



The Kenilworth Education Trust
Kenilworth School & Sixth Form
Respondent Number 7566
Warwick District Local Plan
Examination Statement
Matter 8 - Other Proposed Site
Allocations

OAREP/002

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This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 237355-00

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Matter 8 – Other Proposed Site Allocations

This statement has been prepared on the behalf of The Kenilworth Education Trust which is responsible for Kenilworth School and Sixth Form in response to the issue identified under Matter 8 and in relation to:

- *Policy DS12 – Land for education*
- *ED2 – Southcrest Farm, Kenilworth*
- *Issue: Whether the proposed site allocations for education, a country park, a community hub and outdoor sport are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.*

Introduction

The Kenilworth School and Sixth Form was historically formed through the merger of three schools and a charitable Trust (The Kenilworth Education Trust) was formed in January 2009.

The School is an “Outstanding” school and examination results are some of the highest for a state school in the County.

Kenilworth School currently provides the secondary school provision in the town of Kenilworth with all the Kenilworth primary schools feeding Kenilworth School. Warwickshire County Council Education Department has advised on the basis of the housing growth proposed within the plan period and the priority area for Kenilworth, secondary school provision in Kenilworth will increase to 2,200 places from the current 1,744.

The Kenilworth Education Trust wants to ensure that the Local Plan properly accommodates and integrates the future needs of Kenilworth School and Sixth Form through policies and allocations which will allow for the growth and consolidation of the school on one site.

Existing Kenilworth School Sites

Kenilworth School currently operates from two sites; the secondary school being located at Leyes Lane and the Sixth Form at the Rouncil Lane site. Kenilworth School and sixth form has 1,744 pupils on roll, which includes approximately 450 sixth form students on the Rouncil Lane site.

Many of the buildings on the two sites were built in the 1950/60s and the fabric of many of the buildings is approaching the end of its viable use. It is unlikely to prove to be practical or viable to continue to provide facilities on both sites whilst growing and developing the School to accommodate a larger numbers of students, whilst also providing a community service out of school hours. The School is therefore seeking to consolidate its buildings and other facilities onto one site at South Crest Farm.

This statement is laid out in response to the questions raised by the Inspector under Matter 8 and in relation to Policy DS12 and Southcrest Farm (ED2).

Question 1

What is the justification for the proposed allocation? What options were considered and why was this site chosen?

An options appraisal was undertaken on behalf of the Kenilworth School and Sixth Form, to enable the School's Governing Body to make informed decisions about the future location and nature of the School's buildings set in the context of the Local Plan.

The scope of the options appraisal was to independently review and evaluate the current land and buildings that comprise the two sites owned by The Kenilworth Education Trust. The appraisal considered options for a 2,200 capacity school in terms of buildings and surrounding land within or neighbouring Kenilworth.

Based on a requirement for a school with capacity for 2,200 places, the EFA guidance benchmark BB103 was applied to develop spatial requirements for the school footprint and sports facilities provision. The analysis concluded that a site of approximately 32 acres of land was required to cater for 2,200 school places.

Alongside the overall footprint of land required, the selection criteria adopted in the identification of potential sites included:

- Within reasonable walking distance of Kenilworth town centre
- Proximity to the proposed new residential development area
- Established infrastructure
- Public transport links
- School sports and outdoor provision

A limited number of potential sites were found which met the spatial requirement for developing a school for 2,200 students, which shown in figure 1 below.

