

**WRITTEN STATEMENT – MATTER 7B - PROPOSED HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS –
KENILWORTH**

Introduction

1. These representations are made on behalf of all the parties with an interest in the land to be allocated under Policy H06 (and E2) and comprise:

The McDaide Family

The Hibbert Family

Kenilworth Rugby Club

Kenilworth Wardens Cricket Club

The Trustees of the Stoneleigh Estate

2. The representations focus upon the following Questions posed by the Inspector, namely Q3-Q10.

Q3; In addition to housing provision, are there other benefits that the proposed development would bring?

3. Kenilworth has not experienced significant urban expansion since the Plan period that precedes the preparation of the adopted Local Plan (1996-2011). As a consequence the release of H06 will not only contribute to the provision of housing

land supply in a District wide context, but also –in the context of high house prices- increase and broaden the supply of affordable housing that is available in Kenilworth.

4. The development of H06 is intended to provide a new link road between Kenilworth Road and Glasshouse Lane –which on completion will have a wider benefit to the local highway network in enabling some relief to the existing traffic conditions at the St John’s gyratory.

5. Kenilworth Rugby Club and Kenilworth Wardens Cricket Club are both successful sporting and recreational clubs – with increasing membership. Both Clubs are actively engaging in the development plan process as a means to secure enhanced playing facilities and achieving a sustainable financial future for their Clubs. These objectives are to the benefit of the existing community and the future community. The existing facilities for both Clubs are constrained and prevent the expansion to meet their needs in the current locations.

6. The provision of new employment land (E2) as part of a mixed use development – to create a sustainable pattern of development – will bring modern employment development to Kenilworth broadening job opportunities. The absence of planned expansion of Kenilworth within the Plan period covered by the adopted Local Plan, has meant that the opportunities for the provision of land to meet the locational needs of modern businesses has been restricted.

Q4; What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

7. The development involves housing (and other urban land uses) on Greenfield land which will inevitably bring about a major change in the character and appearance of open land on the east of Kenilworth (Thickthorn). The impacts of developing the site will be addressed within the master planning of the site particularly in the disposition of land uses, including structural open space and landscaping- and through the development management process.

Q5; What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

8. It is acknowledged- and is inevitable- that the release of H06 for c 760 dwellings requires the installation of new infrastructure, including the provision of a new access from Kenilworth Road and upgrading to the A46 roundabout. No infrastructure has been identified to be of a financial scale that might prejudice the full delivery of H06 within the Plan period.
9. Substantial interest has been expressed by housebuilders and developers since Thickthorn was first identified as a potential mixed use allocation within the early stages of the emerging local plan process. The land owners are intent upon the appointment of a promoter/infrastructure provider/developer/major housebuilder

to bring the site forward within the development management process upon the release of the site from the Green Belt. A phased provision of infrastructure will be made through CIL and S106 Planning Obligations.

Q6; Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

10. Yes. This is a site where its deliverability is not challenged by the anticipated scale of infrastructure requirements both in the context of physical works to service the site and the provision of social and community facilities commensurate with the needs of the new resident community.

Q7; What is the expected timescale for development and is this realistic?

11. The land owners for H06 are preparing for the appointment of a suitably experienced promoter/infrastructure provider/developer or major housebuilder to bring the site forward through the development management process including extensive public engagement with Kenilworth Town Council and the existing community in the town. Other than the location of the site within the Green Belt, the site would have been brought forward promptly to assist in the delivery of new housing to meet the needs of the District, during a long period when a 5 year deliverable supply of housing could not be demonstrated. There is a keen list of parties wishing to acquire an interest in H06 (and E2) to bring the site forward for development.

12. It is the delay in the development plan process which has frustrated the early development of this site, rather than any indication that the site itself has financial or ownership constraints on delivery. The constraint has been one of planning policy only, namely the Green Belt.

13. It is anticipated that a developer /major housebuilder will be appointed by mid-2017. It is anticipated that the preparation of a planning application – with a comprehensive master plan, that encompasses the entire land release from the Green Belt east of Kenilworth – with extensive public consultation, including proactive engagement in the emerging Kenilworth Neighbourhood Plan, may take a further period of 12 months.

14. The submission and determination of a planning application, accompanied by an Environmental Statement make take 12 months to conclude with Planning Obligations and other pre-commencement statutory procedures eg S278 Highways Act 1980. As such, commencement of housebuilding may be envisaged in the early part of 2020. It is anticipated that housing would commence contemporaneously from Kenilworth Road and Glasshouse Lane – leading to the early completion of the link road. Thereafter the location will attract a high rate of housing completions in a highly sought after location for ~~new~~ new homes. The site will be completed well within the Plan period.

Q8; What would be the effect of the proposal on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt?

Q9; What would be the effect on the openness of the Green Belt?

Q10; Are there exceptional circumstances which justify altering the Green Belt? If so, what are they?

15. Green Belt policy is not the master of sustainable development. The Framework [84] emphasises that ‘ when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. Site H06 (Thickthorn) is a highly sustainable location for new housing development on the urban edge of Kenilworth. Its suitability to contribute towards the housing needs of the District –and the development needs of Kenilworth through the Plan period, is in part demonstrated by the absence of significant local opposition to the loss of greenfield land from the Green Belt. In short form the local community – and especially the Town Council can see the benefits (summarised above) in a planned expansion of the town to the enduring boundary presented by the A46.

16. The boundary of the A46 will create the clear distinction between the expanded urban form of Kenilworth and the Green Belt to the east. The interface will be addressed within the master planning process so as to create an attractive urban

edge and entry into Kenilworth. The release of H06 will not place Green Belt land to the east of the A46 under pressure for future development having due regard to the distinct change in circumstances formed by the A46.

17. It is submitted that in the interests of meeting the development needs of the District through sustainable patterns of development, there are exceptional circumstances for the release of H06 (Thickthorn- with E2) from the Green Belt. The provision of new housing (and employment) will be the benefit of the town which has not seen significant urban expansion for some c30 years. The provision of a strategic scale of housing will increase local housing supply; broaden housing choice and increase the supply of affordable housing- in a town where house prices are high.
18. The provision of new employment (E2) as part of a mixed use sustainable urban extension will enhance the portfolio of employment land available within the town – attracting new investment and wider job opportunities which will be of benefit to the existing and new community.
19. As such ‘exceptional circumstances ‘justify the release of the Thickthorn location from the Green Belt.