

Our Ref: 9263 DSLPRSC JD

Policy & Delivery
Managed Growth and Communities Directorate
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
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14th March 2019.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Representations to the Draft Solihull Local Plan Review Supplementary Consultation (DSLPRSC).

In relation to:

**Proposed Allocated Housing Site 16: East of Solihull,
And**

Omission 'red' sites - Land south of Hampton Lane, and land west of Ravenshaw Lane/south of Hampton Lane, Solihull.

We write on behalf of our Client, Halford Holdings, who represents the landowners at the former Pinfold Nurseries, which owns approximately 5.29ha (which is identified within the Site Assessments document as **Site 15 Former Pinfold Nursery** (inc. 67 Hampton Lane and a constituent part of DLP 16) of the now proposed housing allocation. The total proposed allocation is approximately 39ha. They also own the above-named omission sites.

This letter is submitted in response to the current consultation on the Draft Solihull Local Plan Review Supplementary Consultation document (DSLPRSC), as follows.

Representations have previously been submitted: in February 2017 in response to the DSLPR; and in January 2016 in response to the Scope, Issues and Options consultation, and the SHELAA 'call for sites'.

We write in support of the proposed Green Belt boundary review which proposes to remove 'Site 16: Land east of Solihull' from the Green Belt. We support the proposed allocation of our Client's site within Site 16 for housing which, together with the rest of the proposed allocation, is estimated could deliver in total around

600 dwellings within the revised plan period to 2035.

Objection is raised to the omission of the two sites: land south of Hampton Lane, and land west of Ravenshaw Lane/south of Hampton Lane, Solihull. We seek their removal from the Green Belt.

In addition, this letter of representation also addresses the following questions as set out in the current consultation document:

Questions 7, 14, 15, 17, 23, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 36, 39 and 44.

Summary of representations and objections

1. Our Client welcomes the opportunity to comment on the DSLPRSC. In making these representations we have had regard to:
 - Government directives,
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019),
 - Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and
 - The Joint Strategic Growth Study for the Housing Market Area (SGS) (February 2018).
2. Taken as a whole, central government makes clear the Local Plan should, as a minimum, aim to meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure needs of the area including unmet needs of neighbouring areas (where consistent with NPPF as a whole). The Local Plan should be based upon relevant and adequate up-to-date proportionate evidence and informed by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
3. For the reasons set out in further detail below, our Client;
 - a) Contends that despite use of Standard Methodology based on 2014 household projections, there is still no signed Statement of Common Ground, (contrary to NPPF). In consequence the proposed contribution towards the cross-boundary shortfall remains at 2,000 dwellings. This is despite new evidence highlighting the increased scale of the Housing Market Area's (HMA) unmet need to 2036.
 - b) **Supports** the proposed distribution of development set out in the DSLPRSC that seeks to distribute housing both within the urban area of the borough, and disperse across a number of identified settlements. **Supports** the decision to review Green Belt boundaries to accommodate the identified growth.
 - c) **Objects** to the plan on the basis that there are insufficient deliverable residential site allocations identified which comply with SMBC's site selection

criteria and national policy recommendations.

d) **Objects** to the proposed allocations:

Balsall Common: Site 21 Pheasant Oak Farm – 100 units
Hampton-in-Arden: Site 6 Meriden Road (together with site 24 from the
adopted Solihull Local Plan) – 210 units
Knowle: Site 8 Hampton Road – 300 units
Solihull: Site 17 Moat Lane/ Vulcan Rd – 200 units
Solihull: Site 18 Sharmans Cross – 100 units
Kingshurst: Site 7 Kingshurst Village Centre – 100 units
Smith's Wood: Site 15 Jenson house/Auckland Drive – 50 units
(figures taken from DSLPRSC and Masterplan Document)
Total of 1,060 units

In our judgement these all appear to be either inconsistent with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) site selection methodology, and/or Green Belt requirements and/or policies for health and wellbeing/loss of sports, or there are concerns in respect of deliverability thus contrary to national policies and guidance.

e) Given the two aspects mentioned above in relation to the potential under-estimation of housing numbers, and the suggested removal of a number of the proposed housing allocations, it becomes more **important that sites such as Site 16 East of Solihull be retained in the Local Plan and that additional sites are identified to provide for the required housing in the Local Plan review, such as our Client's 'red' sites.**

The context for our representations is set out below:

Duty to Cooperate

4. Under the terms of the NPPF, paragraph 27 states: '27. In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance, and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency.' (Further guidance is provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Paragraphs 001 and 002 Reference ID: 61-001-20180913 and ID: 61-002-20180913 Revision date: 13 09 2018.)
5. Currently there is no signed agreed Statement of Common Ground in respect of the housing land supply shortfall in the HMA, contrary to NPPF requirements.
6. The Local Plan must be prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, which

sets a legal duty for SMBC and other public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis on planning issues which affect more than one local planning authority area. Paragraph 24 of the NPPF states, 'Local planning authorities...are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.'

7. It is therefore vital that the Strategic Growth Study (SGS), published February 2018, which was commissioned by all 14 local authorities within the Housing Market Area (HMA), is taken fully into consideration in terms of the unmet housing land supply and the recommendations for addressing this shortfall.
8. It is unclear how Solihull MBC has arrived at its proposed 2,000 dwelling contribution towards the wider HMA shortfall of 60,900 dwellings up to 2036, arising primarily from Birmingham City calculated in the SGS. The Draft Solihull Local Plan Review, published in 2016, proposed making provision for a 2,000 dwelling contribution towards Birmingham's unmet needs up to 2033. However, the Local Plan period has been extended by 2 years in the current consultation, and the housing shortfall figure published in the February 2018 SGS demonstrates a far greater shortfall than originally anticipated in 2016.
9. The figure of 2,000 dwellings proposed as a contribution towards the unmet need has not been justified, it has not been agreed and it does not therefore meet the requirements of national policy

The need to review Local Plans

10. NPPF, paragraph 33, requires policies in local plans and spatial development strategies to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years. They should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should '...take into account changing circumstances affecting an area, or any relevant changes in national policy. Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future.'
11. Therefore, it is important that the Local Plan should aim to 'future proof' their strategic policies and housing need figures as far as practicable to avoid the need to undertake a full plan update of policies at least every 5 years. **On this basis, we strongly recommend SMBC allocate land for more homes than recommended by the standard methodology plus any agreed cross-boundary housing growth.**
12. This approach would be in line with updated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) paragraph 002 (Reference ID: 2a-002-20190220 Revision Date: 20 02 2019) on housing need assessment which makes it clear that the standard method is only a minimum starting point for housing need, it is not a housing requirement. Local

authorities should be seeking to put in place the necessary mechanisms to boost housing delivery in line with government's ambitions to deliver 300,000 homes per annum by the mid-2020s. Providing a greater variety and choice of deliverable sites would also reduce the likelihood of SMBC being required to undertake an early review of the Plan.

The Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study

13. The Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study (produced by GL Hearn/Wood), published February 2018, was commissioned by the 14 local planning authority areas (including Solihull MBC) to establish the extent to which the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (HMA) can meet its own housing market needs up to 2031 and 2036.
14. The Strategic Growth Study (SGS) concludes that with Birmingham HMA plus the unmet need arising from Coventry and Warwickshire HMA (which affects North Warwickshire and Stratford-on-Avon), there is a minimum unmet need for 208,000 dwellings to 2031 and 258,500 homes to 2036. After adjustments are made for windfall assumptions and non-implementation discounts and taking into account the developable land supply and proposed allocations in emerging plans, the SGS estimates an outstanding minimum shortfall of 28,150 dwellings to 2031 and 60,900 dwellings to 2036 across the Birmingham HMA.
15. The SGS applies a four-stage process which sequentially looks at potential solutions to the housing land shortfall recommending a standardised approach across the HMA. These include:
 1. increasing densities of residential development;
 2. identifying potential non Green Belt sites such as Urban Extensions (1500 – 7,500 dwellings); Employment-led Strategic Development (1,500 – 7,500 dwellings); and New Settlements (10,000 plus dwellings);
 3. Should a shortfall remain after undertaking tasks (1) and (2), consider the development potential and suitability of any large previously developed sites within the Green Belt that may lie in sustainable locations; and
 4. Should a shortfall remain after undertaking tasks (1) to (3), undertake a full strategic review of the Green Belt followed by consideration of distribution and broad locations, taking into account market capacity to deliver.
16. At paragraph 1.71 the SGS states,

'Ultimately the solution to meeting the housing need shortfall is likely to require a multi-faceted response, including not just maximising urban supply and accelerating the delivery of this, but the identification of further development land and the progression of local Green Belt reviews. This should reasonably include sites of a range of sizes including smaller extensions to settlements of less than 2,500 homes, together with the identification and delivery of larger strategic

development locations.'

17. The SGS identifies a shortlist of potential Areas of Search for strategic development locations across the HMA that it is recommended can be considered and assessed in further detail by individual councils through the preparation of local plans alongside further small and medium sized sites.
18. The SGS undertook a desk-based 'Strategic Green Belt Review' together with consideration of land use, character, topography, and settlement pattern and transport connectivity to identify potential 'Areas of Search for Strategic Development'. It identifies 6 'Areas of Search' for new settlements; 6 for 'Urban Extensions'; and 3 for employment-led development'. Paragraph 1.59 suggests that, in addition, a number of areas within the Green Belt have been identified where 'Proportionate Dispersal' might be appropriate, in terms of smaller scale developments (500 to 2,500) which would be identified through individual local plan processes.
19. The Study identifies 24 Areas of Search beyond and within the Green Belt. The potential for development in an area of search suggested in the report will depend on many factors, including deliverability. The report recommends that the 14 local authorities undertake more detailed technical analysis and evidence gathering.
20. However, SMBC has not published evidence to suggest that the growth options put forward in the SGS have been investigated. The current DSLPRSC document states that a response will be made to the SGS at the submission stage. **Unfortunately, by this omission at the current consultation stage it appears that the full potential capacity of the Borough has not been objectively tested in accordance with the SGS recommendations.** Therefore, it is difficult to be confident that the full potential capacity of the Borough has been assessed and tested making it problematic for SMBC to resist accommodating more of the unmet need arising from the wide HMA.
21. Without the recommended further technical analysis and evidence gathering, it is not possible for Solihull MBC to demonstrate that existing constraints prevent them accommodating a larger proportion of the cross-boundary shortfall in housing land supply. This may have implications for the soundness of the proposed Solihull Local Plan Review.

Housing Delivery Test

22. The Government's Housing Delivery Test was published on 19th February 2019. In Solihull, the housing requirement is set out in the table as 616, 623 and 615 dwellings for the 3 years in question (2015 to 2018) with the actual delivery of homes being calculated as 2,009 dwellings. This equates to 109% delivery meaning no further action would be required by the SMBC.

23. However, this statistic is somewhat misleading given the High Court challenge to the Solihull Local Plan, adopted 2013, and the requirement to immediately review the plan to establish an objectively assessed need with commensurate supply and delivery.
24. Set in the context of a need for a significant increase in the housing requirement, it seems likely that without a significant uplift in allocated deliverable sites and an increase in delivery rates, SMBC would be required to either prepare an 'Action Plan' or provide a 20% 'Buffer'.
25. By way of illustration, using the three year delivery rate figure of 2,009 dwellings (from between 2015 and 2018), an 'Action Plan' would be necessary based on the Draft Solihull Local Plan Review 2016 requirement of 719 dwellings per annum – equating to 93% delivery. If the current consultation annual housing requirement figure of 885 dwellings were used SMBC would be required to provide a 'Buffer' as it would equate to only 75.6% delivery.
26. It is therefore vital that a range of deliverable small and medium sized sites, as well as a number of larger sites, are identified. Paragraph 68 of the NPPF recognises that, 'Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly...' Sufficient choice is required to encourage house building at a rate necessary to achieve the step increase in growth identified in the emerging DSLPRSC.
27. Paragraph 68 of the NPPF explains that, '...To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should, for example:
 - a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;
 - b) use tools such as area-wide design assessments and Local Development Orders to help bring small and medium sized sites forward;
 - c) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes...'
28. If the current timetable for preparation and adoption of the Solihull Local Plan Review is achieved, it seems likely that next year's published Housing Delivery Test will use revised adopted annual housing figures for Solihull. However, unless there is a step increase in delivery generated by allocation of viable deliverable sites in the short, as well as medium term, with sufficient encouragement given to development of smaller sites, with willing landowners, there is a significant risk that SMBC will fall short of the Housing Delivery Test and fail to meet the requirements for such, set out in the NPPF.

