

# Matter 11: Major Sites in the Green Belt

## Note on Revisions to Policies MS2

16<sup>th</sup> December 2016

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### Background

- 1 At the Local Plan Examination hearings on 7th December issues relating to University of Warwick and Major Sites in the Green Belt (Policies MS1 and MS2) were discussed.
  - 2 This note sets out proposed modifications to Policies MS2 to address the concerns that were raised during those hearings.
  - 3 **In particular these additional modifications seek to**
    - a. Amend policy MS2 to remove Stoneleigh Deer Park (Abbey Park) from the remit of the policy and explain uses that may be appropriate at Stoneleigh Park.
    - b. Amend the site boundary at Fen End (Honiley Airfield) to include the test track area
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### Policy MS2: Major Sites in the Green Belt

- 4 Amend policy MS2 to remove Stoneleigh Deer Park (Abbey Park) from the remit of the policy and explain uses that may be appropriate at Stoneleigh Park. The text below shows all the changes proposed including those set out in LP21 and subsequently. The sections **highlighted yellow** specifically address the points raised at the hearings:

#### MS2: Major Sites in the Green Belt

Development at existing **developed** sites in the Green Belt will be restricted to **'appropriate' forms of development in the Green Belt as defined by National Planning Policy, including the limited infilling and redevelopment of previously developed land, and will be assessed in accordance with national planning policy.**

**Due to the importance of the Former Honiley Airfield, and Stoneleigh Park, and Stoneleigh Deer Park to the economy and the District, there may be very special circumstances to justify further development in addition to that already identified within existing masterplans (within the boundary identified on the Policies Map).**

~~Where this can be demonstrated, proposals should be brought forward in line with an approved Masterplan or Development Brief which demonstrates that the openness and the~~

~~purposes for including the land in the Green Belt is retained, and which complies with other relevant policies in this Plan.~~

In order to ensure that development proposals are appropriate the Council will support the preparation of Masterplan planning applications or development briefs for the Former Honiley Airfield, and Stoneleigh Park, and Stoneleigh Deer Park which demonstrates that the site continues to contribute to the openness and the purposes for including the land in the Green Belt, and which complies with other relevant policies in this Plan.

In the case of Stoneleigh Park, appropriate amendments as a result of HS2 will be supported without the need to revise the Masterplan. If, as a result of the impact of HS2, development is demonstrably required in the Green Belt, this may be considered as 'very special circumstances'. The range of potentially acceptable uses for development of the Park masterplans (within the boundary identified on the Policies Map) will be restricted to those associated with rural innovation and equine activities and appropriate ancillary uses.

~~In the case of the Former Honiley Airfield the range of uses on the site will be restricted to the automotive and motorsport industries and employment associated with these sectors.~~

### Explanation

3.147 National planning policy allows limited infilling or partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites within the Green Belt whether redundant or in continuing use which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development

3.148 However the Council recognises that the sites identified in the above policy have a unique and important role in delivering the objectives of the Strategic Economic Plan and in the local and sub regional economy. It is considered that whilst these sites fulfil an important role in maintaining the openness of the Green Belt and should be retained within it there may be very special circumstances to justify further development within the boundaries identified on the policies map. These are set out in detail below.

### Former Honiley Airfield

3.149 The former military airfield has been used for a variety of aeronautical and automotive uses since the 1950s and most recently for vehicle testing and research and design associated with the automotive industry. It is unique in allowing the co-location of research and development facilities together with a test track for off road testing.

3.150 The site has planning permission for the development of an advanced engineering research and development campus for the automotive and motorsport industries including the provision of a new access and roundabout taking traffic away from the existing access on Oldwich Lane East.

3.151 The site has an important role in delivering the aims of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) in relation to the growth of advanced manufacturing particularly in the long term through the implementation of the planning permission. Funding has been agreed through the City Deal to secure the delivery of the access and traffic proposals set out in the planning permission. Further investment is proposed through the SEP to undertake a utilities upgrade to ensure the site is attractive to companies wishing to relocate.

3.152 The Council acknowledges the site's importance to the sub regional economy and is supportive of the approved proposals in the context of the unique role of the site. It is also recognised that the delivery of the planning permission may provide benefits to the wider community such as noise attenuation. **In this context it is considered that significant employment generation relating to the role the site has in meeting the objectives of the LEP**

**and proposals set out in the City Deal, may justify very special circumstances in assessing further proposals for the site.** However, it is important that redevelopment of the site is carefully managed in the context of the site's sensitive rural location in the Green Belt. This is particularly with regard to the sites limited access to the strategic road network and potential impact of the activities on neighbouring residential communities. It is therefore unlikely than any proposals to extend the range of uses beyond that in the planning permission which are restricted to automotive and motorsport uses would be acceptable.

