

## CHAPTER 3A: HOUSING OMISSION SITES

- 3A.1** In this chapter of my report, I deal with all the additional or alternative housing sites put forward by developers and land-owners that do not feature in the UDP Review. Most of these sites lie in the approved Green Belt and many adjoin the existing urban area or settlements in the Green Belt. In this section of my report, I deal with the site-specific objections on both housing and Green Belt matters.
- 3A.2** To provide a logical order to consider these sites, I have adopted the area-based approach and housing site reference numbers set out in the *Housing Sites Selection Compendium [CD154]*. To avoid any duplication or repetition, I outline the status of each area or settlement in a brief introduction to each section, including the Green Belt status.
- 3A.3** The context for my consideration of these sites is provided by my earlier conclusions on the overall adequacy of housing land supply, both within the current Plan period and beyond, in Chapter 3 of my report. My key conclusions are that:
- *the UDP Review makes sufficient housing provision for a 5-year period from its base date, from the expected date of adoption and for the current Plan period up to 2011;*
  - *taking account of the safeguarded land already identified, the UDP Review could also make sufficient provision of potential housing land for at least 10 years from the expected date of adoption;*
  - *consequently, there is no pressing or compelling need to allocate further additional land for housing within the current Plan period, particularly on greenfield sites or sites currently in the Green Belt;*
  - *the focus of the housing strategy on brownfield land, rather than greenfield sites, and the overall and detailed site-selection procedure for housing sites reflects national policy in PPG3 and the latest regional spatial strategy;*
  - *there is no need to identify any further additional safeguarded land for the period of the current UDP Review.*
- 3A.4** National policy in PPG3, particularly the sequential site-selection procedure and the hierarchy of site selection, is central to my assessment of these sites. Many of the suggested alternative/additional housing sites are greenfield sites that have been considered at earlier UDP inquiries, which would now represent *urban extensions* in terms of PPG3. In view of the general sufficiency of housing provision on existing brownfield and other sites within the main urban areas, there is simply no overriding or urgent need to allocate new greenfield sites to meet current or future housing land requirements.
- 3A.5** The strategic context is provided by the latest regional strategy [*CD51G; RPG11; July 2004*], outlined in Chapter 3 of my report. The key elements are:
- *a fundamental change in direction to concentrate new development within the Major Urban Areas (MUA), resisting peripheral expansion, and securing urban renaissance and the regeneration of the MUAs;*
  - *the need to maximise housing land supply within the MUAs;*
  - *locations which extend the boundaries of the MUA are not acceptable, since they would run counter to the Spatial Strategy (Policy CF3(C));*
  - *the Green Belt is to be retained, with adjustments only where necessary to support urban regeneration (¶ 3.14(d));*
  - *in rural areas subject to strong influences from the MUAs (such as the more rural parts of Solihull), the rate of development is to be managed to that required to meet local needs (Policies CF3 & RR1).*

- 3A.6 Most of the alternative/additional sites would perform poorly against the latest regional strategy, since they lie outside the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not directly support urban regeneration. Moreover, the latest regional guidance seems to indicate that new housing in the settlements in Solihull outside the MUA should be limited to that necessary to meet local needs and support local services (Policy CF2(D)).
- 3A.7 In considering Green Belt issues, the starting point is national policy on Green Belts. PPG2 (¶ 2.1/2.6) confirms that the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence. Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances, and detailed boundaries defined in adopted development plans should also be altered only exceptionally. In this case, detailed Green Belt boundaries were defined either in the 1977 Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan, or in the adopted UDP [CD111]. This latter plan took account of the need to relate housing proposals to a longer timescale than that of the Plan, in accordance with PPG2 (¶ 2.8/2.12). PPG2 (¶ 2.7) also confirms that where existing development plans are being revised and updated, Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless exceptional circumstances exist which necessitate such revision.
- 3A.8 SMBC confirms that, in this Review, the approved Green Belt boundaries in the adopted UDP have generally been retained [CD142]. In considering requests to amend Green Belt boundaries in this Review, the clearly established test is whether there are any exceptional circumstances to justify the amendment, having regard to national policy and the regional strategy established in the latest RPG11. It is also important to realise that tightly drawn Green Belt boundaries help to focus development on the main urban area, thus contributing to urban regeneration and avoiding the unnecessary loss of greenfield Green Belt land. Furthermore, the fact that an alternative Green Belt boundary could provide an equally defensible boundary is no reason in itself to justify the physical extension of the urban area or a rural settlement beyond its existing limits.
- 3A.9 In the interests of consistency and to reflect the general approach taken at the inquiry, sites in the Green Belt are assessed in terms of their Green Belt functions and the impact of their removal and development on the Green Belt, and then assessed against the site-selection criteria and hierarchy in PPG3 (¶ 30-32) and the latest regional strategy. Other relevant factors include the impact on the countryside and landscape in terms of PPS7, along with any site-specific characteristics and exceptional circumstances that may have been advanced. However, since many of these sites have common characteristics, it would be unduly repetitive to deal with most of these sites on an individual basis, and so they are grouped by settlement, area or type. Non-Green Belt sites are dealt with at the end of each section.
- 3A.10 The physical and locational characteristics of these sites are clearly set out in SMBC's *Housing Sites Selection Compendium* [CD154]. This also includes a basic assessment of each site against the site selection criteria in PPG3, and against other national policy, as well as the implications for the latest regional strategy. In most cases, these assessments were not seriously challenged by the objectors, and they provide the basis for my own assessment of the sites.

**SITE-SPECIFIC OBJECTIONS****SOLIHULL EAST**

3A.11 Solihull East covers the main urban area of Solihull, including the town centre. Apart from the village of Catherine-de-Barnes, it lies within the MUA identified in the latest regional strategy. I understand that the Green Belt boundary in this part of the Borough was originally defined in the Warwickshire County Development Plan approved in 1975, which was carried forward into the 1977 Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan. Detailed Green Belt boundaries were finally established in the adopted UDP [CD111].

**GREEN BELT SITES****Site SE1 - Land at Pinfold Nursery, Solihull**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]:1375/866; [H2/1]:1375/868; [C1]:1375/869 – Harper Estates

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]: 1375/317R-318/R; 320/R-321/R; 417/R – Harper Estates

**Site SE2 - Land at Hampton Lane, Solihull**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1355/529; [H2/1]:1355/530; [C1]: 1355/531 – Azemco Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H1/1]: 1500/361/R, 401/R-402/R; [H2/1]: 1500/406/R - Azemco Ltd

**Site SE3 - Land at Marsh Lane, Solihull**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2/1]:1359/719; [C1]:1359/737 – Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]:1359/135/R; 142/R; 255/R - Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd.

**Site SE4 - Land at Riverside Drive/Warwick Road, Solihull**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2/1]:1379/1024-1025 – J J Gallagher Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2]:1379/28/R – J J Gallagher Ltd

**Site SE5 - Land at Pool Meadow Close, Solihull**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2]: 1384/548; [H2/1]: 1384/549 – Lawrence Grove Children's Trust

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

**Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing any of these sites from the Green Belt and designating them as housing sites, either within the current Plan period or as safeguarded land to meet longer term housing needs*

**Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

3A.12 These sites lie on the eastern fringe of Solihull and are all included within the Green Belt in the adopted UDP, a designation continued in this Review. All are undeveloped sites, and in most cases comprise agricultural land, a former nursery, grazing land and/or woodland. The objectors seek to allocate these sites for housing, either within the current Plan period or as safeguarded land to meet longer-term housing needs.

3A.13 All these sites form an integral part of the relatively narrow swathe of Green Belt lying between the urban edge of Solihull and the village of Catherine-de-Barnes and Knowle/Dorridge. In their present undeveloped condition, they perform important Green Belt functions, by helping to prevent the outward spread of the built-up area, safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment and maintaining the separation between the main urban area of Solihull and Catherine-de-Barnes or Knowle/Dorridge. Their removal from

the Green Belt and designation or safeguarding for housing would erode a vulnerable part of the *Meriden Gap* and conflict with PPG2, as well as breaching established and well-defined Green Belt boundaries.