Viability and Deliverability

29. Viability has been given greater prominence in the plan-making and decision-taking process in recent revisions to national policy guidance. Guidance on viability in plan making and decision taking was updated in the PPG on 24th July 2018 in line with the NNPF, July 2018. The PPG confirms that the role for viability assessment is primarily at the plan making stage. Viability assessment should be used to ensure that policies are realistic and that the total cumulative cost of all relevant policies will not undermine deliverability of the plan. The onus is on the local planning authority to demonstrate that the policies in the plan are deliverable and viable.
30. PPG Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 10-002-20180724 states that it is the responsibility of plan makers in collaboration with the local community, developers and other stakeholders, to create realistic, deliverable policies. It is the responsibility of site promoters to engage in plan making, take into account any costs including their own profit expectations and risks and ensure that proposals for development are policy compliant. The price paid for land is not a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan.
31. Whilst the PPG states that assessing the viability of plans does not require individual testing of every site or assurance that individual sites are viable, with site typologies being acceptable to determine viability at the plan making stage, there is still clearly responsibility for local planning authorities to have undertaken viability assessments prior to identification of growth areas and preferred sites. Without this work, it is difficult to be certain that the Draft Solihull Local Plan Review growth strategy and the cumulative costs of associated necessary infrastructure improvements are deliverable.
32. Residential development on the proposed land East of Solihull (Site 16), (which includes our Clients' land) as well as the two red omission sites (16 and 17 of the Site Assessments (January 2019) document, could, for example, provide the full 40% contribution towards affordable housing, CIL contributions and provide a mix of housing tenure and house types in line with SMBC's requirements.

Potential Deliverability Issues for Some of the Preferred Sites

33. Some of the other 'green' sites highlighted by SMBC as preferred development allocations have significant question marks over their deliverability, compliance with national policy and/or impact on sustainable communities such as the potential loss of existing sport and recreation facilities.
34. It is also important to re-emphasise that there is: no published evidence to demonstrate viability for the 'green' sites; no published detailed ecological or landscape assessment evidence to highlight areas of potential constraints; there are

errors within the site assessment work which have undermined the robustness and reliability of some documents; and there is concern that application of the SMBC's site selection methodology and interpretation of national policy has been inconsistent.

35. It is fundamental to the deliverability of SMBC's spatial strategy that sufficient suitable, available and viable land is identified and allocated for development. The housing requirement identified in the DSLPRSC is very much a starting point and minimum figure for the housing land supply. A choice of sizes and locations of sites needs to be provided to encourage the necessary step increase in housing delivery over the next 15 years to achieve the minimum target. It is therefore vital that site allocations are based on sound evidence and their viability, deliverability and compliance with national and local plan policies is carefully considered.
36. A few examples of sites with deliverability concerns are highlighted in response to the specific site questions within the plan below, but this is by no means an exhaustive list.

The Need for Robust Evidence

37. Paragraph 31 of the NPPF requires that the preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals. There are a number of omissions and errors in the evidence base published to date in support of the DSLPRSC. These include the following:
 - The Landscape Assessment report, 2016, recognised that findings were based on an assessment of large areas stating that it '...should be used as a guide only, and it will be re-assessed once details of any proposed development and site location are known...' Therefore, now the preferred locations of site allocations have been progressed, we contend that more detailed landscape assessments should be undertaken to provide a more meaningful assessment of the impact on the landscape of residential development.
 - The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has not been updated since 2012. There has been no revision to accompany the DSLPRSC. Whilst the DSLPRSC document highlights a number of potential infrastructure requirements, it is clear that not all infrastructure providers, such as health providers and emergency services, have been consulted. It is vital that the full implications of the level of proposed growth is assessed to ensure that appropriate levels of infrastructure provision are provided and maintained. This is an important factor necessary to feed into the viability assessment for sites to demonstrate that they are viable and deliverable.

- The February 2018 the 'Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study' evidence document, commissioned by the 14 local authorities comprising the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area, recommended each local authority undertake further detailed housing land supply assessment work. This technical work is necessary to provide the basis for negotiations between the local authorities within the HMA to agree what proportion of the outstanding minimum shortfall of 60,900 dwellings to 2036 should be accommodated where. However, this evidence work has not been published.

Detailed comments are set out below in response to the questions raised in the DSLPRSC document.

Question 7: Do you believe that site 21 Pheasant Oak Farm, Balsall Common should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

38. Identification of the partly brownfield 12ha Pheasant Oak Farm - Site 21 (albeit it appears in the proposed schedule of allocated sites table as 'site 23') for approximately 100 dwellings does not meet the requirements of national policy or meet the policy selection methodology priorities set out in the DSLPRSC.
39. NPPF paragraph 139 requires local authorities to define Green Belt boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Contrary to this requirement, there is no clearly defined physical boundary along the eastern edge of the proposed site allocation – indeed, the land edged red on the masterplans (page 33), does not even follow the field boundaries for over half of the eastern boundary and there are not even any hedges of trees along the boundary.
40. The DSLPRSC states that the 'alignment of the by-pass will provide the new Green Belt boundary'. There are many problems with this approach, summarised as follows:
 - SMBC has rightly rejected many sites proposed for allocation where there are no existing on the ground physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent to be used as the line of a new defensible Green Belt boundary. All sites need to be assessed on the same basis for consistency and to be in-line with national policy.
 - A proposed route of the Balsall Common by-pass was defined in the Solihull Unitary Development Plan in 2006, however, this infrastructure project has not been started and it was removed from the 2013 Solihull Local Plan. The 'Solihull Connected Transport Strategy' 2016 – 2036 suggests that with HS2

and the proposed growth in Balsall Common, the case for reinstating the by-pass should be reviewed as part of the Local Plan Review process. The DSLPRSC document, page 22, discusses 'What is required for the Settlement in the Future?' and here it refers to 'emerging work' indicating the route of the Balsall Common by-pass. There is currently no evidence that the route or the funding stream have been agreed.

- If the by-pass shown on the 2006 Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map was constructed, it would be a considerable distance from the boundary of Pheasant Oak Farm site. If the route of the by-pass is amended and extended to follow the line shown on the 'Illustrative Emerging Concept Masterplan for Site 1 Barretts Farm' (page 14), then it seems likely that the proposed new road would pass even further to the east of Site 23. The bypass would therefore not fulfil SMBC's stated aim of providing a Green Belt boundary for the site.
 - It is contrary to the spirit of national policy to introduce a new artificial physical boundary to define a revised Green Belt boundary.
 - It is unacceptable to propose a site without a strong defensible physical boundary – even if the proposed by-pass is constructed, it would not provide a Green Belt boundary for Pheasant Oak Farm.
41. The 'Site Assessment' document, January 2019, states that the site has '...a low level of accessibility...' and the Sustainability Appraisal identifies only 3 positive effects of development on the land with 6 negative effects, including 2 significant negative effects. Only approximately a third of the site is included in the Brownfield Land Register. The eastern part of the site lies within a high performing broad area in the Green Belt Assessment and it is attributed the maximum possible score of 12.
42. Given this assessment of the site – i.e. it is only partly brownfield, the eastern part of the site makes the highest possible contribution towards the Green Belt purposes, a significant number of negative effects would result from development, and it has a low level of accessibility, with no defensible boundary to the east – we contend it is incorrect for the 'Site Selection Step 1' assessment to conclude that the site is a category 3 priority (generally considered suitable for inclusion in the plan) i.e. 'Brownfield in accessible Green Belt location – Green Belt PDL in highly/moderately accessible location (i.e. located on edge of or in close proximity to urban edge/settlement boundary.)'
43. Under the terms of the SMBC's Site Selection Methodology, Step 1 – Site Hierarchy Criteria, we suggest that Pheasant Oak Farm should not be considered suitable for inclusion in the Local Plan as it is more closely matched in terms of the brownfield area to Priority 8 'Brownfield in isolated Green Belt location' and the rest of the site to Priority 10 'Greenfield in isolated highly performing Green Belt'.

