane allow easy pedestrian connections to the village centre. A public right of way runs through the site and connects with others leading to Berkswell rail station;
- Windmill Lane and Hob Lane are advisory cycle routes leading to the Kenilworth Greenway and two National Cycle Routes. Meeting House Lane is an advisory cycle route to Berkswell rail station, only 10 minutes cycle distance away;
- Bus stops on Waste Lane are served by an hourly service to Solihull and Coventry and daily services to and from the local primary and secondary schools; and
- Berkswell rail station is 1.4km to the north and Tile Hill station is 2.5km to the north-east, with services to Birmingham New Street and Euston (every 20 minutes) and also to Birmingham International, Coventry, Rugby, Northampton and Milton Keynes.



Local Amenities

A number of key amenities are easily accessible from the site, including:

- Balsall Common Primary School, within a 10 minute cycle, 22 minute walk or short bus ride;
- Proposed primary school and community hub at Barrett's Farm, will be within an estimated 5 minute cycle ride or 15 minute walk;
- The Heart of England Secondary School, within a 6 minute cycle ride, under 20 minute walk or a short bus journey;
- The Co-operative foodstore in the village centre, 3 minutes by bus or 6 minutes by cycle; and
- Balsall Common Health Centre, 9 minutes by cycle or 14 minutes combined walk and bus ride.



Some of the existing facilities available within Balsall Common

Air Quality, Noise and Vibration

It is not considered that there will be any significant air quality or noise and vibration effects as a result of the proposed development. No significant effects, either standalone or cumulative, are anticipated during construction or operation of the HS2.

Ground Conditions

Development of the site will allow any potential contamination from past agricultural and current land-use activities to be addressed, resulting in a beneficial effect on local ground conditions.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning shows the site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 'Low Probability' of flooding. Surface water flood mapping indicates that the site is at 'very low' risk of surface water flooding and low risk of groundwater flooding and no recorded incidents of fluvial, groundwater, sewer or highways flooding have been recorded.

The increase in surface water runoff created by development can be attenuated on-site and released at existing greenfield runoff rates into existing field drains and roadside drains, so that flood risk will not be increased on-site or off-site as a result of development.

Landscape and Trees

The site is not subject to any national or local landscape designations.

It contains a number of well-established mature oak trees which could be retained within multi-functional green spaces to enhance the site's character and key habitats, including sustainable drainage systems, areas for informal outdoor recreation and connectivity to the surrounding area.

Visually development at the site can be well contained due to the flat, gently undulating topography of the area aided existing vegetation. High-quality green spaces throughout the development, and specifically along the eastern boundary, would limit visual change.

Ecology

The site is not covered by, nor in close proximity to, any statutory sites designated for their nature conservation interest at a national or international level.

Most of the site comprises habitats of predominantly low intrinsic ecological value. Furthermore, the site is of sufficient size that any losses can be compensated for by habitat enhancement and new habitat creation.

Incorporating mitigation and enhancement measures increases the value of retained habitats (such as grassland, ponds, ditches and hedgerows), and creates new habitats (such as wildflower grassland, woody planting, hedgerows and ponds) and opportunities for protected/notable species, thus delivering a net gain in biodiversity.

Heritage

The site does not include any designated heritage assets where there would be a presumption in favour of their retention/preservation in situ. A proportionate and appropriately landscaped development can avoid harm to the significance and the setting of the listed Berkswell Windmill, c. 230m to the south of the site.

The site is identified as having low potential for archaeological remains, apart from 'negligible' value features and deposits related to former farming practices.


















Opportunities and Considerations

Development of the site presents a number of opportunities, as follows:

- Retention of most of the existing hedgerows, mature trees and ponds within a layout which encourages ecological connectivity through new planting and green infrastructure;
- Extension of the footpath along Waste Lane and retention of the Millennium Way footpath route through the site to enhance connectivity with the surrounding village;
- Creation of a more logical and defined edge to the settlement, reinforcing a new defensible green belt boundary;
- Incorporation of sustainable drainage into a landscaped edge, providing an attractive eastern boundary and ensuring the development does not create water run off from the site;
- Provision of attractive and varied public open space, incorporating play areas;
- Development of the site will address the poor contribution it currently makes to the local area.