- 3A.14 In the case of Sites SE1 & SE2, it would also extend and consolidate development along Hampton Lane, creating a weaker Green Belt boundary and building in open countryside away from the existing built-up area. It could also possibly set a precedent for further development along this stretch of Hampton Lane. Sites SE3 & SE4 also make a significant contribution to the entrance to Solihull from the main road network in both visual and physical terms. They provide an attractive rural setting, complementing the well defined and firmly established Green Belt boundary formed by the open space to the north. Along with Site SE5, identification for housing development either now or in the future would lead to the erosion of sensitive areas of open land on the fringe of the urban area. It would also remove a particularly vulnerable area of Green Belt between the existing built-up area and the major roads, as well as possibly leading to pressure to remove the adjoining open land from the Green Belt.
- 3A.15 Apart from the issue of housing land supply, both during the current Plan period and in the longer term, no exceptional circumstances have been advanced to justify the exclusion of these sites from the Green Belt, and they would therefore conflict with PPG2. In the absence of any pressing need to identify further greenfield sites to meet current or longer-term housing needs, there is no sound case to remove these sites from the Green Belt.
- 3A.16 In terms of the site-selection criteria in PPG3 (¶ 31), these sites are reasonably well related to existing facilities and local services, within easy reach of good access by public transport to Solihull town centre. In most cases, there are no fundamental infrastructure, environmental or physical constraints, and any access problems could probably be overcome. The development of these sites could also contribute to the local community, including provision of affordable housing.
- 3A.17 However, Site SE2 contains higher-quality farmland (Grade 2/3A) and there may be landscape, nature conservation, air quality and traffic noise issues. Development would result in a major extension of the urban area beyond its well established boundaries, representing a substantial encroachment into the surrounding countryside on higher grade farmland, which would not reflect national guidance in PPS7. In the case of Site SE4, the fact that it has been tipped means that site investigation and possible remediation work would be required. Since the tipped area has now blended into the natural landscape, it does not fall within the definition of *previously developed land*. The proximity to the by-pass, the River Blythe and a SINC could also constrain future development. For Site SE5, vehicular access may also be a problem, given the restricted nature of Pool Meadow Close, and there are other factors, such as the proximity of the motorway and the River Blythe SSSI which might constrain development.
- 3A.18 More particularly, these are all greenfield sites, which would represent *urban extensions* in terms of PPG3, and which do not lie at the top of the site-selection hierarchy. In view of the present sufficiency of housing land supply for the current Plan period and beyond, there is no urgent need to identify further greenfield sites like this to meet current housing requirements. Furthermore, in most cases, the development of these sites would extend the boundaries of the MUA, which is not favoured in the latest regional strategy, and the loss of Green Belt would not directly support urban regeneration. Consequently, the designation of these sites would perform poorly against the new regional strategy. I also note that the suitability of many of these sites for long-term housing was rejected at the previous UDP inquiry, mainly on Green Belt grounds [CD128; p.82-83; p.101; p.105-107].

Consequently, in the absence of any exceptional circumstances or overriding housing need, I conclude that there are sound and clear-cut reasons to reject the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their identification for housing development, either now or to meet longer term needs, particularly given the conflict with national policy in PPG2, PPG3 & PPS7 and the latest regional strategy.

**Recommendation**

***I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.***

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**NON-GREEN BELT SITES**

**Site SE8 - 42-48 Church Hill Road/2-10 Whitefields Road, Solihull**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]:1362/748 – Cala Homes (Midlands) Ltd  
**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

**Key issues**

- *Should this site be designated as a proposed housing site, in view of its brownfield status and locational characteristics.*

**Inspector’s reasoning and conclusions**

3A.21 This site fronts Whitefields Road/Church Hill Road, bounded by Alderwood Place and a railway line, in the urban area of Solihull. Formerly occupied by houses, it is now being redeveloped with apartments under the terms of a full planning permission granted in December 2001. It would therefore be inappropriate to designate it as a *proposed* housing site, and the contribution to housing land supply will be fully taken into account under the “commitments” category. No further amendments are therefore needed in response to this objection.

**Recommendation**

***3A.22 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet this objection.***

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**SOLIHULL NORTH**

3A.23 Solihull North covers the north-western part of the Borough, including Chelmsley Wood and Marston Green, most of which lies within the MUA identified in the latest regional strategy. The Green Belt boundary in this part of the Borough was originally defined in the Warwickshire County Development Plan approved in 1975, including areas of *Interim Green Belt*, which was carried forward into the 1977 Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan. Detailed Green Belt boundaries were finally established in the adopted UDP.

**GREEN BELT SITES**

**Site N9 - Chelmsley Lane/Coleshill Road, Marston Green (adjacent to Site (I))**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1409/882; [C1]: 1409/884 - Secretary of State for Health  
**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

**Site N10 - Land at Bickenhill Lane, Marston Green**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]:1361/1028-1029 – Bulpitt Trust;  
**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H1]: 1361/29/R-32/R; 247/R – Bulpitt Trust

**Key issues**

- Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing these sites from the Green Belt and designating them as strategic housing sites.

**Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

- 3A.24 Site N9 is an overgrown field, lying between Coleshill Road and new housing off Chelmsley Lane/Wagstaff Way (UDP Site 9B) to the west of Long-term Housing Site (I), with Marston Green Park to the west. Site N10 comprises paddocks and fields along with some existing houses, lying on both sides of Bickenhill Lane, between Elmdon Trading Estate and Marston Green. In the adopted UDP, both sites lie in the Green Belt, with Site N9 mostly allocated for public open space, and these designations are carried forward into the UDP Review. The objectors seek to remove these sites from the Green Belt and designate them for housing development within the current Plan period.
- 3A.25 In Green Belt terms, both sites form an integral part of the narrow wedge of Green Belt between Marston Green and Chelmsley Wood or Elmdon Trading Estate. In their present undeveloped condition, they perform important Green Belt functions, by helping to prevent the outward spread of the urban area and maintaining the separation of these built-up areas. The removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their development for housing would significantly erode the integrity and function of this relatively vulnerable area of remaining Green Belt. The removal and development of Site N10 could also lead to pressures to develop adjoining land, further damaging the integrity of the Green Belt. Apart from issues about the overall supply of housing land, no exceptional circumstances are advanced to justify the development of these sites, and consequently, their removal from the Green Belt would conflict with long-established national Green Belt policy in PPG2.
- 3A.26 In terms of the site-selection criteria in PPG3 (¶ 31), both sites are reasonably close to local facilities, schools, jobs and public transport. There may be possible school capacity problems and highway constraints, but there seem to be no serious infrastructure, physical or environmental constraints. However, these are greenfield sites, which do not lie at the top of the sequential search criteria in PPG3. Furthermore, even though they lie generally within the MUA, a housing designation would not perform particularly well against the latest regional strategy, since they are greenfield sites and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration.
- 3A.27 Furthermore, the development of Site N9 would directly result in the loss of allocated public open space, contrary to RPG11 Policy CF3, SUDPR Policies R2 & R4 & Proposal R4/2. Although no detailed assessment of local need for public open space has been undertaken by the objector or SMBC, and this land was not included in the area of POS transferred to SMBC in 1999, the loss of open space would conflict with the guidance in PPG17 (¶ 10). I also note that the suitability of this site for housing was rejected at the 1995 inquiry, mainly due to lack of justification and the importance of the open space element [CD128; p.86-88]. The possibility that the development of Site N10 would enlarge Marston Green Park, including an extension to the cricket ground and additional sports and recreation facilities, is not sufficient to outweigh the fundamental Green Belt and other policy objections.
- 3A.28 Consequently, in view of my conclusions on the overall adequacy of housing land supply to meet current housing requirements, I can see no exceptional circumstances or other reasons to justify removing these sites from the Green Belt and designating them as housing sites at this time, particularly in view of the conflict with PPG2, PPG3 and the latest regional strategy.

**Recommendation**

**3A.29 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

**NON-GREEN BELT SITES**

**Site N12 - Land at Coleshill Road, Berwicks Lane, Marston Green**

***Objections to First Deposit***

[H1/1]: 1405/1011 – Rosemount Fabrics

***Objections to Revised Deposit***

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

***Key issues***

- *Should this site be designated as a proposed strategic housing site, particularly bearing in mind its existing use as a playing field.*

***Inspector's reasoning and conclusions***

3A.30 This site lies between Coleshill Road, Berwicks Lane and Maple Leaf Drive within the urban area of Marston Green, not far from the village centre and adjoining existing housing. Extending to about 2.6ha, it is currently used as a playing field for Chelmsley Town Football Club. It has no specific allocation either in the adopted UDP or in the UDP Review. Rosemount seeks its designation as a strategic housing site within the current Plan period.

3A.31 This site is reasonably well located in terms of local facilities and accessibility to public transport, and apart from possible school capacity problems and highway constraints, there are no overriding infrastructure, physical or environmental constraints. Unlike many others, this site does not lie within the Green Belt and is unallocated in the adopted and emerging UDPs. However, although it lies within the built-up area/MUA, it is a greenfield site, which is not at the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3 and RPG11 Policy CF3. More particularly, the development of this site for housing would directly result in the loss of existing open space, playing fields and urban greenspace, contrary to RPG11 Policy CF3, UDP Policy R2 and PPG17 (¶ 15). I also understand that no assessment of the local need for, and provision of, open space has been undertaken and no firm proposals for compensatory provision have been made.

3A.32 Consequently, I conclude that there are sound and clear-cut reasons to reject the allocation of this site for housing at this time, particularly in view of the conflict with national and regional policy and other SUDPR policies, including PPG3, PPG17 & RPG11, and in the light of my conclusions on the general adequacy of housing land supply in terms of current requirements.

***Recommendation***

**3A.33 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet this objection.**

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**HAMPTON-IN-ARDEN**

3A.34 Hampton-in-Arden is an historic village lying in the Green Belt between Solihull and Coventry. In the adopted UDP [CD111], the main built-up area is inset from the Green Belt, having previously been washed over by the Green Belt in the 1977 Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan and earlier Warwickshire County Development Plan. The UDP Review carries forward the existing inset status of the settlement, with no changes to the Green Belt boundary, and makes no specific proposals for new housing sites. The village lies well outside the MUA identified in the latest RPG11, in the *Meriden Gap* part of the rural area surrounding Solihull.