Under the terms of SMBC's methodology, sites that fall within priorities 8 and 10 should be considered unsuitable for inclusion unless there is an exceptional justification.

44. In the case of Pheasant Oak Farm, the lack of a physical defensible boundary close to the eastern site edge, should also exclude it from consideration as a site allocation as it would not accord with the NPPF.
45. SMBC's Step 2 – Refinement Criteria in the 'Site Assessment' document includes within the 'Factors Against' allocation:
 - 'Sites that would not use or create a strong defensible boundary'- as is the case on the eastern boundary;
 - 'Sites that would breach a strong defensible boundary to the Green Belt' - as this site would, it would breach the strong defensible boundaries of Windmill Lane to the west and Waste Lane to the north;
 - 'If finer grain analysis shows the site (or part to be included) is not accessible' - which the site assessment does as it concludes the site has a low level of accessibility; and
 - 'If the SA appraisal identifies significant harmful effects' - which is the case here as this site has 6 negative effects, including 2 significant negative effects.
46. The proposed Pheasant Oak Farm allocation needs to be removed from the Solihull Local Plan Review and a deliverable alternative site, or sites, need to be identified to accommodate approximately **100** dwellings.

Question 14: Do you believe that Site 12 south of Dog Kennel Lane should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site? and

Question 15: Do you believe that Site 26 Whitlock's End Farm should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

47. In response to questions 14 and 15, it is proposed that Site 12 would accommodate approximately 1,000 dwellings on a site area extended eastwards towards Creynolds Lane, beyond the indicative boundary in the Draft Solihull Local Plan Review 2016 consultation. Site 26, between Whitlock's End Farm and Dicken's Heath road represents a smaller allocation than that proposed in the Draft Solihull Local Plan Review, 2016, reducing it from a capacity of approximately 600 to 300 dwellings.
48. There are a number of concerns relating to the proposed allocation of these sites, in particular, the lack of a clear defensible physical boundary and concern that there

will be pressure for further development up to the Stratford Canal, as shown on the promoter's masterplan submission for site 26. There is therefore a significant risk that the purposes of including land within the Green Belt will be severely compromised, in particular: purposes a) to c) under paragraph 134 of the NPPF i.e. a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; and c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

49. NPPF paragraph 139 requires local authorities to define Green Belt boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Contrary to this requirement, there is no clearly defined physical boundary along the southern edge of sites 12 and 26. SMBC has rightly rejected many sites proposed for allocation where there are no existing on the ground physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent to be used as the line of a new defensible Green Belt boundary. All sites need to be assessed on the same basis for consistency and to be in-line with National policy.
50. We therefore contend that the **sites need to be re-evaluated to better reflect on the ground physical features, rather than relying upon the proposal to create a physical Green Belt boundary**. There is doubt over whether the 1,300 dwellings anticipated on the sites can be delivered in a manner which is compliant with national policies and local strategic objectives.

Question 17: Do you believe that Site 6 Meriden Road should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

51. In the 2013 Solihull Local Plan a 2.79 ha site allocation, referred to as site 24, Land off Meriden Road, Hampton in Arden, was defined for residential development. It was anticipated that it would deliver approximately **110** dwellings with the following reasons and conditions statement, 'This site has been released in special circumstances. Development of the site will be conditional on reclaiming the ammunition depot for open space, or in the event the ammunition depot is unavailable, some alternative development solution delivering additional open space.'
52. The justification provided in the 'Draft Concept Masterplans' document, January 2019, for the site not being brought forward for development was the 'poor neighbour' of the Arden Wood Shavings operation to the east and south of the 2013 site allocation. For this reason, and because it would provide an opportunity to re-use the former ammunitions depot SMBC are now proposing to also allocate the 4.2ha site of the Arden Woods Shaving operation for residential development of approximately **100** dwellings.
53. However, the 'Draft Concept Masterplan' document, January 2019, acknowledges that alternative premises would need to be found for the wood shaving operation to

enable the residential development of both sites. This is likely to be problematic given the 'bad neighbour' characteristics of the use. In addition, the site preparation works necessary on the brownfield element of the site may mean that it is unviable – something which has not been tested, but could make the allocation unsound.

54. Therefore the deliverability of both sites 24 (as referenced in the 2013 adopted plan) and 6 is questionable and there is significant concern that the 210 dwellings proposed for these sites could not be achieved within the plan period. With such doubt over the deliverability of the proposed allocations, we contend they should be removed from the housing delivery calculation.

Question 23: Do you believe that Site 8 Hampton Road should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

55. Identification of the two parcels of greenfield and land in community sports use off Hampton Road totalling approximately 13 ha for approximately 300 dwellings does not meet the requirements of national policy or meet the policy selection methodology priorities set out in the DSLPRSC.
56. NPPF paragraph 139 requires local authorities to define Green Belt boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Contrary to this requirement, there is no clearly defined physical boundary along the northern edge of the larger of the proposed site allocations on the north western side of Hampton Road. This parcel of land, edged red on the masterplans document (page 64), does not even follow the field boundary for two-thirds of the site boundary so there are not even any hedges or trees along this section of the north eastern boundary.
57. SMBC has rightly rejected many sites proposed for allocation where there are no existing on the ground physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent to be used as the line of a new defensible Green Belt boundary. All sites need to be assessed on the same basis for consistency and to be in-line with National policy.
58. There are a number of other constraints which together raise doubts over the desirability of allocating both the northern and southern sites for residential development. These include:
- a height differential of 17 metres between the lowest levels adjacent to Purnell's Brook and the highpoint close to Hampton Road meaning development is likely to be more visually intrusive in the Green Belt and impact more on openness and views than the existing lower lying existing residential development to the south west and north west;
 - a portion of the northern parcel of land incorporates Purnell's Brook Woodland Local Wildlife and NPPF paragraph 170 requires planning policies

