

SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN

DRAFT SUBMISSION PLAN

KN1 HAMPTON ROAD, KNOWLE

REPRESENTATIONS ON SITE SPECIFIC CONCEPT MASTERPLANS

Summary

The residential development on the northern part of this site should be limited in order to avoid breaching the ridgeline that crosses the site and a new Green Belt Boundary should be formed by retention of the existing hedgerows.

Representations

This representation should be read in conjunction with my representation on Policy KN1 Hampton Road and the related Justification.

I do not understand why The Savills Architects Site Proposal has been included since this has, presumably been superseded by the "SMBC Illustrative Concept Masterplan". These two plans differ significantly from one another and whilst it is assumed the Council's plan, being later, has greater precedence, this is not clear. The Savills Architects Site Proposal should be deleted.

Objectives

The fundamental aim (and indeed the major driver for this site's allocation) is to provide new facilities for Knowle Football Club, i.e. new pitches and a clubhouse which could also be used by the local community. These facilities are to be funded by the new housing, however this is not stated in the Plan. The aim is that the club would vacate the existing premises and pitch on the southern site and develop new facilities on the north western side of the northern site. There would be new houses on the western part of the northern site and also on the southern site. The southern site, being much closer to the village could be developed as a care village or retirement complex. Inclusion of this objective is important. as it was one of the major justifications for the selection and allocation of this site.

Different Land Uses / Proposals

The reference to a care village or retirement home is not mentioned, however, it is important to include this option as it has a great bearing on the overall density of the development

The concept masterplan shows a cricket pitch. As I understand it, Knowle Village Cricket Club has no intention of moving from its current site and it is not clear if this is an error, or whether this is intended to provide an additional recreational facility on this site, recognising the fact that the Council has identified the KDBH area as a possible site for a new sport hub. Clarification is needed as it would have significant implications for the scale of the facilities required, such as floodlighting, security fencing and car parking provision, particularly as this is a location that is not accessible by public transport and the siting of such extensive facilities in this Green Belt location could adversely affect the character and setting of the Grand Union Canal. It also has significant implications for the scheme viability if Council funding is to be used on this site.

Phasing and Delivery

Para 242 refers to the necessity for a clear phasing and delivery programme, but this does not appear in the current Plan. Since the replacement sports facilities have to be in place before the football club can re-locate, and indeed cross-funding may be required for the building of the new sports facilities, early provision of housing on the northern site will be required. A mechanism is needed to ensure that the pitches are provided before housing is occupied.

Other modifications are necessary:

- To ensure that harmful visual impacts as a result of the major engineering works required to create the housing and sports facilities are minimised;
- To secure the retention of the existing public footpath in its current location;
- to identify the necessary highway improvements with regard for safety and the character and appearance of the Knowle Conservation Area;
- To protect all the trees and hedgerows on the site;
- To avoid harm to the setting of Grimshaw Hall.
- To clearly identify the vehicular site access including the proposed access and car parking areas required to service the sports facilities.

Extent, Location and Density of Development

The KDBH Neighbourhood Forum's Landscape and Character assessment identified that the site forms part of the rural setting of Knowle. The ridgeline which the assessment identified, forms, in conjunction with the mature trees and hedgerows, a natural landscape limit to any development. The assessment identified the second mature hedgerow as defining the extent of housing on the site. Contrary to this, the Council's masterplan shows housing breaching this ridgeline and extending beyond the second hedgerow. Moreover, a road with street-lighting and a sports pavilion is identified as being located at this sensitive and prominent high point. Both would have an unacceptable and detrimental impact on the visual setting of Knowle. No development should take place on the highpoints or along the ridgeline, so the north easterly extent of development as currently shown on the concept masterplan needs to be revised.

As the proposed housing will need to be reduced on the northern site, this could be compensated for by the siting of a care village or retirement home on the southern site which is closer to the village and can more easily accommodate higher density housing.

The Council's masterplan indicates that the new road would form the new Green Belt boundary. This is not acceptable due to its visual impact, referred to above and also, as it is not a defined feature, it could be subject to revision. It is interesting to note that many other potential housing sites in the KDBH area were rejected by the Council on the basis that they did not possess a defined Green Belt boundary, yet in this location the Council appears perfectly content to create a brand new one.

The highest density on this site should be restricted to not more than 30-35dph consistent with the indicative densities for small extensions to villages as set out in the Local Plan table. This could be compensated for by higher density on the southern site e.g. a purpose built scheme for the elderly.