**GREEN BELT SITES****Site HA13 - Arden Brickworks, Coventry Road****Objections to First Deposit**

[H1]: 1402/967; [H2]: 1402/972 – Redland Properties

**Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

**Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify designating this site for housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, particularly bearing in mind the presence of existing buildings and its Green Belt status.*

**Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

- 3A.35 Arden Brickworks lies on the southern side of the main A45, close to M42(J6) and the NEC link road, extending to some 5.93ha. It comprises a group of buildings, plant and structures associated with the brickworks, adjoining a plant hire depot, kennels and Civic Amenities site close to the main road, with mineral workings to the south. The site lies in the Green Belt, originally defined in the Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan, confirmed in the adopted UDP and continued in the UDP Review. Arden Brickworks is part of a much larger site with long-standing permissions for mineral working. From 1997, the site was subject to review, and planning conditions now require each extraction phase to be restored to agriculture and the restoration of previous phases.
- 3A.36 Redland argues that the site falls within the category of a *Major Developed Site in the Green Belt*, and should be allocated to meet current or future housing needs. This is related to other objections seeking an employment allocation and an additional policy, designating this site as a *Major Developed Site in the Green Belt*, which I deal with under Policy E1 (Chapter 4) and Policy C1 (Chapter 7), later in my report.
- 3A.37 Originally, SMBC did not regard this as a *major developed site* because it is subject to restoration conditions and contains temporary buildings [CD142: ¶ 6.4/SOL-C2-1]. SMBC later accepts that the brickworks on the frontage (3.6ha) is correctly defined as *previously developed land* (¶ 10.3.2) [SOL-C2-2], but this does not necessarily mean that the site should be positively considered as a future housing site. It performs poorly against the site-selection criteria in PPG3 (¶ 30-32), particularly since it is poorly located, well away from any established settlement, isolated from existing houses and a considerable distance from local facilities. It would not help to build a sustainable community, and its proximity to the main A45, with possible noise and pollution, and a local nature reserve/RIGS, along with possible land contamination, are constraints to development. It is also in a visually prominent location. Moreover, since sufficient suitable previously developed and other land is available within the urban area, there is no pressing need to identify sites outside the urban area to meet current housing requirements.
- 3A.38 SMBC's acceptance that the front part of the site constitutes *previously developed land* goes some way to recognising its status and might provide some leeway in terms of opportunities for re-use and redevelopment. However, given its location in a vulnerable part of the *Meriden Gap Green Belt*, I consider it would be inappropriate to designate the front part of this site for housing, particularly given its prominent location in the Green Belt, the proximity of current and future mineral workings, its isolated location and the physical and visual impact that the redevelopment of the existing buildings could have on the character and openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, this site lies well outside any rural settlement, beyond the MUA, would not reflect the priorities in RPG11 Policy CF3, and would not support urban regeneration.

3A.39 Consequently, in the absence of any pressing or overriding need to allocate further land for housing to meet current or future housing requirements, I can see no exceptional circumstances or other special reasons to justify designating this site for housing, either within or beyond the current Plan period, at this time, particularly given the conflict with national policy in PPG2 & PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.40 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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#### **Site HA14 - Land off Old Station Road, Hampton-in-Arden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1140/577, 584; [H2/1]: 1140/580;  
[C1]: 1140/581 - William Davis Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Site HA15 - Hampton Storage Depot, Meriden Road, Hampton-in-Arden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1438/535; [C1]: 1438/537 – Mr J Taylor

[H2/1]: 1002/698 - Packington Estate Enterprises Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H1/1]: 1438/388/R-389/R; [H2/1]: 1438/212/R, 393/R  
– Mr J Taylor

#### **Site HA16 - Old Station Road/The Grove, Hampton-in-Arden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1307/1 – Mr J V Trumper

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify designating these sites for housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, particularly bearing in mind their Green Belt status.*

#### **Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

3A.41 Hampton Storage Depot (Site HA15) comprises a former ammunition depot, currently used for storage, and an adjacent field lying on the eastern fringe of Hampton-in-Arden adjoining existing housing. In the adopted UDP, it lies within the approved Green Belt, a designation carried forward into the UDP Review. This site has a long and complex planning history, with several applications and appeals for residential development, all of which were refused. The objectors seek to remove this site from the Green Belt and allocate it for housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, with a capacity of 120-250 dwellings, depending on whether the whole site or just the field is developed.

3A.42 In its current mainly undeveloped condition, this site performs important Green Belt functions by helping to prevent the outward spread of Hampton-in-Arden, maintaining the separation of settlements within the *Meriden Gap*, and safeguarding the adjoining countryside from encroachment. Development for housing would represent a substantial extension of Hampton-in-Arden into the surrounding countryside, breaching its present well-defined limits, in a particularly visually conspicuous location and eroding the predominantly open character of the Green Belt.

3A.43 Apart from the issue of housing land supply, one of the main arguments advanced to support this proposal is based on the view that the former ammunition depot structures represent *previously developed land*. However, they do not seriously detract from the mainly open character of this eastern fringe of the settlement. I realise that development would enable the bunkers, walls, hardstandings and structures to be removed, but this is not sufficient reason to justify a housing allocation, since new housing would be

much more visually intrusive than the current structures and uses. In this instance, the intervening field is particularly important in terms of its Green Belt function, and separates the existing built-up area from the former ammunition depot. In my view, these factors do not represent the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify this proposal, which would otherwise conflict with long-standing national policy in PPG2.

- 3A.44 In terms of PPG3, this site adjoins the main built-up area of Hampton-in-Arden, but it is some distance from local facilities and the railway station. The site could contribute to the local community, supporting local services and providing affordable housing, and there are no overriding infrastructure or physical/environmental constraints, although vehicular access might need improving. Although part of the site may constitute *previously developed land*, much of it is a greenfield site which would represent an *urban extension* to an inset Green Belt settlement. The fact that it lies outside a rural settlement away from the main urban area does not bring it to the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3. Although the UCS [CD99-101] acknowledges the planning gain of removing the storage depot, development would represent a substantial extension of the village, remote from local services and tending to encourage car borne travel. I also note that residential development has been rejected on several occasions, including at earlier UDP inquiries, mainly on Green Belt grounds, visual impact and expansion into the countryside [CD128: p.95-96; CD129: p.76-77]. Little has changed since those recommendations and decisions were made.
- 3A.45 Sites HA14 & HA16 lie on the north-western fringe of the village. Site HA14 is an arable field lying on the eastern side of Old Station Road, where William Davis seeks to remove the site from the Green Belt and allocate it for new housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, with a capacity of about 90 dwellings. Site HA16 comprises a detached dwelling, *Vale House* and its grounds, lying between Old Station Road and the main Birmingham-Coventry railway line. Mr Trumper supports Green Belt policy, but seeks a housing allocation for this site, within the Green Belt, with a capacity of up to 30 dwellings. Both sites lie in the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in this Review.
- 3A.46 These sites lie within the swathe of Green Belt lying to the north of Hampton-in-Arden. Although part of Site HA16 is developed, both sites help to prevent the outward spread of the built-up area, maintain the separation of settlements in the *Meriden Gap*, and safeguard the countryside from encroachment. At the inquiry, the objectors agreed that the sites currently perform valid Green Belt functions. The existing Green Belt boundaries are tightly drawn and firmly defined around the edge of the main built-up area, whilst the proposed boundary of Site HA14 would be somewhat weaker, especially on the northern edge. Rather than consolidating the built form of the village, development would significantly extend the built-up area into the surrounding countryside, eroding the open character and setting of the Green Belt adjoining Hampton-in-Arden. Similarly, the allocation of Site HA16 for new housing would consolidate built development, physically separated from the main built-up area of the village and beyond the defined settlement boundary. It would also erode the open character and function of this relatively vulnerable part of the *Meriden Gap*, and could set a precedent for further development outside the village, which could further compromise the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3A.47 Apart from issues of housing land supply, including the *Barker Report*, no exceptional circumstances are advanced to support the allocation of these sites for housing. I realise that some landscaping has been undertaken around the eastern boundary of Site HA14, in response to the inspector's comments at the last UDP inquiry. Although the existing and proposed landscaping might help to soften the visual impact of development and

complement the *Arden Parklands* landscape features, it would not prevent a significant encroachment into the surrounding countryside. The site is visible from the surrounding area, particularly from public footpaths and the higher land at Diddington Hill, and I share SMBC's view that this site relates more closely to the surrounding countryside than to the main built-up area. I also note that the allocation of Site HA14 was rejected at previous inquiries, mainly due to the intrusion into the countryside and Green Belt issues [CD129: p.69-77; CD128: p.14-15]. I recognise that Site HA16 is largely hidden from view behind the road frontages and existing houses, but this is not sufficient reason to justify a housing allocation. In my view, none of these factors represent the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify a housing allocation on these Green Belt sites and, consequently, they would conflict with national policy in PPG2.

- 3A.48 In terms of PPG3, these sites are reasonably close to local facilities, employment and public transport, and there are no overriding infrastructure, technical, physical or environmental constraints. They could also contribute to the local community, supporting local facilities and providing affordable housing. Site HA16 is further away from local facilities, and there may be access difficulties, noise from the railway line and constraints as a result of the extensive tree cover. Development might also compromise the character of *Vale House*, which although not listed, dates from 1868 and has some local significance. More particularly, these sites would represent greenfield *urban extensions* to an inset settlement in the Green Belt, which does not lie at the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3 (¶ 31). This is particularly relevant when housing provision can be met from existing brownfield and other land within the main urban areas, since there is simply no need to allocate further greenfield sites at this time to meet current housing needs.
- 3A.49 Furthermore, all these sites would perform poorly against the latest regional strategy. They lie outside a rural settlement beyond the MUA, would similarly not reflect the priorities in RPG11 Policy CF3, particularly since extensions to rural settlements outside the MUA are not favoured, and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration. I recognise that allocation for housing could help to meet local housing needs under Policy CF2, but the strategy of the SUDPR is for such needs to be met mainly within the main urban area.
- 3A.50 Consequently, in the absence of any pressing or overriding need to allocate further land for housing to meet current and future housing requirements, I can see no exceptional circumstances or other special reasons to justify designating these Green Belt sites for housing, either within or beyond the current Plan period, at this time, particularly given the conflict with national policy in PPG2 & PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy.