- and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, for example, a) protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity and d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.
- There are a number of group TPOs covering the site which would need to be protected.
 - Public Right of Way SL12 crosses the site and would need to be re-routed or the route and setting protected.
 - the proximity of Grimshaw Hall, a Grade I Listed building means great care must be taken to protect the setting;
 - the southern site is currently occupied by Knowle Football Club which is well used, though facilities need upgrading.
59. The Masterplan work suggests that a 'Sports Hub' could be constructed in the Green Belt to the north east of the northern parcel of land up to the Grand Union Canal, however, very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to justify such a large 'urbanising' intrusion into the Green Belt.
60. There is concern that the promoters propose development of not only the Knowle Football Club site, but also the cricket pitches to the south east (identified by SMBC for 'potential future development'), and the densely wooded area to the north east of the Knowle Football Club site. The woodland currently provides an important screen and setting for the Grade I Listed Hall.
61. The 'Site Assessment' document, January 2019, states that the northern site (reference 213) has overall medium to high accessibility, though no existing footway. In terms of Green Belt, it has been assessed as moderately performing with a combined score of 7 but highly performing in terms of checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
62. The southern site (reference 166), which includes consideration of the cricket club and woodland area as well as the Knowle Football Club land, is a higher performing parcel in terms of Green Belt scoring 11 out of a potential top score of 12. It performs particularly highly in terms of its role: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. Whilst it is highly accessible, it also has no existing footway.
63. Given this assessment of the site – i.e.: it is greenfield and partly in community playing field use; the southern parcel of the site makes virtually the highest possible contribution towards the Green Belt purposes and the rest makes a moderate contribution; there is no defensible boundary to the north east of the northern plot; and there are a significant number of physical constraints – we agree it is appropriate for the 'Site Selection Step 1' assessment to conclude that the site is a category 6 and 7 priority i.e. greenfield in accessible moderately and highly performing Green Belt location.

64. Under SMBC's Site Hierarchy Criteria Step 1 sites which fall within priorities 5 to 7 are considered to have potential for inclusion in the plan as site allocations but should not be considered to be 'impact free' and those which are priority 6 and 7 sites are 'unlikely inclusions'. i.e. site 8 Hampton Road, is therefore an unlikely inclusion in the Plan.
65. The Step 2 Refinement Criteria refines results from Step 1 and requires more significant justification for sites performing less well in the hierarchy – which would include the Hampton Road sites. In this assessment within the 'Factors Against' is the criteria, 'Sites that would not use or create a strong defensible boundary.'
66. In summary, we contend that the site should be removed from the Solihull Local Plan Review as a potential residential allocation due to the following reasons: the lack of a physical defensible boundary along the north east boundary of the northern plot; loss of community playing fields; pressure within the Green Belt for alternative and additional 'urbanising' sports facilities; the adverse impact on sensitive issues such as highly performing Green Belt, heritage assets, and ecology. Given the constraints, there is no evidence that, were the site to come forward for development, it could be delivered in a viable manner.
67. Therefore, we contend that **proposed site allocation 8, Hampton Road, should be removed from the Solihull Local Plan Review and a deliverable alternative site, or sites, identified to accommodate approximately 300 dwellings.**

Question 26: Do you believe that Site 16 east of Solihull Hampton Road should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

68. **As promoters of part of this overall site allocation (i.e. the former Pinfold Nurseries site incl. 67 Hampton Lane – which is identified in the Site Assessments document ref 15), yes, we believe this proposed Site 16 should be allocated as a housing site and the Green Belt boundary amended accordingly.**
69. We have already made detailed representations in response to previous Local Plan Review consultations, and call for sites (in relation to the former Pinfold Nurseries site incl. 67 Hampton Lane etc.) and welcome SMBC's acknowledgement as to this site's suitability for housing based upon its sustainability credentials. As such we do not propose to repeat them in full here.
70. In relation to the former Pinfold Nurseries site, we agree with the Site Assessments Document – Site 15 (January 2019) that the land is within a lower performing parcel in the Green Belt Assessment, has a high level of accessibility, is within an area of medium landscape sensitivity, and is suitable for development, and that the site could form part of an urban extension in area identified in the spatial strategy as suitable for growth.

71. The whole of Proposed Site 16 site would have defensible boundaries (at least for the south, west and north) and it would not be necessary to keep the land permanently open (thus justified by NPPF para 139 b) and e) – f)).
72. Additionally, it would provide for a significant and logical extension to the town, have a high level of accessibility to local services and facilities, given its close proximity to Solihull itself, and would be well served by public transport and the ability to promote sustainable forms of transport (walking and cycling), thus NPPF, paragraph 72 (in relation to identifying land for homes) and 102 (in relation to promoting sustainable forms of development) compliant.

Comment on illustrative Emerging Masterplan

73. The revised Masterplan, which forms part of the consultation document, shows illustratively the southern rectangle of our Clients' ownership (extending east off Pinfold Road) as potentially suitable for medium density housing, with the rectangle of land to the north of this shown as Public Open Space (POS).
74. We note much of our Client's former Pinfold Nursery site indicatively proposed for 'medium density housing' area has the caveat that it is a 'potential area of development subject to ecological assessment'. This is surprising, as we are not aware SMBC has published any assessment in relation to a potential ecological constraint here. In the absence of evidence to justify this potential constraint to development, we object to its inclusion in the Masterplan which would appear to be contrary to NPPF requirements in particular paragraph 31 (in relation to plan-making and reviewing plans) which states 'the preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence.'
75. We support the proposed allocation of this whole site for approximately 600 units (which includes the former Pinfold Nurseries site) as shown in the Table 83 of the consultation document. The former Pinfold Nurseries Site etc. is capable of being brought forward for development in the Local Plan as a standalone site, and is not dependent upon the wider total proposed Site 16 being brought forward. It has its own access off Hampton Road would have a logical boundary as demarked by the existing field boundary to the north, east and west (to the south it would be demarked by the existing rear boundaries of the houses fronting Hampton Lane).
76. Overall, we do not believe there are any sound planning reasons why proposed Site 16 should not be included in the revised Local Plan. In addition, we do not see that there is any planning reason why the former Pinfold Nurseries site cannot be developed in isolation if there is any delay in the remainder of the proposed Site 16 from coming forward.

Question 27: Do you believe that Site 17 Moat Lane/Vulcan Road should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

77. The 5 ha urban site is expected to deliver approximately 200 dwellings. However, the viability of the site for residential development has not been tested and the potential land contamination on the site is unknown. There is also a recommendation in the masterplan document that consideration should be given to the relocation or removal of the telecommunications mast if possible.
78. Given that there are likely to be significant site preparation costs, it seems inappropriate for the site to be allocated for development for 200 dwellings without a detailed viability assessment. Until this evidence work has been carried out, we contend that the site does not satisfy the national policy requirements and, until such time as it can be demonstrated that the site is deliverable during the plan period, it should not be allocated in the Solihull Local Plan Review.