Key

 Site Boundary	 Existing PROW	 Existing trees and hedges retained with no-development offset	 Grade II* Listed Berkswell Windmill
 Boundary of adjacent draft land allocation sites	 Potential footpath improvements	 Existing ponds to be retained with 10m offset	 Careful treatment of boundaries required to protect amenity of existing residents
 Potential Vehicular Site Access	 Existing bus stops	 Potential 36m green offset from eastern boundary incorporating SuDs feature	 Locally listed building
 Indicative route of potential new by-pass	 Opportunity to connect through to adjacent draft land allocation sites	 Potential new tree planting	

4.0 Development Vision

Initial Concept Masterplan

- 1 A development that safeguards and enhances the route of the existing public right of way, forming a greenway, which passes through the centre of the site, promoting interconnectivity by foot and bicycle with the wider community.
- 2 A development that incorporates an extensive area of open space and a robust landscape buffer to the sites eastern boundary creating an improved transition from the settlement to the surrounding countryside which will reinforce the new defensible green belt boundary.
- 3 A development that provides extensive areas of varied public open space will provide potential for walking and play, as well as incorporating sustainable drainage features and ecological enhancements.
- 4 A development that retains valued existing hedgerows and mature trees, compliments and reinforces them with additional planting, providing ecological connectivity across the site.
- 5 A legible development with clear pedestrian routes through the site will provide both pleasant walks through the newly created public open space and ensure interconnectivity with the wider Balsall Common village.
- 6 A development with a primary access from Waste Lane and a secondary access off Hob Lane will provide safe and appropriate access to the development.



A development that complements and enhances the character of Balsall Common creating a sustainable community.



Creation of a parkland edge to the sites eastern boundary.















The incorporation of sustainable drainage features within the scheme to form positive features within the proposals.

A development that complements and enhances the character of Balsall Common creating a sustainable community.



Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Boundary of adjacent draft land allocation sites
Land allocation site 1 - Barretts Farm and
Land allocation site 3 - Windmill Lane
-  Proposed Site Access.
Primary Access of Waste Lane
and Secondary access off Hob Lane
-  Footpath routes through site link to existing
routes and routes through the adjacent
Barretts Farm site to the railway station and
potential new school
-  New crossing and footpath improvements
on Waste Lane, improving connection to
existing pedestrian and cycle routes
-  Existing bus stops, these could be relocated
closer to the proposed site access to provide
an increased level of public transport
accessibility
-  Varied areas of public open space (including
SuDs features) offers walking and cycling
routes and areas for play
-  Route of proposed new by-pass
forming clear edge to the green belt
-  Proposed development area (8.6ha)
-  Listed Buildings
-  Retained landscape feature
-  Planting to eastern boundary

Suggested Design Plan

Imagery (c) 2018 Google Map data (c) 2018 Google

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5.0 Benefits and Conclusions

Development of the site as shown would have the following social, economic and environmental benefits:

- Provision for much needed housing for all ages, including affordable homes and a mix of house types and sizes, to help meet the needs of the Borough and contribute to the wider housing needs of the Greater Birmingham area;
- By following existing field boundaries and hedgerows, creation of a strong, defensible boundary to the Green Belt and the settlement in line with NPPF advice;
- Provision for a substantial undeveloped 'green buffer' between new housing and the potential future by-pass for the village;
- Significant improvements to the environment and residential amenity resulting from removal of the site's existing unsightly buildings and uses;
- Enhanced enjoyment by the public of the public right of way through the site;
- Increased use for residents of existing good footpath and cycle connections to adjoining allocations, Berkswell rail station and key facilities such as existing schools, the proposed new school within Barratt's Farm, village centre shops and the village health centre;
- A net gain in biodiversity and provision of an attractive network of for green infrastructure, open space and children's play;
- Economic benefits both during the construction phase, when some 131 jobs would be created, and in the long term, derived from increased population and spending on local businesses and services (some £10.4m annual household expenditure would be generated by the new residents); and
- Potential for Council Tax receipts of some £5.5m over 10 years, together with New Homes Bonus, CIL payments and Section 106 contributions to improved local infrastructure and environmental enhancements to the village centre

For all these reasons we conclude that the site is suitable, available and deliverable as a site for a sustainable, distinctive and inclusive development of some 350 homes which would enhance the attractiveness of Balsall Common as a place to live and deliver significant benefits for the local community.



Provide a clearly defined and defensible greenbelt boundary;



Support and create additional 131 jobs in the area during construction phase;



Provide sustainable drainage features;



Provide enhancements to existing footpath and cycle routes;



Provide new public open space with the potential for children's natural play;



Provide much needed new homes, including affordable homes, in a sustainable area for growth;



Retain existing hedgerow features and enhance with new planting to provide ecological benefits;



Provide economic benefits including £10.4m annual household expenditure by new residents.



An artists impression of how development may come forward to create a greenway through site and establish a strong pedestrian/cycle linkage across the site from north to south.

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