### ***Recommendation***

**3A.51 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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**MERIDEN**

3A.52 Meriden is a compact village lying in the Green Belt between Solihull and Coventry. The main built-up area is inset from the Green Belt, the boundary of which was originally defined in Warwickshire County Development Plan and 1977 Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan and confirmed in the adopted UDP [CD111]. The adopted UDP also proposed housing development on two sites (Sites 6A/6B), along with a replacement recreation ground on land south of Hampton Lane (Proposal R1/8), and identified a long-term housing site at Leys Lane. These proposals are carried forward into the UDP Review, apart from housing Site 6B which has now been developed. The village lies well outside the MUA in the latest RPG11, in the rural area surrounding Solihull.

**GREEN BELT SITES****Site ME 18 - Land at Birmingham Road, Meriden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1]: 1372/930; [H1/1]: 1372/929; [H2]: 1372/928; [H2/1]: 1372/931; [C1]: 1372/932 – Mr J Kimberley  
**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

**Site ME19 - Rear of 53-65 Fillongley Road, Meriden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1418/641; 643; [H2/1]: 1418/642; [C1]: 1418/640 - Trustees of the Archdiocese of B'ham  
**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

**Site ME20(a) - Land off Fillongley Road, Meriden****Site ME20(b) - Land at Manor Fields, Meriden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1426/937; [H2/1]: 1426/1160 – William Davis Ltd; [H1/1]: 1492/1114; [H2/1]: 1492/1113 – CPS Ltd; [C1]: 1426/892 – William Davis Ltd; 1492/1110 – CPS Ltd;

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]: 1492/46/R - CPS Ltd

**Site ME21 - Land West and East of Maxstoke Lane, Meriden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2/1]: 1002/698 – Packington Estate Enterprises Ltd  
**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

**Site ME22 - Land at Hampton Lane, Meriden**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1362/747-749; [H2/1]: 1362/750-751; [C1]: 1362/766 – Cala Homes (Midlands) Ltd  
**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H1/1]: 1362/426/R-427/R; [H2/1]: 1362/245/R-246/R; Cala Homes (Midlands) Ltd

**Key issues**

- Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing any of these sites from the Green Belt and allocating them for housing development, either in the current Plan period or to meet longer term housing needs.

**Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

3A.53 These sites lie around the fringes of Meriden and generally comprise undeveloped land, grazing land or farmland. Site ME18 includes land formerly occupied by a garage which has planning permission for redevelopment with 9 apartments, along with an adjoining plot used for caravan storage. SMBC has no objections to the redevelopment of the former garage site for housing. Apart from this former garage site, all these sites lie within the approved Green Belt established in the adopted UDP and continued in the SUDPR. Site ME22 is also allocated as public open space, intended for replacement playing fields. The objectors seek to remove these sites from the Green Belt and allocate them wholly or partly for housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.

- 3A.54 Contrary to some objectors' views, the latest regional strategy does not suggest that current Green Belt boundaries should be reviewed. In fact, RPG11 (¶ 3.14) states that such boundaries should not be amended unless necessary to support urban regeneration, which is not argued in these cases. The Green Belt boundaries in this part of Meriden are well defined, firmly established and enduring, and given the designation of safeguarded land, are not too tightly drawn. In their present undeveloped condition, these sites perform important Green Belt functions, by helping to check the outward sprawl of Meriden, maintaining the gap between settlements in the *Meriden Gap*, and safeguarding the adjoining countryside from encroachment. Identification for housing development would represent significant extensions to the village into the surrounding countryside, eroding the open character and integrity of the Green Belt. In the case of Sites ME19 & ME21, it could also create pressures to develop other similar open Green Belt land between the edge of the village and the main A45.
- 3A.55 As for Sites ME18 & ME21, the construction of the new Maxstoke Lane link road and the development of nearby land, do not represent the exceptional circumstances necessary to support the release of these sites from the Green Belt. The possibility of safeguarding the adjoining land in NWDC for future housing is a matter for the NWLP review and, in any event, would not be required to meet Solihull's housing needs. The provision of additional affordable housing is not, in itself, sufficient reason to justify the development of these sites, particularly since an element of such provision will be made in the proposed housing site at Maxstoke Lane (UDP 6) and most local housing needs are intended to be met in the main urban areas.
- 3A.56 Apart from the particular merits of these sites compared with the proposed housing site off Maxstoke Lane and Long-Term Housing Site (e), no exceptional circumstances are advanced to justify the removal of these sites from the Green Belt. I have already dealt with the general question of housing land supply in Chapter 3 of my report. In my view, none of these factors represent the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify the development of these sites and so I consider their removal from the Green Belt would conflict with long-standing national policy in PPG2.
- 3A.57 In terms of the site-selection criteria in PPG3 (¶ 30-31), most of these sites are reasonably well related to the local facilities in Meriden village, with regular bus routes to the town centres and employment areas at BIA, NEC & BBP. Most of the sites could also contribute to the local community, supporting local facilities and providing affordable housing. In most cases, there seem to be no fundamental infrastructure, environmental or physical constraints to development, and in most cases, any access problems could probably be overcome.
- 3A.58 However, Sites ME20a & ME20b contain higher grade farmland, and there could be landscape implications, particularly since these sites typify the *Ancient Arden* landscape. Although these sites are not visually prominent from the road frontages, they can be clearly seen from the churchyard, the public footpaths to the east and from other higher land, and development would be particularly intrusive in visual terms. Since both sites are closely related to the countryside in terms of land use and topography, their allocation could also conflict with national policy in PPS7. The development of Sites ME18 & ME21 would also involve a significant incursion into the countryside, part of which is higher-grade farmland, on an area of land which is visually prominent when viewed from the new road link, and would not perform well against national policy in PPS7. Parts of Sites ME19 & ME21 also include higher-grade farmland, and development would encroach into the open countryside away from the settlement, contrary to PPS7. Some of

these sites were also rejected at previous UDP inquiries, mainly on the grounds of Green Belt and impact on the countryside.

- 3A.59 More particularly, these are all greenfield sites, which are simply not required given the present sufficiency of housing land and the existence of brownfield and other land within the urban areas to meet current and future housing requirements. In each case, allocation for housing would represent a substantial *urban extension* into the surrounding countryside, which does not lie at the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3. I therefore consider these sites do not perform particularly well against national guidance in PPG3. Since they lie outside a rural settlement beyond the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration, they would also perform poorly against the latest regional spatial strategy. I deal with the objectors' points about other allocated and safeguarded sites, including Maxstoke Lane (Site 6) and Leys Lane (Site e) in Chapter 3 of my report.
- 3A.60 The future of Site ME22 is directly linked to the proposed development of the existing recreation ground east of Maxstoke Lane for new housing (Proposal H1/1; Site 6). I deal with much of the background and justification for this housing proposal and the replacement recreation ground in Chapter 3 of my report. In relation to these objections, it is important to note that outline planning permission has twice been granted for the proposed replacement recreation ground on this site (1998 & 2004), and detailed layouts are being drawn up. At the time of the SUDPR inquiry, SMBC intended to serve the notice to treat to purchase the land, arising from a CPO inquiry confirmed in 2000, and the associated housing site (Site 6) was shortly to be marketed. Consequently, there is a reasonable degree of certainty that this objection site will be purchased by SMBC and developed as a replacement recreation ground, a use consistent with its Green Belt designation. Development would clearly conflict with the proposed replacement recreation ground, endorsed as being in the public interest by the 1999 CPO inquiry, and fail to accord with PPG17.
- 3A.61 In view of my conclusions on the overall adequacy of housing land supply in terms of current and longer term housing requirements, I conclude that there are no exceptional circumstances or other reasons to justify reviewing the Green Belt boundary in this locality and designating these sites for new housing, either in the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, particularly in view of the conflict with PPG2, PPG3, PPS7 and the latest regional strategy.

### ***Recommendation***

**3A.62 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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**BALSALL COMMON**

**3A.63** Balsall Common is a relatively modern settlement located in the eastern part of the rural area surrounding Solihull. It is identified as a settlement inset from the Green Belt, the principle of which was first established in the Warwickshire County Development Plan, approved in 1975, carried forward into the 1977 Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan and confirmed in the adopted UDP [CD111]. The SUDPR proposes two strategic housing sites (Sites 10A & 10B), both of which have now been developed. The settlement lies well beyond the MUA identified in the latest regional guidance [RPG11; CD51G].