Question 28: Do you believe that Site 18 Sharman's Cross Road should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

79. The 2.8 ha site with an estimated capacity of 100 dwellings currently accommodates disused rugby pitches with associated club facilities. It lies adjacent to the popular Solihull Arden Tennis Club, which also accommodates a number of other sporting activities such as squash, gym, and hot pod yoga.
80. There is concern that the permanent loss of community playing field facilities in an area identified in SMBC's Playing Field study, 2017, as being deficient in this area runs counter to the strategic objective of protecting and promoting healthy sustainable communities. There is no information contained in the DSLPRSC document to suggest that an alternative venue has been identified to replace the facility to serve the local community. Indeed, the 'Site Assessment' report states, '...includes the existing playing pitch which is not currently in beneficial use, However, it will need to be replaced as the evidence base identifies that pitches are not in surplus.'
81. NPPF paragraph 92 states that planning policies should guard against loss of valued facilities and plan positively for recreational and sports facilities in order to plan for healthy communities. Paragraph 97 states that 'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh

the loss of the current or former use.'

82. We contend that it does not conform with national policy for site 18 to be allocated in the Solihull Local Plan Review until such time as replacement playing pitches can be provided to serve the local community to compensate for the loss. **Therefore, under the terms of national policies, the site should be removed from the Solihull Local Plan Review and alternative site or sites found to accommodate the estimated 100 dwellings.**

Question 32: Do you believe that Site 7 Kingshurst Village Centre should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

83. The regeneration objectives of the Kingshurst Centre proposal are laudable, including the proposal to accommodate 100 dwellings, however, the 'Draft Concept Masterplan' states that CBRE believe there are viability issues with the site's redevelopment and there is concern that no profit would be generated. Given that the NPPF and PPG are clear in their requirement for all allocated sites to be viable, it seems inappropriate for this site to be included in the Solihull Local Plan Review and counted towards the housing requirement.
84. NPPF Glossary defines developable sites as follows, 'To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.'
85. **We therefore recommend that Site 7 is not relied upon as an allocation for housing.**

Question 33: Do you believe that Site 15 Jenson House/Auckland Drive should be included as an allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

86. The text accompanying the illustrative emerging masterplan for site 15, Jensen House, (page 92) of the masterplan document, states, 'Work is currently in progress to determine whether and to what extent this site may be available to accommodate residential development.' Given this stated uncertainty about deliverability of the estimated 50 dwellings and given the national policy requirement for allocated sites to be deliverable, it is inappropriate and unsound for site 15 to be included in the Solihull Local Plan Review.
87. NPPF paragraph 16 states that Plans should be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but 'deliverable'. To be considered deliverable the NPPF Glossary (as recently amended in the February 2019 version of the NPPF) states that, **sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered**

on the site within five years.

Question 36: Are there any other areas of the Borough where washed over status should be reviewed, if so which areas and why?

88. As part of the Green Belt review, our Client considers it appropriate for the SMBC to critically examine whether it is still in line with national and local plan strategic policies for the larger, more sustainable settlements, which make a limited contribution towards openness, to have areas of 'ribbon' development or areas 'washed over' by Green Belt on the edge of the settlements.
89. In the case of Solihull Town, our Client contends that it would be entirely reasonable and justified to re-assess the Green Belt boundary to consider whether it is still appropriate for the largest, most sustainable settlement in the Borough, to have such a tightly drawn settlement boundary.
90. NPPF paragraph 133 sets out the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy as being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 134 explains that, 'Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'
91. NPPF paragraph 138 explains that when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, it is necessary to consider promoting sustainable patterns of development. Plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport.
92. NPPF paragraph 139 requires, 'when defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:
- a) ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
 - b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
 - c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
 - d) make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;
 - e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and

- f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'
93. Paragraph 140 of the NPPF states that, 'If it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt...' Therefore, conversely, it must be assumed that it would be inappropriate to include a village (or presumably edge of a settlement development) within the Green Belt which does not make an 'important contribution' towards the openness of the Green Belt.
94. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) paragraph 002 (Reference ID: 2a-002-20190220 Revision Date: 20 02 2019) on housing need assessment makes it clear that the standard method is only a minimum starting point for housing need, it is not a housing requirement. Local authorities should be seeking to put in place the necessary mechanisms to boost housing delivery, including ensuring land which it is not necessary to keep permanently open is removed from the Green Belt as part of any review and adjustment to boundaries.
95. For the following reasons, the washed over Green Belt designation for our Client's 'red' sites, south of Hampton Lane, should be removed - in accordance with the aspirations of national, and local strategic plan policies - and a new boundary defined:
- a) Our Client's sites do not have an 'open character' which makes an 'important contribution' towards the openness of the Green Belt. This is supported by SMBC's Green Belt Assessment published in July 2016, which concluded that it had a combined score of 4 (out of a possible maximum score of 12).
 - b) Development here would cause less harm to openness and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt than many of the proposed site allocations which score more highly in the Green Belt Assessment.
 - c) The site is close to existing ribbon development and represents a natural extension of the town, particularly given that land to the north has already been proposed for removal from the Green Belt.
 - d) The sites have clear defensible boundaries comprising existing development, mature and dense hedge and tree lines, and roads. In addition, the sites could be included as part of the wider area south of Hampton Lane extending eastwards up to Ravenshaw Lane (following the line southwards of Field Lane which is proposed as the new Green Belt boundary for allocation Site 16) down to the River Blythe to the south.

- e) The sites are in a sustainable location with easy access to a wide range of local community, retail, entertainment and other local services.
 - f) The sites are well served by public transport with bus stops along Hampton Lane.
 - g) With an amendment to the Green Belt boundary, the sites could come forward for development as a windfall sites, or they could be identified and allocated within the Local Plan.
96. Extending the settlement boundary of Solihull Town to the east to include our Client's 'red' sites as well as the former Pinfold Nursery site to the north of Hampton Lane, within the urban area, would:
- contribute towards meeting the growth aspirations of the Town;
 - remove an area of land which has been assessed to contribute little to the Green Belt purposes;
 - direct development towards sites which would be available to come forward for development in the next 5 years in accordance with national requirements;
 - direct development towards a highly sustainable area; and
 - direct development towards sites which have clear physical permanent defensible boundaries suitable for defining a new Green Belt boundary.
97. Clearly, it is important that all Green Belt boundaries are assessed against the same criteria and, where appropriate and justified (as is the case for our Client's sites), the Green Belt boundaries are amended to better reflect national policy requirements.
98. Whilst our Client supports the removal of the washed over Green Belt status of the land east of Solihull both north and south of Hampton Lane, including all land in his ownership, he firmly believes that the sites should be allocated for development and removed from the Green Belt even if the settlement boundary is not adjusted elsewhere. This is because the site meets all the national and local site selection criteria, details of which are highlighted within this letter.

