

**SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN 2020**  
**DRAFT SUBMISSION PLAN**  
**HAMPTON ROAD, KNOWLE**  
**REPRESENTATIONS ON POLICY KN1**  
**AND JUSTIFICATION**

**Summary**

These representations illustrate, firstly my concern about the lack of evidence contained in the Plan to demonstrate the deliverability of this allocation and secondly, in the event sufficient evidence is forthcoming, those amendments which I believe are needed in order to strengthen the policy provisions in relation to site KN1, Hampton Road, Knowle.

*These representations should be read in conjunction with my representations on the Site Specific Concept Masterplan for Hampton Road.*

**Deliverability**

1. The reduction in numbers from 300 houses on this site to 180 is welcomed, however I have great concerns regarding the lack of evidence provided by the Plan that this allocation will be both viable and deliverable. The deliverability of the sports facilities (and the new schools on allocation KN2) is crucial as the original rationale for the Council allocating two large development sites in Knowle was the community benefits these allocations would deliver. The delivery of these benefits to compensate for the loss of significant areas of Green Belt is therefore imperative.
2. If the delivery of new sports facilities is in any way dependent upon a financial contribution from the sale of, or the development of the football ground land, then this is seriously questionable, as the football club does not own this site. The land comprising both cricket and football grounds on the south side of Hampton Road, is owned by the Trustees of Knowle Village Cricket Club. Land Registry searches reveal that the football club has no legal interest in the land whatsoever and cannot deliver its sale. This site is also subject to a restrictive covenant that the land is to be used only for the purposes of recreational games for the benefit of the residents of Knowle. This throws into doubt the ability of the football club to utilise any of the value of their existing ground to facilitate a move from their current premises and therefore the deliverability of the community benefit to be provided by this housing allocation.
3. Whilst Knowle Football Club has approx. 300 members, apparently supporting 23 teams, at least 200 of these members are below the age of 14. The club supports only three full adult teams, with all the remaining teams being junior ones, the vast majority (at least 17 teams) numbering only 5/6 a side teams. It is extremely doubtful that a club of this size could generate sufficient revenue to support the kind of facility

envisaged on Hampton Road. Indeed, recent history has demonstrated that the football club has been singularly incapable of properly maintaining its current facility, in that a few years ago, the clubhouse was in a sufficiently parlous state that its (uninsured) roof was blown off in a storm, rendering the clubhouse unusable, and has since been replaced by pre-fabricated huts. The club has expressed its desire that at least one of its new pitches should have a 3G artificial surface. FA recommendations for the support of such a 3G pitch are that a sinking fund of at least £25,000 per annum is needed merely to replace the pitch, let alone any other running costs. The maintenance of such a facility, together with three or four additional grass pitches, plus a clubhouse, by Knowle Football Club, therefore, appears to be totally unrealistic.

4. The Council has identified the KDBH area as a search area for a new sport hub, serving a wider area, and the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan indicates that the Council would be prepared to exercise CPO powers in order to provide the sports facilities which are lacking in the Borough. Whilst this might assist the re-location of the football club, it would bring its own difficulties in that it would lead to significant additional car borne traffic in a location that is not accessible by public transport. The installation of 4 or 5 football pitches would also necessitate the provision of at least 100 car parking spaces, plus coach parking facilities for supporters. Overspill parking outside the Old Silhillians site on the Warwick Road already causes huge difficulties at weekends, similar difficulties on the much narrower, rural, Hampton Road would be intolerable and would constitute a significant safety hazard on a road which already has a bad accident record. The siting of extensive sports facilities in this location would be extremely intrusive in this area of Green Belt and great care would need to be taken not to adversely affect the character and setting of the Grand Union Canal. Clarification is also required with regard to the range of sports which might be provided and how they would be maintained for the benefit of the Knowle community.
5. The location is not as accessible as the Council is suggesting. The southern part of the site is close to amenities but the northern part is much further away from the village centre. It is approximately 800m from the nearest bus stop (the bus services are not good in any event), 1km from any local shops and the nearest primary school and much further away from the Arden Academy.
6. The site on the north side of Hampton Road is subject to significant constraints such as topography, (there is a 17m drop in level over the site) Local Wildlife Sites and the setting of Grimshaw Hall, whilst the southern part has land ownership difficulties on the football ground. Overall, the allocated site is also subject to a large number of development requirements and the Council's Viability Study shows that the site is only marginally viable, if it had to comply with all the Council's policy requirements. Furthermore, this marginal viability is based on 300 houses whereas the current masterplan quotes only 180 houses.

**Modifications required**

There is currently no credible evidence within the plan to show that development of this site is deliverable. Without such evidence, the effectiveness of the Council's Plan is in serious doubt and the test of soundness has not been met. If the Council cannot, through the Local Plan process, adequately demonstrate that an acceptable scheme providing the new sports facilities, within a good quality, less dense housing layout can be achieved, the allocation should be deleted on the grounds it is undeliverable and unsound.