**GREEN BELT SITES****Site BC23 - Barretts Lane Farm, Balsall Common**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2/1]: 1379/1021 – J J Gallagher Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]: 1379/28/R – J J Gallagher Ltd

**Site BC24 - Land at Needlers End Lane, Balsall Common**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2/1]: 1379/1023 – J J Gallagher Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]: 1379/28/R – J J Gallagher Ltd

**Site BC25 - Land at 152 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common****Site BC26 - Grapes Villa Farm, 170 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1]: 1439/905; [H1/1]: 1439/821; 1453/699;  
[H2]: 1439/903; [H2/1]: 1439/904; [C1]: 1439/902 -  
Mrs I Thompson; [H1/1]: 1432/700 – Mrs E A Nightingale

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

**Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify identifying these sites for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet long-term housing needs, particularly bearing in mind their inclusion in the approved Green Belt.*

***Inspector's reasoning and conclusions***

**3A.64** Site BC23 is a large greenfield site, mainly farmland, lying to the east of Balsall Common, extending to almost 50ha and crossed by the line of a proposed by-pass (Proposal T12/4). Site BC24 is an overgrown field on the north-western fringe of Balsall Common, adjoining existing housing along Needlers End Lane, open space and a new housing estate (formerly Site 10B) to the east, and open countryside to the north. Gallagher seeks to designate these sites for long-term housing, with land to the north-east of the proposed by-pass being allocated as a long-term employment site. Sites BC25 & BC26 lie on the north-western fringe of Balsall Common, behind the properties fronting Kenilworth Road, and comprise a paddock, along with Grapes Villa Farm and several derelict outbuildings. The objectors seek to designate both sites for housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs. All these sites lie in the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in this Review.

**3A.65** The designation of Site BC23 for long-term housing and employment uses would require a major amendment to the Green Belt boundary. Given the overall sufficiency of housing land to meet current requirements, both within the current Plan period and beyond, there are no exceptional circumstances

which could justify this course of action. In its present undeveloped condition, the land helps to prevent the outward spread of Balsall Common and safeguard the countryside from encroachment, as well as maintaining the separation of settlements. The identification of this large swathe of land would have a significant impact on the open character of this vulnerable and relatively narrow area of Green Belt between Balsall Common and Coventry, contrary to national guidance in PPG2 (¶ 2.16). If eventually developed, it would constitute a substantial encroachment into the open countryside away from the existing settlement, altering the characteristic *Ancient Arden* landscape pattern and performing poorly in terms of PPS7. The fact that development might enable the completion of part of the proposed by-pass, for which no firm decision has yet been made (see Chapter 7), does not provide sufficient reason to identify this land for possible future development.

- 3A.66 Similar considerations apply to the other sites which, although much smaller, perform valid Green Belt functions by helping to prevent the outward spread of Balsall Common and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Although these sites are relatively well contained, development would breach the existing well defined settlement limits, and their removal from the Green Belt and subsequent development for housing would be contrary to PPG2.
- 3A.67 In terms of the site-selection criteria in PPG3, these sites are relatively well located to Balsall Common, not far from local shops and schools. Site BC23 has easy access to Berkswell railway station and regular bus services to Solihull and elsewhere, and is not far from major employment areas in Coventry and BIA/NEC. There are no overriding constraints to development, although a site of this size might require further infrastructure and school facilities. The site is large enough to make a significant contribution to the local community, including affordable housing, and development could help to fund and bring forward a section of the proposed by-pass. Detailed highway access has not been determined, but a suitable solution could probably be found using the surrounding roads. However, as a substantial *urban extension* and large greenfield site, it would not meet the criteria in PPG3 (¶ 30-32), particularly since current and future housing provision can be made without allocating new greenfield sites. It would also represent a major expansion of a rural settlement beyond the MUA, without supporting urban regeneration, and would undoubtedly conflict with the latest regional spatial strategy.
- 3A.68 Similar considerations apply to the other sites, albeit on a smaller scale. There are no fundamental infrastructure, environmental or physical constraints, and they could make a modest contribution to the local community, including an element of affordable housing. In the case of Site BC24, development could lead to improvements in the quality and facilities at the adjoining open space, and for Site BC26, unattractive agricultural buildings would be removed. However, they would all represent greenfield *urban extensions*, which would not meet the site-selection criteria in PPG3 (¶ 30-31). Since they would represent extensions to a settlement outside the MUA, and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration, they would also perform poorly against the latest regional strategy.
- 3A.69 Consequently, and in the absence of any exceptional circumstances or other special reasons, I conclude that there is insufficient justification for the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their identification for housing development, either within or beyond the current Plan period, particularly in view of the conflict with the latest regional strategy and national planning policy in PPG2 & PPG3.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.70 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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**KNOWLE AND DORRIDGE**

3A.71 Knowle & Dorridge is a long-established settlement lying in the rural area to the south-east of Solihull. Excluded from the Green Belt, the settlement boundaries were most recently defined in the adopted UDP [CD111]. The UDP Review proposes three long-term housing sites (Sites (f), (g) & (h)), carried forward from the adopted UDP, which I deal with in Chapter 3 of my report. This settlement lies beyond the MUA identified in the latest regional spatial strategy and is surrounded by approved Green Belt. However, in the past, it has been treated as an urban area, as shown in the UCS [CD99-101].

**GREEN BELT SITES****Site KD27 - Land at Jacobean Lane, Copt Heath, Knowle*****Objections to First Deposit***

[H1]: 1452/527; [H2/1]: 1452/526; [C1]: 1452/524-525  
- Mrs S Middleburgh

***Objections to Revised Deposit***

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

**Sites KD28A/28B - Land at former Thackers Nursery, Hampton Road, Knowle*****Objections to First Deposit***

[H1/1]: 1398/786-788; [H2/1]: 1398/789 - Persimmon  
Homes (South Midlands) Ltd;

[H2]: 1421/665; [H2/1]: 1421/666– Umberslade Securities

***Objections to Revised Deposit***

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

***Key issues***

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing these sites from the Green Belt and allocating them for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.*

***Inspector's reasoning and conclusions***

3A.72 These sites lie on the northern fringe of Knowle. Site KD27 is currently used as grazing paddocks and residential gardens, whilst KD28A/B comprises a former nursery. Both sites lie in the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in this Review. The objectors seek to remove these sites from the Green Belt and allocate them for housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs. For Site KD27, the objector also suggests removing the frontage properties in Warwick Road/Jacobean Lane from the Green Belt.

3A.73 These sites lie within the swathe of Green Belt to the north of Knowle. In their current mainly undeveloped condition, they perform valuable Green Belt functions, by preventing the outward spread of Knowle, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and maintaining the separation of settlements in the Green Belt. Contrary to some objectors' views, the latest regional strategy does not indicate that Green Belt boundaries should be reviewed or amended, unless it is necessary to support urban regeneration.

3A.74 In the case of Site KD27, development would not only extend the built-up limits of Knowle into the surrounding countryside, but also require the removal of some 7.5ha of land from the Green Belt, which would significantly reduce the relatively narrow gap between Knowle and the main urban area of Solihull. In the case of Site KD28A/B, it would create a weaker northern Green Belt boundary and might also set a precedent for further development on adjoining land in the future. Apart from housing land supply, no

exceptional circumstances are advanced in support of the development of these sites, and so I conclude that they would be contrary to PPG2.

- 3A.75 In terms of PPG3, Site KD27 is at least 1.5km from local facilities and would not perform well against the other site-selection criteria in PPG3. Although parts of the site could constitute *previously developed land*, due to the existing dwellings, the majority is a greenfield site, representing an *urban extension*, which does not lie at the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3. The low density of proposed development might also conflict with PPG3 (¶ 58), and there may be access constraints. Although the site is reasonably well screened from the sports ground to the north, it is open to view from the east. In addition, I understand there are serious problems of school capacity in this locality (see ¶ 3.179 of my report).
- 3A.76 Site KD28A/B is closer to local facilities, employment and schools, but development would be visually prominent and would represent a conspicuous intrusion into the surrounding countryside, particularly given the local topography. Moreover, it would represent a greenfield *urban extension* to a rural settlement beyond the main urban area. I also understand that this site was considered at the last UDP inquiries [CD128: p.77.78; CD129: p.83]. Although the first inspector thought the site should be considered for housing, in view of the serious shortfall in housing land, at the second inquiry, the site was rejected mainly on the grounds of impact on the Green Belt and visual prominence.
- 3A.77 Furthermore, since both sites lie outside a settlement beyond the MUA, and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration, they would not perform well against the latest regional strategy. In the absence of any exceptional circumstances, I consider the development of these sites would harm the integrity, character and function of the Green Belt and represent unnecessary and visually intrusive encroachments into the countryside surrounding Knowle. Consequently, I conclude that there are sound and clear cut reasons to reject the development of these sites at this time, particularly in view of the conflict with national policy in PPG2 & PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy.

**Recommendation**

**3A.78 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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**Sites KD29/30 - Land north-east of Long-term Housing Site (h), Grove Road, and Land adjacent to Long-term Housing Site (h), off Hertford Way, Knowle**

**Objections to First Deposit**

[H1/1]: 1129/623; [H2/1]: 1129/624; [C1]: 1129/625 – William Davis Ltd; [H1/1]: 1140/584 – William Davis Ltd  
[C1]: 1409/883-884 – Secretary of State for Health

**Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

**Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing these sites from the Green Belt and allocating them for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, bearing in mind the potential impact on the character of the village and surrounding countryside.*

**Inspector’s reasoning and conclusions**

- 3A.79 These sites adjoin proposed Long-Term Housing Site (h) to the rear of Hertford Way/Stockton Close, north-east of Grove Road on the eastern fringe of Knowle. Site KD29 is an arable field to the north-east of Site (h) adjoining a public footpath, whilst Site KD30 is a sliver of land between Site (h) and *Freshfields*, part of the Woodside Rehabilitation Unit. Both sites lie in the

approved Green Belt in the adopted UDP, a designation continued in this Review. The objectors seek to remove these sites from the Green Belt and allocate them for new housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs. Site KD29 would accommodate about 65 dwellings. The objections are related to others seeking to allocate Site (h) for housing development within the current Plan period, which I deal with in Chapter 3 of my report, and my conclusions on that site are relevant here.