Question 39: Are there any red sites omitted which you believe should be included; if so which one(s) and why?

The Case for Allocation of Land south of Hampton Lane (Site Assessment Reference: 16) and land west of Ravenshaw Lane/south of Hampton Lane (Site Assessment Reference 17).

99. Both sites were promoted for consideration in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Review 'call for sites'.
- Land south of Hampton Lane (approximately 5.02 ha) is identified as site 16

in both the Peter Brett SHELAA published December 2016 and the most recent 'Site Assessment' document (January 2019).

- Land west of Ravenshaw Lane/south of Hampton Lane (approximately 1.6 ha) is identified as site 17 in both the Peter Brett SHELAA published December 2016 and the 'Site Assessment' document, (January 2019).

100. The sites are shown in the context of the surrounding area in the plan extract below:



Sites shown on Google Earth map extract (copyright)

Sites' Characteristics

101. Our Client's roughly rectangular sites are located to the east of the A41 to the south of Hampton Lane. The sites are separated from each other by North Lodge and the Rookery, a broadleaf deciduous woodland area which lies north of Old Berry Hall, Ravenshaw Lane, a Grade II* Listed building.
102. The sites lie in a sustainable location just over half a mile from the nearest primary school, approximately half a mile from the nearest doctor's surgery and fresh food outlet, whilst bus stops are immediately adjacent to land west of Ravenshaw Lane/south of Hampton Lane. There is currently an hourly bus service into Solihull Town Centre on the 82 bus.
103. A designated cycle path runs along much of the frontage of land south of Hampton Lane. Whilst there is currently no public footway along the frontages of the sites, there is a very wide highway verge, part of which may be used to lay out a footway under an appropriate legal agreement, together with a pedestrian crossing to the

footway and proposed urban extension on the north side of Hampton Lane.

104. Both of these 'red' omission sites lie to the south of, and front onto Hampton Lane which is characterised by existing ribbon development to the west separated by an open field. The sites are currently undeveloped with some mature trees and hedgerows, particularly along the site boundaries. The trees in the south east section of Site 16, south of Hampton Lane, form part of the wider Rookery woodland. All significant trees could be retained within any residential development scheme and measures could be taken to enhance the ecological value of the area.
105. Access could be gained into our Client's sites from Hampton Lane and/or from Ravenshaw Lane.
106. Neither of our Client's 'red' sites have known heritage, ecological or sport and recreation assets which would be impacted by development.
107. The sites are not located within an area liable to the risk of flooding as shown on the Environment Agency Flood Risk Map.

Deliverability

108. There are no known legal or physical constraints which would prevent the sites coming forward for development within 5 years. Both sites are assessed in the 2016 SHELAA as Category 1 sites, which means that they could be developed within a five-year period as they are 'deliverable...available now, offer a suitable location for housing now and there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years from the date of adoption of the plan.' Our Client supports the comment that the sites could be appropriate for residential use and 'make an appropriate extension to the existing settlement.'
109. These sites are in the single ownership of a willing family and could be brought forward for development within the first 5 years of the plan period.

Sustainable extension east of Solihull and Green Belt review

110. Solihull Town Centre was identified in the adopted Solihull Local Plan, 2013, as a focus for sustainable growth including approximately 950 new homes up to 2028. Policy P2 'Maintain Strong, Competitive Town Centres' in the Draft Solihull Local Plan Review document, December 2016, suggests that 1400 new homes could be built on 'opportunity sites' in the Town Centre with potential for over 100 additional homes on land near the train station, together with up to 11,700 sq.m of commercial and leisure development and up to 74,620 sq.m of new office development up to 2032.
111. However, within the existing Town Centre boundary residential growth is inevitably limited and much of the anticipated growth is dependent upon aspirational goals

which will not necessarily be achievable – such as relocating the rail station.

112. Solihull Town Centre is therefore a vibrant urban area which has grown significantly over recent years and has plans to build upon this success into the future. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate for the Green Belt boundary to be reviewed and for land east of Solihull, Site 16 in the Concept Masterplan document, January 2019, (which includes the former Pinfold Nursery site also owned by our Client) to be allocated for development.
113. An urban extension eastwards fulfils local and national planning policy objectives of directing development towards the most sustainable sites where there would be least adverse impact on the Green Belt, landscape, environment, ecological assets, historical assets, and health and well-being.
114. Proposed housing allocation Site 16 in the DSLPRSC demonstrates the Council has accepted the logic and desirability of extending Solihull Town Centre eastwards and this is supported.

Inclusion of omission sites in the proposed extension east of Solihull

115. Development on our Client's sites south of Hampton Lane would build upon this direction of growth. This could be achieved by either:
- Allocating our Client's sites for development within the current plan period using the existing defensible boundaries of built development, mature trees and hedging; or
 - Moving the Green Belt boundary to follow the proposed new eastern boundary of Field Lane southwards to also follow the line of Ravenshaw Lane. This would provide a strong physical defensible boundary and the line of the River Blythe could provide a southern Green Belt boundary, just as the Grand Union Canal is proposed as the new Green Belt boundary to the north.
116. Whilst we commend the land south of Hampton Lane, west of Ravenshaw Lane, and north of the River Blythe as a formal allocation for residential development in the Submission version of the Solihull Local Plan Review, this does not necessarily need to be the approach. Instead, this land could be removed from the Green Belt and planning applications for development could be submitted and assessed on a site by site basis - as is proposed as an option in the DSLPRSC for the larger settlements of Balsall Common, Hockley Heath and Cheswick Green.
117. Land south of Hampton Lane is assessed as 'Refined Parcel 31' in the Green Belt Assessment, 2016 whilst land north of Hampton Lane, which has been proposed for removal from the Green Belt and allocation for residential development, is assessed as 'Refined Parcel 29'. Both parcels of land are attributed the same combined

Green Belt score of only 4 out of a possible 12 meaning that the land is lower performing in terms of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. NPPF paragraph 139 requires when defining Green Belt boundaries, that plans should not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open and define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Both of these criteria would be satisfied by removing land south of Hampton Lane from the Green Belt.

