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Dear David

ARDEN TRIANGLE, KNOWLE & LAND AT OAK GREEN, DORRIDGE

BWB has been instructed to undertake a preliminary transport review of the proposed Arden Triangle (Allocation Site 9) and the amber site known as Land off Blue Lake Road, Dorridge from the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) Draft Solihull Local Plan Review. The review is intended to inform the Draft Local Plan Supplement Consultation.

Background

The Arden Triangle comprises 46 hectares of predominately greenfield land to the southeast of Knowle town centre. The site is bounded by Warwick Road to the east; Grove Road to the south and existing development including the Arden Academy to the north and west. The SHELAA estimates the capacity of the site to be 1,158 dwellings, but SMBC's Solihull Local Plan Site Allocations – Masterplans (Jan 2019) document indicates 750 dwellings.

The amber site comprises 24 hectares of predominately greenfield land to the southeast of Knowle town centre. The site is bounded by Norton Green Lane to the east; Blue Lake Road to the south and residential development fronting onto Grove Road and Knowle Wood Road to the north and west. The SHELAA estimates the capacity of the site to be 602 dwellings, but the proposed Vision Document by Heyford Developments indicates 320 dwellings.

Location

SMBC' Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation document highlights Knowle's easy access to the Motorway network and a lack of local employment opportunities. 2011 Census data from the Solihull 26 Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) indicates that approximately 70% of Knowle residents commute to/from the north during peak periods.

Whilst the SMBC Site Assessments refer to their sustainable locations, it should be noted that the 2011 Census data also indicates that 81% of existing Knowle residents commute by car. This is significantly higher than would be expected in such a location and conflicts with the stated

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sustainability credentials of the sites. Consequently, significant investment will be required if travel by sustainable modes is to be encouraged and traffic impact minimised.

Even in a sustainable location, 1,080 houses (based on the proposed allocation and the developer's masterplan involved in the amber site) will typically generate between 500 to 600 vehicles during peak hour traffic. This level of traffic increase will have implications on the local highway network and will require full assessment and mitigation. Dispersing the allocations to smaller sites would reduce local transport impact.

If the two sites are allocated, a large proportion of generated peak hour traffic will route via Knowle High Street to the M42 and beyond. Knowle High Street is approximately 6 metres wide and congestion is frequently caused when traffic is delayed by the high levels of pedestrian activity at the three zebra crossings within the main village shopping area.

The High Street is not currently suitable for the such increases in traffic. Consequently, careful consideration will need to be given to improving the highway environment to better balance the competing needs of pedestrians and traffic on this section of road.

Site Accesses

The B4101 Station Road is the main route through Knowle and Dorridge. It is a bus route, approximately 6 metres wide and fronted by private dwellings for most of its length. Congestion has been observed during peak times on this route and whilst it has coincided with the start and end of the Arden College school day, the limited carriageway width and numerous sources of conflicting activity means that congestion can occur at any time.

Consequently, it is considered that vehicular accesses to either site should be avoided from roads to the east, such as Station Road, Grove Road and Knowle Wood Road. Rather, these roads should be used to provide traffic-free pedestrian and cycle routes to enable residents to access local facilities including public transport services.

The Arden Triangle Draft Concept Masterplan Option 2 currently shows vehicular access onto Station Road and Grove Road, whilst the amber site vision document shows access onto Knowle Wood Road. These access locations are considered inappropriate and contrary to encouraging sustainable travel

These vehicular access locations should be amended and focused to the east on Warwick Road and Norton Green Lane, with highway improvements provided as necessary. For the amber site, it is likely that Norton Green Lane would need to be widened at existing pinch points and both the Warwick Road/Grove Road and Warwick Road/Norton Green Lane junctions improved to safely accommodate additional traffic. For both sites, it is considered that the Warwick Road/Station Road junction will also require improvement.

The Arden Triangle Concept Masterplan shows two potential access locations on Warwick Road in the northern portion of the site. These will require careful consideration, as the vertical and horizontal alignment of the carriageway could make it difficult to achieve the required visibility standards.

Pedestrian/cycle facilities are generally poor on the frontages to the sites, with little or no footway provision or crossing facilities. These will need to be provided to accord with identified desire lines if travel by these modes is to be encouraged.

Consideration will have to be given to other non-transport related factors such as landscape and countryside character, as the transport improvements necessary to allow for development on either the Arden Triangle or amber sites could have significant impacts on these considerations. These will need separate assessment.

I trust that this preliminary transport review is acceptable for your purposes. However, please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Andy Passmore
Director