- 3A.80 In their present undeveloped condition, both sites perform valid Green Belt functions by helping to prevent the outward spread of Knowle, safeguarding the adjoining countryside from encroachment and maintaining the separation of settlements in the *Meriden Gap*. This is particularly true of Site KD29, although Site KD30 has a similar function, even though it adjoins Woodside Rehabilitation Unit which remains in the Green Belt and provides a green wedge between that development and Long-Term housing Site (h). Allocation of Site KD29 would extend built development into the countryside surrounding Knowle beyond its existing and proposed limits, whilst Site KD30 would consolidate the existing development between Long-term Housing Site (h) and the properties fronting Station Road, both eroding the open character, integrity and function of the Green Belt.
- 3A.81 As discussed at the inquiry, it would be difficult to remove only these sites from the Green Belt. A much more significant amendment would probably be required, removing some 10ha of land from the Green Belt, including the adjoining playing fields and hospital. This would put pressure for future development in the Green Belt around Knowle/Dorridge, representing a major encroachment into the surrounding countryside and further eroding the Green Belt. Apart from the question of housing land supply, no exceptional circumstances are advanced in support of developing these sites, and consequently, I consider the proposal would conflict with long-standing national Green Belt policy in PPG2.
- 3A.82 In terms of PPG3, both sites are reasonably well located to existing facilities, with ready access to regular bus services and no overriding infrastructure, physical or environmental constraints. However, I understand that there are serious problems of primary/secondary school capacity in this area (see ¶ 3.179). More particularly, these are both greenfield sites, representing *urban extensions* to a settlement outside the main urban area, which is not at the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3. They would also perform poorly against the latest regional strategy (Policies CF2 & CF3), particularly since the loss of Green Belt would not directly support urban regeneration in the MUA and the sites would not specifically address local housing needs.
- 3A.83 As the landscape evidence clearly shows, the development of Site KD29 would also extend to a local ridgeline, with a significant visual impact, particularly from the bridleway and Warwick Road, and adversely affect the current *Arden Pastures* landscape features. Although there is a firm boundary to the edge of this site, development would clearly be seen as a significant encroachment into the countryside surrounding Knowle & Dorridge. I understand that both sites formed part of a larger area of land which was rejected at the last UDP inquiry, mainly due to the elevated and open aspect and encroachment into a sensitive landscape in the *Meriden Gap* [CD128; p.71]. Apart from the completion of the housing estate off Middlefield Avenue, little has changed in physical terms since then.
- 3A.84 I therefore conclude that, in the absence of any exceptional circumstances and the lack of any pressing or overriding need to find additional greenfield land to meet current and future housing requirements, there are soundly based reasons to reject the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their allocation for housing development, either within the current Plan period or in the longer term, particularly given the conflict with national policy in

PPG2 & PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy. I deal with William Davis' criticisms of other safeguarded land at Tidbury Green and Cheswick Green in Chapter 3 of my report.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.85 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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#### **Site KD31 - Land at Norton Green Lane, Dorridge**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2/1]: 1359/719; [C1]: 1359/737 – Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]: 1359/135/R, 142/R – Taylor Woodrow Devts Ltd

#### **Sites KD32A/32B - Land at The Ards, Nevin and adjacent land, Dorridge Road, Dorridge**

#### **Site KD33 - Elm Farm, Darley Green Road, Dorridge**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H.1/1] - 1057/953; 955-956; [H2/1]: 1057/954 – David Wilson Estates; [H1/1]: 1492/1113-1114; [H2/1]: 1492/1115 – Countryside Planning Services Ltd; [H1]: 1450/77; [H2]: 1450/76; [C1]: 1450/78 – Mr R Clinton;

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]: 1492/46/R – Countryside Planning Services Ltd.

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing these sites from the Green Belt and allocating them for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.*

#### **Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

3A.86 These sites lie on the eastern fringe of Dorridge, adjoining the main built-up area. Site KD31 comprises 19ha of agricultural land lying to the rear of the houses in Knowle Wood Road and bounded by Blue Lake Road/Norton Green Lane/Grove Road. Taylor Woodrow seeks to remove this land from the Green Belt and designate it as safeguarded land to meet longer term housing needs. Sites KD32A/B & KD33 comprise the site of a former detached house, *The Ards*, with its wooded grounds and pool, the detached house and grounds of *Nevin*, and the land around Elm Farm. The objectors seek to remove this land from the Green Belt and allocate it for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs. These sites lie within the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in the UDP Review.

3A.87 These sites lie in the broad swathe of Green Belt around the south-eastern fringe of Dorridge. In their present largely undeveloped condition, they perform important Green Belt functions by preventing the outward spread of the built-up area, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and maintaining the separation of settlements in the Green Belt. Development would represent a significant extension of the built-up area into the countryside surrounding Dorridge, eroding the open character, integrity and function of the Green Belt. It would also lead to coalescence with the row of houses along Darley Green Road and the properties at Darley Green/Norton Green. Identification of Site KD31 for future development would require a major amendment to the Green Belt boundary, and lead to the erosion of the open character of an important area of Green Belt on the edge of Dorridge.

3A.88 I understand that Site KD32B used to be occupied by a substantial detached house and landscaped grounds, including a pool which still exists. However, the presence of existing or previous residential properties does not necessarily justify the development of the surrounding or adjoining land. Apart from the general issue of housing land supply, no exceptional

circumstances are put forward to support the development of these sites, and so I consider they would conflict with national policy in PPG2.

- 3A.89 In terms of PPG3 (¶ 31), these sites are reasonably well located to existing facilities and services, and development would contribute to the local community and provide an element of affordable housing. However, I understand there are problems of school capacity in this locality (see ¶ 3.179). For Site KD31, extensive off site/access works would probably be needed, and as a major extension into the countryside surrounding Dorridge, it would perform poorly against national policy in PPS7. For Sites KD32A/B & KD33, there may also be access and nature conservation implications, and the low density of development envisaged would not reflect current advice in PPG3 (¶ 57-58). I also note that the suitability of these sites for housing was rejected at the previous UDP inquiry, due to their sensitive location in the *Meriden Gap* Green Belt and encroachment into the countryside, along with nature conservation implications for Site KD32A/B [CD128; p.60-61; p.94-95].
- 3A.90 Furthermore, although there are some existing and demolished properties, these are principally greenfield sites, which together or independently, would represent an *urban extension* to a settlement which lies outside the main urban area. Consequently, they would not feature at the top of site-selection hierarchy in PPG3, and would not perform well against the latest regional strategy, since they lie beyond the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration.
- 3A.91 In the absence of any overriding or urgent need to identify additional greenfield sites for new housing within the current Plan period or in the longer term, I consider the development of these sites, either in total or independently, would represent an unnecessary and visually intrusive encroachment into the countryside surrounding Dorridge, harming the integrity, character and function of the Green Belt. I therefore conclude that there are sound and clear cut reasons to reject the development of these sites at this time, particularly in view of the conflict with national policy in PPG2, PPG3 & PPS7 and with the latest regional strategy.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.92 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS** to the Plan to meet these objections.

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#### **Site KD34 - Land at Earlswood Road, Dorridge**

##### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H1]: 1435/283; [H2/1]: 1435/190; [C1]: 1435/191-192  
– Mr & Mrs A D Gatling

##### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

#### **Site KD35 - Land at Earlswood Road, Four Ashes, Dorridge**

##### **Sites KD36A/36B - Land at Box Trees Road/Four Ashes Road, Dorridge**

##### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H1]: 1410/1107 – Shirley Estates (Developments) Ltd  
[H1]: 1410/85; 1410/1105 – Shirley Estates (Devts) Ltd

##### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

#### **Sites KD37A/37B - Land off Four Ashes Road, Dorridge**

##### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H1]: 1410/1106; [H1/1]: 1410/375 – Shirley Estates  
(Developments) Ltd

##### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Site KD38 - Land at The Firs, Light House and Moat Lodge, Four Ashes Road, Dorridge**

##### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H1/1]: 1451/639; [C1]: 1451/638 – Mr M Leek

##### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

**Site KD39 - Land at Four Ashes Road, Dorridge**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2]: 1458/908; [H2/1]: 1458/910; [C1]: 1458/909 - Messrs Kimberley/Bradley

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

**Site KD40 - Land at Browns Lane/Smiths Lane/Widney Manor Road, Knowle**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1]: 1373/1003; [H2]: 1373/1004; [C1]: 1373/1005 – Granby Farms Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1] 1373/220/R-221/R, 334/R – Granby Farms Ltd

**Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing any of these sites from the Green Belt and allocating them for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.*

**Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

- 3A.93 These sites lie around the south-western and western fringes of Dorridge, largely comprising fields or underused land. They all lie in the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in this Review. The objectors seek to remove these sites from the Green Belt and allocate them for housing development, either in the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs. Granby Farms originally promoted Site KD40 for housing in its general objections to Policies H1, H2 & C1, but confirms that the site-specific element of these objections is no longer pursued [O/H.1/1373/1003/1]. No further action is therefore necessary in relation to the site-specific aspects of these objections.
- 3A.94 All these sites lie within the broad swathe of Green Belt around the western and south-western fringes of Dorridge. In their present largely undeveloped condition, they all perform valid Green Belt functions by preventing the outward spread of the built-up area, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and maintaining the separation between settlements. Rather than being seen as a logical rounding-off, development of all or some of these objection sites would extend the built-up area into the adjoining countryside, breaching the present well defined limits along Four Ashes Road/Earlswood Road, eroding the open character of the southern and western fringes of Dorridge, and undermining the overall integrity and function of the Green Belt.
- 3A.95 In the case of Sites KD37A/B, KD38 & KD39, removal from the Green Belt would reduce the perceived distance between Dorridge and the main urban area of Solihull and erode this relatively narrow Green Belt gap. I recognise that some development already exists along the western side of Four Ashes Road, including farms and cottages, a nursery, car dealers, golf driving range, horse riding centre and *Moat Manor* conference centre. However, it retains much of its rural character, rather than displaying urban features, and these uses do not justify any further development which, in my view, would unacceptably extend and consolidate development on this side of the road. Furthermore, the somewhat arbitrary western boundary of Sites KD37A/B, undefined by any existing features, could act as a precedent for future development on the western side of Four Ashes Road, further weakening the integrity of the Green Belt. Although Sites KD38 & KD39 are relatively well contained by tracks, roads and the railway, they would represent isolated extensions of the built-up area which, on their own, could not be justified.
- 3A.96 Apart from the issue of housing land supply, other factors advanced in support of these sites include the isolation from the main farmholdings, with trespass and vandalism, and their physical and locational characteristics. I recognise that Site KD39 lies opposite Long-Term Housing Site (g), but this lies on the eastern side of Four Ashes Road, within the built-up framework of Dorridge. In my view, none of these other reasons represent the exceptional

circumstances necessary to justify the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their subsequent development for housing, and so they would contravene national policy in PPG2.

3A.97 In terms of PPG3, these sites are on the edge of the built-up area, but most lie some distance from local facilities and main public transport routes. There seem to be no overriding infrastructure, environmental or physical constraints to the development of these sites, but I understand there are serious problems with school capacity in this locality (see ¶ 3.179). Dorridge is a popular place to live in, and new housing could support local facilities and provide additional affordable housing, benefiting the local community. However, these sites represent greenfield *urban extensions* which do not lie at the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3, particularly relevant when current housing requirements can be met from existing brownfield and other sites within the main urban area. These are clearly peripheral sites outside the main built-up area of Dorridge, which are effectively in the open countryside on its southern and western fringes. Furthermore, since the sites are outside a settlement lying beyond the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration, development would not perform well in terms of the latest regional strategy.

3A.98 Consequently, in the absence of any exceptional circumstances, I conclude that there are sound and clear-cut reasons to reject the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their allocation for housing, either during the current Plan period or beyond, particularly in view of the conflict with national policy in PPG2 & PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy. I deal with the objectors' criticisms of other allocated and safeguarded housing sites in Chapter 3 of my report.

**Recommendation**

**3A.99 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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**NON-GREEN BELT SITES**

**Site KD41 - Dorridge Garage, Poplar Road, Dorridge**

3A.100 The objections to this site have been dealt with under Policy H1 (Table 2 – Site 20) in Chapter 3 of my report.

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**Site KD42 – 37-39 Avenue Road, Dorridge**

***Objections to First Deposit***

[H1/1]: 1365/843 – Chase Midland plc

***Objections to Revised Deposit***

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

***Key issues***

- *Should this site be allocated for housing development, since it lies within the urban area, close to local facilities.*

***Inspector's reasoning and conclusions***

3A.101 This 0.36ha site lies on the north-western side of Avenue Road, between Avenue Close and Templeton Close, within the built-up area of Dorridge. Chase Midland argues that, if small sites continue to be allocated for new housing, this site should similarly be allocated. However, at Revised Deposit stage, all sites of less than 0.4ha were deleted from Table 2 of Policy H1/1 (Rev 3/11), and so this site would be too small to justify a specific allocation. In any event, full planning permission for housing redevelopment was

granted in August 2002 and the development is now completed as *The Willows* apartments. It is therefore unnecessary and inappropriate to specifically allocate this site for new housing development.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.102 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet this objection.**

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### **CHADWICK END**

3A.103 Chadwick End is a small village lying at the south-eastern extremity of the Borough, linked to Baddesley Clinton in Warwickshire. It lies within the approved Green Belt, confirmed most recently in the adopted UDP [CD111]. I understand that Baddesley Clinton has a similar status as a *washed-over* Green Belt settlement in the Warwick District Local Plan Review [UDP.165/1]. The SUDPR carries forward the Green Belt designation of the village.

### **Sites CE43/CE44 - Land off Bakehouse Lane, Chadwick End**

#### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H1/1]: 1429/646; [H2/1]: 1429/645 - Mr N Moore;  
[C3]: 1429/644 – Mr N Moore

#### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify designating these sites for housing development, either in the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, particularly given the Green Belt status of the settlement.*

### ***Inspector's reasoning and conclusions***

3A.104 These sites lie on the eastern fringe of Chadwick End, behind the houses in Wheeler Close and Bakehouse Lane, and are currently used for grazing. In the adopted UDP, these sites are included within the Green Belt, and this designation is continued in the UDP Review. Mr Moore seeks a housing allocation on these sites, with a total capacity of about 30 dwellings, most of which could be affordable housing; Site CE44 for development within the current Plan period and Site CE43 to meet longer term needs. I deal with the related objection, arguing that Chadwick End should be an inset settlement in the Green Belt, under Policy C3, later in my report (see Chapter 7).

3A.105 At the inquiry, SMBC confirmed that Chadwick End is a settlement suitable for limited infilling and is now designated as such under Policy C2(iii). This reflects the *Chadwick End Village Study* [CD164; ¶ 4.6] which recognised the potential for limited infilling within the village, but considered it would be unsuitable for substantial expansion. Most of the limited opportunities for infilling have now been taken up and the SUDPR makes no further specific provision for additional housing in the village. SMBC resolved to review the *Village Study* in March 2002 and, at the inquiry, confirmed that this work will be carried forward to inform a future review of the UDP.

3A.106 There is no dispute that both sites lie within the Green Belt. In their present undeveloped condition, they perform important Green Belt functions, by preventing the outward spread of Chadwick End, safeguarding the adjoining countryside from encroachment and maintaining the separation of settlements. The independent development of these sites would be difficult without placing an inset boundary around the settlement, since this could not be considered as a limited infilling or consolidation of the built-up area, but rather as a significant expansion of the village. I recognise that the sites are

well contained by Priests Park Wood, but this would not overcome the erosion of the open character of the Green Belt that development would cause.

- 3A.107 The arguments put forward in support of development are based on the needs of Chadwick End, the impact of planning policy and the merits of these sites. Firstly, the objector argues that the character of the village has changed, with declining facilities, no opportunities for infilling and no provision for housing for the young and elderly. There is a need to ensure its long-term viability, in line with the *Rural White Paper* and SUDPR Policy C7. Secondly, there is a need for more housing in the village, and these sites could both be developed entirely for affordable housing, with two houses donated to the Parish Council to cover the upkeep of the village hall. Green Belt planning policy is very restrictive and it is argued that these sites have considerable merit for local needs housing.
- 3A.108 However, these arguments could be used for many rural settlements in the Green Belt. Chadwick End is not far from the main urban areas and other larger settlements, where most provision for local housing needs is expected to be met. No specific assessment of local housing need for Chadwick End has been undertaken, and the provision of affordable housing is specifically addressed in SUDPR Policy H4. Infill developments have been permitted in this settlement in past, and it is not impossible that further limited infilling could take place in the future. The changes in the make-up of population and households are similar to other rural settlements. The provision of 100% affordable housing is relevant, but neither this possibility, nor the other factors mentioned represent the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify the development of these Green Belt sites.
- 3A.109 Furthermore, these sites do not perform well against the criteria in PPG3. They are greenfield sites, which would represent a significant expansion of a small Green Belt settlement that lacks a range of facilities, and which lie towards the bottom of the site-selection hierarchy. They are poorly located in terms of existing local facilities, isolated from the main urban areas, with a relatively poor public transport service, and are too small to be likely to support new services. Vehicular access could also be a problem, particularly for the northern site, and there could be implications for the adjoining SINC. In terms of rural housing, they would not meet all the criteria in PPG3 (¶ 69-71), particularly since Chadwick End is a small fragmented settlement which is not designated as a rural service centre in the SUDPR. In view of the general sufficiency of housing provision on existing brownfield and other sites within the main urban areas, there is simply no need to allocate greenfield sites like these to meet current or future housing land requirements.
- 3A.110 Furthermore, the expansion of the village in the manner intended would not reflect the latest regional strategy, which focuses most new housing in the MUAs and allows development in the Green Belt only where it supports urban regeneration. Development would also encroach into the countryside surrounding the village, contrary to national policy in PPS7. In addition, I note that the development of Site CE44 was rejected at the previous UDP inquiry, mainly because it would extend into the countryside and lies outside the line of existing development [CD129; p.108-110]. In physical and visual terms, there have been no changes since then.
- 3A.111 I recognise that Mr Moore is a local benefactor who is genuinely concerned about the future of Chadwick End and is prepared to provide 100% affordable housing on these sites. However, I conclude that this is not essential to safeguard the viability of the village and that these are not exceptional circumstances sufficient to justify the development of these Green Belt sites, particularly in the face of conflict with national policy in PPG2, PPG3 & PPS7 and with the latest regional strategy.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.112 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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### **HOCKLEY HEATH**

**3A.113** Hockley Heath is a compact settlement on the southern boundary of the Borough, centred along the main A3400 Stratford Road. In the Warwickshire County Development Plan and Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan, much of the land around the settlement was designated as *Interim Green Belt*, pending decisions on the location of future development and establishment of permanent Green Belt boundaries. This was undertaken in the adopted UDP, which made specific housing allocations, identified safeguarded land to meet longer term housing needs, and finalised Green Belt boundaries. Hockley Heath parish was subject to a specific Action Area Plan in the adopted UDP, mainly to guide development at the new Dickens Heath village, and inset Hockley Heath village from the Green Belt. The UDP Review carries forward a new housing allocation (Site 4 – now completed) and the proposed by-pass (Proposal TR12/2), and retains the boundaries of the Green Belt established by the adopted UDP.

