



RICKETT ARCHITECTS

Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future: Solihull Local Plan Review

Draft Local Plan – Supplementary Consultation

Representations Submitted on Behalf of Real Christmas Trees Ltd.



Question 1

It is considered that the Council has still not included sufficient houses to cater for the wider Housing Market Area requirements. It is considered that the provision for the shortfall that is occurring in the wider HMA should be increased to at least 4000 dwellings over the period 2018 – 2035.

Question 2

The methodology for the site selection process is agreed.

Question 15 – Proposal Site 26

It is considered that site 26 at Whitlock's End Farm should be included as an allocated site. This is a sustainable location close to a range of public transport facilities. A full suite of supporting studies has previously been submitted in respect of the whole farm area, currently in operation as a Christmas tree farm. These cover a full Arboricultural Assessment, Landscape and Visual Assessment, Ecological Appraisal, Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Study and all reveal that there are no constraints to development.

Following publication of the supplementary consultation document additional Access and Heritage Assessments have been undertaken. The Access Assessment, submitted with this representation, confirms that the proposed two new accesses off Bills Lane are sufficient to accommodate in excess of 750 additional dwellings without difficulty. The benefit of this arrangement is that it will reduce pressure on the A34 which will arise from the development of sites 11 and 12 whilst also enhancing accessibility from new residential development to the railway stations at Shirley and Whitlock's End.

Whilst much of this site is a very limited landscape value existing hedgerows and trees of values will be retained and enhanced as part of any redevelopment.

It is considered that this site offers considerable potential to be extended to make a contribution of up to 1000 dwellings to meet Solihull's needs without long term prejudice to the form and function of the Greenbelt in this area whilst also making additional provision for public access to open space to enhance existing areas of open space to the east as part of a wider network of green spaces and corridors.

A series of three potential development options are attached with this Representation. In preparing these options regard has been had to additional assessments in respect of the heritage value of Whitlock's Farmhouse. This concludes that there will be no constraints to development in the vicinity of the farmhouse. Accordingly, it is considered that an average development density of some 36dph can be applied across the entire

development area. This will enable a mix of densities to be achieved within the site to enable an organic development to be achieved with a range of densities leading to a lower density and 'softer' edge to the urban area.

Option 1 – This reflects the Site 26 proposal as set out in the Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation document. It is considered that development can accommodate up to 525 units. Existing bridleways would remain and become part of the wider green network. All other areas of the site will remain in agricultural production.

Option 2 – This larger site includes an area previously included within Site 13 up to the retained area of open space to the west. This is considered to be a natural and logical extension of Site 26 and will provide up to c. 750 dwellings.

Option 3 – This reduces somewhat the separation between South Shirley and Dickins Heaths while still maintaining a workable and effective gap. The benefits of this option are that it will enable the entire site to be brought forward as part of a comprehensive development scenario with public access into the Greenbelt area. An extended corridor to the south of the retained open space can be achieved which will then link in to the wider area of public open space between a new development and Dickins Heath, for the benefit of both communities. It is also considered that the extension of development to the south will enable access to be achieved to a possible new canal marina development at the junction between canal and the railway embankment. This could form the focus for a more formal centre to enhance public accessibility and facilities associated with both the canal and the wider area of open space.