118. The Sustainability Appraisal (January 2019 version) of our Client's 'red' site 16 assesses development here would have 4 positive effects, and only 3 negative effects with 11 neutral effects. Development on site 17 would have 3 positive, 3 negative and 12 neutral effects. The sustainability credentials for both of these omission sites are therefore as good as, or better than, many of the proposed site allocations.
119. Our Client contends that the commentary in the 'Site Assessment' document, January 2019, is misleading. The document suggests that the '...site is poorly related to urban area or to Catherine de Barnes and would result in coalescence.' However, the Green Belt Assessment states that the land makes very little (scoring only 1) contribution towards the purpose of preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another. Indeed, the sites score less well in this regard than the proposed site allocation 16, land east of Solihull, north of Hampton Lane.
120. Allocation of our Client's sites would contribute towards a more sustainable pattern of growth when compared to many of the other proposed Housing Allocations in the DSLPRSC. The site is within easy reach of a range of retail, community and public transport facilities. Development here would be in line with national sustainable development objectives.
121. Our Client's sites have moderate to low value in terms of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt; lie within a landscape character area which is capable of accommodating a limited amount of appropriately designed and laid out development; and are close to the main urban area of Solihull Town Centre. These are all significant reasons in support of directing development to proposed housing allocation 16, and such reasons could also apply to the our Client's 'red' sites. Existing roads and dense woodland would provide enduring boundaries for a revised Green Belt boundary or alternatively, the larger area of land south of Hampton Lane could be removed from the Green Belt with the river Blythe and Ravenshaw Lane providing the new boundary, in accordance with NPPF requirements.
122. Our Client's sites could be brought forward within the first 5 years of the plan period with immediate contributions towards: the shortfall in the 5 year housing land supply; infrastructure through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments and S106 contributions; and the creation of mixed tenure and size developments which would meet the identified need for smaller units, affordable and starter home provision.

Development on our Client's site would not result in the coalescence of settlements.

123. It is important that, where appropriate, sufficient Green Belt land is removed and identified for housing development to meet the objectively assessed housing need in the Housing Market Area. When carrying out the Green Belt Review and identifying potential housing allocations, the Council needs to be satisfied that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period. Our Client's sites are lower performing against Green Belt purposes and it is not as necessary to keep them permanently open as many other sites proposed for allocation. It is logical, therefore, that our Client's sites be removed from the Green Belt as part of the current Solihull Local Plan Review process as they are suitable, sustainable, deliverable sites capable of contributing towards meeting housing needs.
124. If there is not an immediate need for both of our Client's sites to come forward for development within the current Solihull Local Plan Review period, land west of Ravenshaw Lane/south of Hampton Lane could be a logical site to be identified as 'safeguarded' land. In this instance, the site south of Hampton Lane could be brought forward within the current Local Plan Review period. It has strong defensible boundaries in its own right with dense woodland on the south and east boundaries. The roads and woodland therefore provide clear defensible boundaries for a realigned Green Belt in accordance with the NPPF.
- 125. Our Client therefore formally requests that land south of Hampton Lane and land west of Ravenshaw Lane/south of Hampton Lane is allocated for housing development and/or removed from the Green Belt.**
126. In summary, our Client's sites:
- are suitable, available and deliverable as evidenced in the Peter Brett SHLAA;
 - do not include any heritage assets, Local Wildlife Sites, land liable to the risk of flooding, community facilities and sport and recreation uses, commercial uses, or landfill;
 - are not of high agricultural value;
 - make a low to moderate contribution towards the purposes of including land within the Green Belt;
 - would not result in the coalescence of settlements;
 - have no known legal or physical constraints which would prevent development;
 - perform better against the development criteria objectives than many of the sites currently being proposed by the Council for allocation for development;
 - are in a sustainable location adjacent to the main urban area of Solihull Town Centre and proposed urban extension, Land East of Solihull, Site 16, making it a logical area for further expansion;
 - have clear defensible boundaries formed by roads and woodland; and

- could be developed in the first five years of the Plan by a willing landowner.

127. Development on our Client's sites would make a short-term impact on the shortfall in housing land supply and affordable/starter home need with housing deliverable within the first 5 years by willing landowners. They could provide a mixed tenure development with a mix of dwelling sizes to meet local needs for smaller dwellings and affordable and starter homes in line with local and national policy objectives.

Question 44: Are there any other comments you wish to make on the Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation?

SHLAA and SHELAA Sites

128. St. George and Teresa School, site 155, with an identified capacity of 31 dwellings, is currently in educational use therefore an alternative site for would need to be found before this site could be released for residential redevelopment.
129. There is no evidence within the DSLPRSC to show that suitable alternative land has been secured to accommodate existing displaced uses such as the Dorridge/Knowle St George and Teresa School. Whilst the Masterplan work suggests one option might be to relocate the school onto the Arden Triangle land, this is far from certain. Deliverability on this site to provide a total of approx. 31 dwellings is therefore uncertain and should not be included in SMBC's housing delivery calculation.

The Priorities for a Green Belt Boundary Review

130. SMBC has demonstrated exceptional circumstances exist for some land to be released from the Green Belt to accommodate the Borough's own needs and a contribution to the unmet needs arising from the wider HMA as it is clear that the need cannot be accommodated simply by increasing densities and directing development towards non-Green Belt land.
131. The NPPF is clear, at paragraph 138, that when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, sustainable patterns of development should be promoted. Consideration should be given to the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport.
132. Paragraph 139 goes on to set out what factors need to be taken into consideration when defining Green belt boundaries. These include:
- a) ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;

- b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- c) here necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
- d) make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;
- e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and
- f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

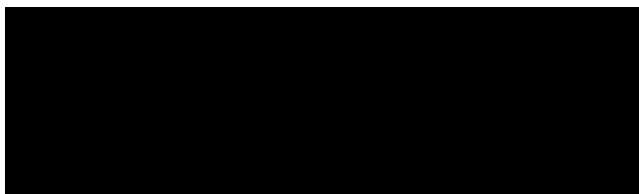
Overall summary of representation.

133. In summary, we firmly believe it would be in accordance with national and local plan policies for our Clients' site at the Former Pinfold Nurseries Site etc. to be removed from Green Belt and allocated for residential development in the forthcoming Submission version of the Solihull Local Plan Review. This can be brought forward for development either in conjunction with the whole of the proposed Site 16 (East of Solihull), (subject to arrangements being in place to safeguard potential concerns in relation to uplift in value and distribution of land uses across the entire site) or as a stand- alone development.

134. In respect of the 'red' omission sites we believe each site offers a natural addition to the proposed east extension to Solihull Town Centre and, along with the proposed Site 16 ought to be removed from Green Belt.

We should be grateful if you would confirm receipt of this letter of representation;

Yours faithfully,



Glenda J Parkes, Dip.TP., MRTPI
Director
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