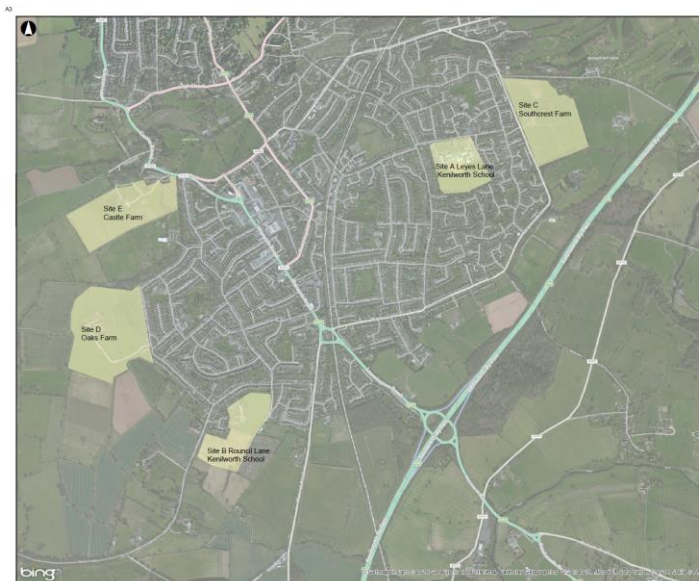


Figure 1 – Potential sites

Potential sites along the southern boundary of Kenilworth were eliminated due to the noise impact of the A46 prohibiting development of a school. Following the identification of these potential sites, each site was visited and observations such as access points, roads, overhead lines, boundary conditions, site topography, etc to establish the potential for development of these sites.

The potential sites were assessed against a number of key historic and existing constraints which impacted on their viability. In most cases, due to planning and statutory requirements, the development of circa 35 acre school site was not considered to be possible where these physical and environmental constraints exist. These key constraints were:

- A large part of Kenilworth is located within the former medieval 'Kings Woods' which formed part of the woodland associated with Kenilworth Castle immediately to the north west of the town
- 8 No. designated heritage assets are located within the north west and south east periphery of Kenilworth
- The proposed High Speed Rail line (HS2) is planned approximately 1km from the eastern edge of Kenilworth
- The noise impact from the A46 road which runs along the southern edge of Kenilworth
- Designated conservation area, parks and open spaces to the west and south east
- High flood risk zones that exist in the north-west and south-east sections of Kenilworth

In addition to identifying these constraints, potential sites to the west of Kenilworth were advised to be less favourably by the Highways Authority due to constrained infrastructure and archaeological sensitivity.

An appraisal of the potential sites favoured Southcrest Farm as the site which best aligned with the School's criteria for site selection due to:

- Good proximity to the centre of Kenilworth
- Good proximity to the proposed new housing development
- Close to public transport links
- Existing road infrastructure
- Site offers flexibility in developing a purpose built facility
- External sports facility provision is viable
- Community sports provision is viable
- Sustainable and efficient solutions are viable
- Minimal disruption to the school
- Minimal disruption to neighbours and community
- Future expansion and flexibility
- Single site provision possible



Figure 2 – Proposed school layout at Southcrest Farm

Question 2

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

The site is currently within green belt and the design and development of a new school would be sensitive to its location and topography. The site has a steady gradient from north to south and the proposed scheme is positioned to follow the site profile by creating a series of terraces for the sports pitches provision. The main school footprint is proposed to be concentrated at the top end of the site and built into the site topography.

Pedestrian access will link current walking routes from the town centre and bus stop locations. The proposed layout incorporates the existing pond as a natural feature, car and coach parking and drop off provision are incorporated within the site footprint, along with cycle racks and accesses.

Question 3

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

Southcrest Farm is located on an existing road with good links to the town centre and a short distance from the current School site at Leyes Lane. Amenities and public transport are already established in nearby Leyes Lane and Glasshouse Lane is located to the perimeter of Kenilworth.

Alongside the architect, transport planners and designers have developed the site wide masterplan incorporating existing features such as the pond into the landscape, car parking

and playground areas. The existing road network is well established and the road access to the site is currently a 50 mph road, which will require speed reduction measures and improvements.

Early engagement with utilities providers and statutory bodies such as Highways Authority has informed the proposed development. Utilities are located in the vicinity of the site, however new power, gas, water and drainage infrastructure will be required to service the site.

The costs for development of a new 2,200 pupil school have been developed based on EFA guidelines and published cost data for schools in England. The project infrastructure costs have been developed based on the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors guidelines. Initial desk studies and engineering input have informed a financial model for this preferred option which is based on installation of all utilities and new accesses into the site. A combination of terracing and retaining walls will be utilised to create plateaus across the site for the provision of playing fields, running track, etc to address the gradient across the site.

The site is positioned away from existing urban density and the current school, consequently the site has the potential to be developed with minimal disruption to the school and town.

Question 4

How does the proposed allocation relate to proposed housing sites in terms of phasing, funding etc.?

In line with paragraph 177 of the NPPF that reads “It is equally important to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that planning infrastructure is deliverable in a timely fashion”. The new school is proposed to be built by 2020 which would be in line with demand for additional places as new housing is built.

