

A note explaining where information relating to the assessment of sites is located

Introduction

- 1 This note has been prepared at the request of the Inspector during the Matter 4 hearings held on Thursday 29th September.
- 2 The assessment of sites is set out in three locations within the evidence base.

Stage 1: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

- 3 All sites submitted to the SHLAA have been subject to a strategic assessment. This is documented in the SHLAA (HO12 and HO22PM)

Stage 2: Detailed Sites Assessment

- 4 Sites assessed through the SHLAA as potentially suitable and available were then subject to more detailed assessments in relation to a number of constraints and potential impacts. The full evidence relating to these assessments is set out across the evidence base documents, which are arranged on the website by theme. However, the information relating to each of these assessments is brought together in the following documents:
 - a. Site Selection Methodology (HO23PM): this matrix includes a row for each site assessed in detail (other than village sites) and summarises the assessment of that site in relation to a range of constraints and impacts. The final 6 columns summarise the position regarding each site at each stage of the Local Plan process to show whether the site was taken forward and in those cases where a change occurred, why this change happened.

It should be noted that in the version of this document (HO23PM) published in the examination library, the final 5 columns of this document appeared separately on pages 3 and 4. This is because of the complexities of publishing large spreadsheets in a legible way. The Council accepts that this makes it hard to read online. The Council has therefore republished HO23PM.

- b. Updated Village Site Appraisal Matrix (V19PM): this matrix follows a similar structure to the Site Selection Methodology but sets out the assessment of each site on a village by village basis. As the evidence base for village assessments differs to some extent from other sites, the headings for each column are different to those used in the Site Selection Methodology. The summary and conclusions relating to each site are set out in the final column.

Stage 3: Sustainability Appraisal

- 5 The Sustainability Appraisal looks at those sites that the Council considered were reasonable alternatives to the preferred sites. It summarises the evidence from the detailed assessments and provides an indicative scoring matrix for each site to demonstrate the relative sustainability impacts and benefits of each site.

Specific Queries

- 6 Two specific queries were raised during the EIP hearings session held on Thursday 29th September (Matter 4).
- a. Loes Farm, Warwick (SHLAA ref W28): this query related to where the information is regarding how this site was reassessed in light of the need to accommodate additional housing need arising in Coventry. The site selection methodology (HO23PM) sets out the detail regarding the constraints and impacts of this site. Whilst the site was progressed in the 2012 Preferred Options, further detailed work relating to the landscape (see column entitled Landscape Character Assessment in HO23PM) and heritage (see column entitled Heritage Settings assessment in HO23PM), combined with the lack of exceptional circumstances for green belt release, meant this site was not progressed at the Revised Development Strategy Stage (2013). This position was revisited at the Publication and Submission Draft Stages with the same conclusions being drawn (see last six summary columns of HO23PM). For the 2016 modifications, evidence relating to landscape and heritage remained valid and the site was not considered suitable for meeting additional need. The site was not therefore reassessed in the updated Sustainability Appraisal (SA11PM). In summary, the information regarding how this site was assessed is found within the Site Selection Methodology (HO23PM) and no changes were considered necessary in preparing the 2016 modifications.
- b. Land at Westwood Heath Road (SHLAA Ref C03, C18 and C31): this query related to the comparative assessment between this site and the site allocated at Westwood Heath Road (Site H42 – SHLAA ref C13).
- i. C03 and C18 were considered in the 2014 SHLAA (HO12) as being unsuitable for development based on a lack of suitable access (C18) and unsuitable in isolation. However C18 was considered potentially suitable in part together with adjacent site/s to the west (C03). C31 represented an amalgamation of the two sites and was considered in the 2015 SHLAA (HO22PM) as being suitable in part for development subject to infrastructure improvements and an early partial review of the plan.
- ii. C03 was considered in the site selection methodology in 2014 (SA07) and was compared directly to land to the west (H42) under the column relating to potential coalescence / landscape: *“The western part of this area is assessed as having development potential with associated green infrastructure to mitigate landscape impacts. The eastern part (site C03) is assessed as having a significant impact on the gap between Coventry and Kenilworth and would limit the potential for green infrastructure development”*

- iii. Internal assessments were undertaken that enabled the council to compile various evidence sources that in turn informed the selection of potential sites and their inclusion in the Sites Selection Methodology matrix (HO23PM).
- iv. One of the major considerations at this stage was the landscape evidence produced by RMA and published as part of the evidence base (LA09PM). An update published in January 2016 considered and compared various proposed sites, including the land at Hurst Farm (C31) and H42.
- v. The plan accompanying the assessment of the land in this area demonstrates clearly the sites considered to be most appropriate for development and those where development would adversely impact on the wider landscape (following p. 14). The summary of Hurst Farm in paragraph 2.2.4 of LA09PM suggests that as a whole, it would be inappropriate for development but that a smaller parcel using the extant river course as a southern boundary might be suitable for allocation. The evidence also shows that the area to the north of the brook (safeguarded as S1) comprises the area that is potentially suitable for development. The remainder of the site was not therefore taken forward for detailed assessment in the 2016 Site Selection Methodology Update.