

Matter 7d: Whether the proposed housing site allocations at the Growth Villages and Hockley Heath are justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Bellway Homes West Midlands
Represented by Hunter Page Planning Respondent No. 12981 / 1373

Matter 7d: Proposed housing site allocations - Growth Villages and Hockley Heath

The following statement relates to:

**Cubbington
H26 – Opposite Willow Sheet Meadow**

What is the current planning status of the site? Response to question 1

- 1.1 The site currently has no planning status and has most recently been used for agricultural purposes.

How does it fit within the overall spatial strategy? Response to question 2.

- 1.2 This site fits with the Council's strategy of directing housing to the most sustainable settlements. Cubbington was identified as a Growth Village in the Settlement Hierarchy Report (2014), these being the most sustainable rural settlements according to a range of sustainability indicators, including the availability of local services and facilities as well as accessibility to larger settlements

In addition to housing provision, are there other benefits that the proposed development would bring? Response to question 3.

- 1.3 The development, subject to the delivery of 65 dwellings will provide the following benefits that are recognised by the House Builders Federation to be as a direct result of housing development. Any contribution/benefits will obviously be agreed with the Council at the appropriate time:

- The provision of affordable housing;
- Support the employment of 279 people in the construction industry;
- Increase open space, community support and leisure spending by £60,840;
- Generate £104,455 towards education; and
- Generate £650,000 in tax revenue, including £83,590 in Council Tax revenue.

What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated? Response to question 4

- 1.4 These would be a loss of allotments. However, these will be re-provided in a nearby location in agreement with the Cubbington Allotment Association. Bellway Homes are already in constructive dialogue with them and have discussed a re-location strategy.

Is the scale of development proposed compatible with the capacity of the village to accommodate further growth in terms of character and appearance, the level of services and existing infrastructure? Response to question 5

- 1.5 Cubbington has been assessed as the second highest scoring rural settlement in the Council's Village Profile and Housing Allocations report (February 2016), a score which takes account of its current population and settlement size, service availability and accessibility.

What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed? Response to question 6

- 1.6 There are no physical constraints to the development of this site or any abnormal costs to be accounted for.

Is the site realistically viable and deliverable? Response to question 7.

- 1.7 The site is viable and deliverable. Bellway have a contract with the landowner and it is available to be delivered within 5 years.

What is the expected timescale for development and is this realistic? Response to question 8

- 1.8 Within 5 years of adoption of the Local Plan
What would be the effect of the proposal on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt? Response to question 9.
- 1.9 Paragraph 80 sets out the 5 purposes of including land within the Green Belt. In this case, the effect on the purpose of including land in the Green Belt would be as follows:

- 1.10 With regard to unrestricted sprawl the site is well contained with existing vegetation and seen in part against the backdrop of existing development. Whilst an open field would be lost, it is considered that this would not upset the views and enjoyment of the adjoining countryside and the open character of this countryside. The existing containment of the site would therefore not encourage the unrestricted sprawl of built up areas.
- 1.11 In terms of preventing neighbouring towns from merging, it is considered that the development of this contained site would not have a notable impact on the open gap between Cubbington and surrounding settlements.
- 1.12 In terms of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the site is visually enclosed by vegetation to the north, east and west along with the Coventry Road. It does not therefore contribute to the perceived openness of the Green Belt, instead appearing and reading as part of the existing settlement. The character of the adjoining countryside would not therefore be harmed.
- 1.13 The site is far enough away from the centre of the settlement so will not have an effect on any historic significance associated with the settlement.
- 1.14 Finally, the site is considered in relation to the potential allocation of other sites as part of the local plan process that considers brownfield and greenfield sites outside the Green Belt first. In this regard, the development of this site would not hinder the regeneration of derelict urban sites.

What would the effect be on the openness of the Green Belt? Response to question 10.

- 1.15 The removal of this site from the Green Belt does not compromise the function of the Green Belt, and the 5 key functions will not be eroded in this location.

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

- 1.16 Para 84 states that in reviewing the Green Belt, account should be taken of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. Para 85 similarly refers to ensuring consistency with a Local Plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements of sustainable development. Given the drivers of the spatial strategy to meet needs where they arise, the proposal to amend the inner boundary of the Green Belt is similarly consistent with the tenets expressed in the NPPF.

- 1.17 In this context, there exist several exceptional circumstances that justify the principle of altering the Green Belt boundary in the Development Plan and the specific alteration proposed at Cubbington. These are summarised in the following paragraphs:
- 1.18 Spatial Strategy: Its guiding principle is that need should be met where it arises. This, consistent with earlier strategies which considered the most sustainable pattern of development, is intended to enable urban extensions, together with Growth Villages, to remain as the primary focus for growth. This gives rise to the spatial strategy that has been employed in this case that meets with the housing and economic vision for the plan area.
- 1.19 Objectively Assessed Needs: On the basis of the estimate of housing need and demand in the Local Plan, 16,766 new homes are needed between 2011 and 2029. This is based upon various technical studies that reflect demographic evidence and economic growth assumptions. This is a level of development which established a need for urban expansion and growth in larger villages has resulted in the need to amend the Green Belt and the identification of development at Cubbington.
- 1.20 There is no prospect of this level of housing being provided within the Local Plan area without additional land being allocated in the Green Belt. Moreover, there is no prospect of this being achieved without development of urban extensions and development around Growth Villages.
- 1.21 It has been established through the early examination sessions that the development requirements in the local plan area cannot be met within the urban and administrative areas of the main settlements. It has been recognised that expansion of the urban areas and growth villages into the Green Belt is the only way that the local plan can meet its development requirements and the unmet needs of Coventry in a sustainable manner.
- 1.22 Taken together these factors combine to provide the exception circumstances necessary to support the alteration of the Green Belt as a matter of principle. Added to this, the Joint Green Belt Study scores Green Belt land around Cubbington (CB1), within which this site lies lower than surrounding parcels of land.