The new school is proposed to be built as a series of connected buildings, with the Sixth Form building completed first to release the Rouncil Lane site (allocated site H012 in the local plan) for housing. Followed by completion of the main school site and external works, at which point the Leyes Lane site (allocated site H09 in the local plan) is released for housing.

In addition to land receipts from the disposal of the current school sites, education contribution for additional places in the form of S106/CIL from developments across Kenilworth will form part of the funding for the development of the 2,200 capacity school.

Question 5

Is the proposal realistically viable and deliverable? How will it be funded?

National Policy as set out within the NPPF, in particular paragraph 173 states “pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan making and decision making. Plans should be deliverable”.

Kenilworth School, along with schools across the country, is seeing decreased funding from Government and increased pressure to provide value for money whilst retaining the current outstanding results.

The allocated site at Southcrest Farm (ED2) for educational use has been demonstrated to be the most appropriate site when considered against reasonable alternatives. Working closely with the School, several options have been developed by designers and assessed for viability and deliverability. Schedules of accommodation have been developed for the school footprint through intensive engagement with School staff and advisors to create a school footprint in line with EFA guidelines.

The funding for the new school is a combination of sources, including: S106/CIL developer contribution for the additional places; land receipt from the disposal of Rouncil Lane and Leyes Lane sites (housing allocation sites H09 and H012); and EFA. And based on the following:

- Condition assessments of the existing Sixth Form School buildings have concluded that the Sixth Form is likely to require replacement within the next decade, consequently, capital funding from the EFA will be sought to support the replacement of these buildings
- Independent advisors have undertaken land valuations based on housing densities in line with regional policy
- Initial market approaches for a development partner for the School

Viability of the scheme has been assessed on the basis of cost estimates for the construction of a new 2,200 pupil school with associated buildings, car parking, play areas, access, site utilities, etc.

The costs associated with the development of a new 2,200 pupil school have been initially estimated as £35 to £42m, consequently the School envisage the scheme being taken forward with a development partner. Initial market testing resulted in a strong response from potential partners, especially amongst the well-established construction firms in the region with a track records in delivering self-financed education facilities. The School propose to develop this approach and appoint a successful partner to deliver the new facilities at Southcrest Farm and to dispose of the existing school sites for redevelopment.

The programme for the scheme has been developed in line with the appointment of a development partner. In addition, Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and Kenilworth School and Sixth Form are jointly developing a cashflow model to support the development on Southcrest Farm, to offset anticipated phased S106/CIL contributions.

Finally, the School is currently undertaking a consultation for Academy status which has the potential to offer funding arrangements which utilise existing School estate assets.

Question 6

What is the expected timescale for development?

The expected timescale is to submit a planning application in late 2017 with construction works completed for the summer of 2020, with a start of school date of September 2020.

Question 7

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

The allocation of green belt for educational use will enable Kenilworth town to maintain a single 'outstanding' secondary school which continues to provide secondary and sixth form education to pupils from all primary schools in Kenilworth.

Question 8

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

Kenilworth town is surrounded by green belt, consequently any further expansion of Kenilworth will be into the green belt.

Expansion to the west and north of the town would impact on the heritage and archaeology assets of the town, alongside highways and flooding constraints. To the south the green belt is severed by the A46 road and to the east by the proposed HS2 route.

Southcrest Farm is located east of Kenilworth and sits to the south of residences along Crew Lane and the Kenilworth golf course. The site is relatively isolated and is surrounded by mature trees along its perimeter, with roads to the north and west, a tree lined spinney to the south and agricultural fields to the east.

The site has a slightly elevated position, however the mature trees surrounding the site act as a natural barrier to neighbouring fields. A combination of mature trees and setting the massing of the school buildings along the line of the site topography supports a minimal overall visual impact along Glasshouse Lane and Crew Lane.

Locating Kenilworth School on this site provides good access and connectivity between the existing town and the proposed new housing developments.

Question 9

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

Kenilworth School is unable to expand its current sites to accommodate the educational and community needs to support the proposed housing numbers within the plan period. There is insufficient land mass available within the town to accommodate a 32 acre school site, consequently, altering green belt is the only viable option.