3.153 In addition to the permission it is recognised that some small scale development may be necessary adjacent to the test track to assist in its operations, however the Council will ensure in assessing any proposals that the openness of the Green Belt is maintained.

3.154 The boundary identified on the proposals map reflects the approved planning unit and defines the areas the Council considers is acceptable for limited development and infilling. This recognises that some of the approved development is located on woodland rather than previously developed land.

### **Stoneleigh Park**

3.155 Stoneleigh Park is a unique facility within the Green Belt which is home to the headquarters of the Royal Agricultural Society for England (RASE) and a number of other agricultural and countryside organisations. The park hosts a wide range of shows and events showcasing rural activities and businesses from across the country and as such is an established part of the rural economy both locally and nationally.

3.156 A long term Masterplan for the park has been set out to develop the site as a rural innovation science park with an emphasis on sustainability, the environment, agriculture, equine activities, forestry, and rural businesses. Outline planning permission was granted in November 2012 for the redevelopment and reuse of buildings at Stoneleigh Park. **The masterplan planning permission time expires in November 2020. The Council will support the preparation of a new masterplan planning permission to guide the development of Stoneleigh Park for the latter part of the plan period.** It is intended that the site will evolve into a national hub for rural and sustainability research and equine activities, providing the opportunity for the clustering of businesses relating to these activities.

3.157 It is recognised that the delivery of the long term plan is therefore likely to bring significant economic benefits for the local area. The Council supports the unique role of the Park and the delivery of the Masterplan to secure its long term future. A wider range of uses have been permitted on the site than previously allowed to assist this. **It is considered that uses associated with rural innovation and equine activities necessary as part of enhancing the parks status as a rural business park may justify very special circumstances in the future. Some ancillary uses may also be reasonable as part of bringing forward the wider development of the site as a centre for rural excellence.**

3.158 It is accepted that there may be a need to revisit this Masterplan in the future during the plan period. It is important that future development is carefully planned and guided in the context of the Parks sensitive location in the Green Belt, adjacent to two Listed Historic Parks, and its relationship to the village of Stoneleigh. The land at Stoneleigh Park continues to fulfil an important function in maintaining the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore any future updates to the Masterplan will need to be assessed in terms of the proposed intensity of development and mix of uses.

3.159 It is recognised that some of the land proposed for development through the Masterplan does not fall under the definition of previously developed land. This policy therefore defines the boundary, in line with the planning permission, which reflects the area the Council believes is appropriate for redevelopment of the Park.

3.160 It is recognised that the need to safeguard land for HS2 (policy NE6) may impact on the delivery of the Masterplan. **Amendments to the existing Masterplan as a result of HS2 will be accepted providing they are within the approved parameters in terms of overall floor space and uses.**

#### **Stoneleigh Abbey Business Park**

3.161 Now the site of Abbey Business Park it has been used for a range of uses over the years including a Military hospital during the Second World War. It lies within Stoneleigh Deer Park which is designated as a Grade II Historic Park. 3.162 Since outline planning permission was granted for an office Masterplan in 2002 the site has been subject to phased redevelopment which has included the development of a new headquarters facility for the British Horse Society. A revised Masterplan has recently been granted permission to include demolition of the remaining World War II hospital huts for new office space.

3.163 The redevelopment of the site has been carefully managed in the context of the historic parkland setting and it continues to fulfil an important role in the Green Belt. The Council supports the continued use of the site but considers that development beyond that approved is unlikely to be appropriate.

#### **Other Major Sites in the Green Belt**

3.164 Development at other major sites will be restricted to limited infilling and redevelopment of previously developed land and will be assessed in accordance with national planning policy.

At the hearing session, the Council agreed to consider amending the boundary of the area at Fen End to which Policy MS2 applies. The track area is an integral part of the uses which take place on the site and it is the presence of the track that has resulted in development associated with automotive uses being permitted here. It is therefore proposed that the boundary be amended to include the test track area, following the boundary of the area of the land-ownership shown by the blue line within Appendix C (Vehicle Operations Permission) of the Jaguar Landrover Matter 11 Statement.