### **GREEN BELT SITES**

#### **Site HH45 - Land at Stratford Road/Kinerton Lane, Hockley Heath**

#### **Sites HH46/HH47A/HH47B - Land West of Stratford Road, Hockley Heath**

#### **Site HH50 - Land North of School Road, Hockley Heath**

##### ***Objections to First Deposit***

[H1]: 1377/676; [H1/1]: 1377/378 – Hockley Heath Estate; [H1]: 1437/86-87; [H2]: 1448/546; [H2/1]: 1448/547 – Mr R Bennett; [H1]: 1437/88 – Mr R Bennett

##### ***Objections to Revised Deposit***

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Site HH48B - School Road, Hockley Heath**

##### ***Objections to First Deposit***

[H1/1]: 1492/1114; [H2/1]: 1492/1113 – Countryside Planning Services Ltd

##### ***Objections to Revised Deposit***

[H1/1]: 1492/45/R; [H2/1]: 1492/46/R - Countryside Planning Services Ltd

#### **Site HH49 - Ashtons Nursery, School Road, Hockley Heath**

##### ***Objections to First Deposit***

[H1]: 1391/923; [H1/1]: 1391/926; [H2]: 1391/924; [H2/1]: 1391/927; [C1]: 1391/925 – Miller Homes

##### ***Objections to Revised Deposit***

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

##### ***Key issues***

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify allocating these sites for residential development, or safeguarding them to meet longer term housing needs, particularly in view of their Green Belt status, the potential impact on the character of the village and surrounding countryside, and the relationship with the proposed Hockley Heath by-pass.*

##### ***Inspector's reasoning and conclusions***

**3A.114** These sites comprise various parcels of land on the western side of the A3400 Stratford Road, between Kinerton Lane and School Road, on the north and western fringes of Hockley Heath, along with Site HH48A/B on the southern side of School Lane. Most comprise grazing land or farmland. In the adopted UDP, all these sites lie in the approved Green Belt, a designation continued in the UDP Review. The line of the proposed Hockley Heath by-

pass crosses these sites in a north-south direction. The objectors seek to allocate these sites for new housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.

- 3A.115 Dealing firstly with Green Belt issues, in their present undeveloped condition, these sites perform important Green Belt functions, by preventing the outward spread of Hockley Heath, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and maintaining the gap between Hockley Heath and Cheswick Green/Ilshaw Heath. The allocation of these sites for development would represent a substantial amendment to the existing Green Belt boundary, significantly extending the existing built-up area beyond its present well-defined limits into the surrounding countryside, and eroding the open character of the Green Belt. Much of the land, particularly in the north, is flat and open, and so any development could have considerable visual impact. With weaker Green Belt boundaries, development would extend beyond the line of the by-pass and could act as a precedent for further development around Hockley Heath, conflicting with long-standing Green Belt policy in PPG2.
- 3A.116 The particular circumstances advanced in support of housing development on most of these sites include the relationship with the proposed by-pass. However, no firm decision has yet been made on the construction of this by-pass (see Chapter 5 of my report), and the fact that development might help to bring forward or partly finance the by-pass is insufficient reason to justify such a large-scale development. I recognise that the construction of the by-pass would alter the character of this western fringe of the village, but the extent of development proposed would extend well beyond the line of this proposed road. It would also breach any well defined boundary formed by the by-pass and possibly set a precedent for further development beyond the line of the new road. As agreed at the inquiry, any development of these sites would be premature until a firm decision on the by-pass is taken. Apart from the general question of housing land supply, no other reasons are advanced to support the development of these sites.
- 3A.117 As regards their nature and use, none of these sites is degraded land, but most are in positive use, either as arable or grazing land, and some comprise higher-grade farmland. I recognise that some of the land is open and devoid of any significant landscape features, and lacks some of the characteristics typified by the *Arden* landscape type. Site HH45 contains remnants of an old airfield, and Site HH49 contains a former nursery, but these do not fully meet the definition of *previously developed land*. CPS' main argument on Site HH48B has been overtaken by events, since this site is now fully developed with all the houses in place. I also note that Sites HH47 & HH49 were considered at previous UDP inquiries [CD128; p.47-48; CD129; p.79-80], when they were rejected mainly due to uncertainty about the by-pass and the lack of a defensible western boundary in Green Belt terms. Consequently, I can find no exceptional circumstances that would justify the removal of these sites from the Green Belt which would otherwise conflict with national policy in PPG2.
- 3A.118 In terms of PPG3, the southern sites are reasonably close to local facilities, with a limited range of bus services, but Site HH45 lies some distance away and is rather isolated. The development of these sites could contribute to local community, supporting local facilities and providing affordable housing, but at the expense of a substantial enlargement of the village. Rather than representing a minor infilling or rounding-off of the built-up area, these sites would represent major greenfield *urban extensions* of a rural Green Belt settlement well beyond the main urban area, which lies some way down the site-selection hierarchy and cannot be justified given the present sufficiency of housing land.

- 3A.119 I realise that development could be phased, but the overall scale of development would more than double the number of houses in the settlement. There seem to be no local infrastructure capacity problems, apart from school capacity, but vehicular access could be difficult, particularly off the new by-pass, and one of the sites is partly identified as a potential SINC. Consequently, allocating or safeguarding these sites for housing would not meet all the relevant criteria in PPG3. Furthermore, they would not perform well against the latest regional strategy, since the sites lie well outside the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration.
- 3A.120 I therefore conclude that there are sound and clear-cut reasons to reject the allocation of these sites for housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term housing needs, particularly given the conflict with national policy in PPG2 & PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.121 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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### **MONKSPATH AND CHESWICK GREEN**

- 3A.122 Monkspath covers the south-eastern fringe of the main built-up area of Solihull, whilst Cheswick Green is a compact rural settlement lying just to the south-west, washed over by the Green Belt. In the Warwickshire County Development Plan and subsequent Solihull Green Belt Subject Plan, much of the land south of the A34 was designated as *Interim Green Belt*, pending decisions on the location of future development and establishment of permanent Green Belt boundaries. This was undertaken in the adopted UDP [CD111], which identified safeguarded land on the western side of Cheswick Green to meet longer term housing needs, and finalised Green Belt boundaries. This approach is continued in the UDP Review. In terms of the latest regional guidance, the built-up area of Monkspath lies within the MUA, whilst Cheswick Green lies in the rural area.

### **GREEN BELT SITES**

#### **Site MO51 - Lodge Farm, Dog Kennel Lane/Stratford Road, Monkspath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2/1]: 1420/679; [C1]: 1420/678 – TRW Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H2/1]: 1420/348/R – TRW Ltd.

#### **Site MO52 - Land at Stratford Road, Monkspath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1]: 1416/886; [C1]: 1416/887 – Trustees of A L Lowe

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Site MO53 - Land off Stratford Road, Monkspath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1386/809; [C1]: 1386/816 – Marcity Developments

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [H1/1]: 1386/418/R-419/R – Marcity Developments

#### **Site MO54 - Land to the Rear of The Plough Inn, Stratford Road, Monkspath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1397/23; [H2/1]: 1397/29-31 – Pendragon PLC

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing any of these sites from the Green Belt and allocating them for new housing development or safeguarding them to meet longer term housing needs.*

**Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

- 3A.123 These sites lie on the southern side of the A34 Stratford Road, between Dog Kennel Lane and Creynolds Lane. Most are fields, used for grazing or farming, although Site MO53 includes existing residential and commercial properties, including *Jeffersons* public house and *The Dell*. The objectors seek to remove these sites from the Green Belt and allocate them for new housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs. All these sites lie in the approved Green Belt established in the adopted UDP and continued in the UDP Review.
- 3A.124 In their current undeveloped condition, these sites perform important Green Belt functions, by preventing the outward spread of Monkspath/Solihull, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and maintaining the separation between the main urban area and the rural settlement of Cheswick Green. Their removal from the Green Belt and development for housing would represent significant extensions of the main built-up area, breaching the well defined boundary of Stratford Road/Dog Kennel Lane and eroding the open character of the Green Belt. It would also reduce the gap between the main urban area and Cheswick Green, undermining the integrity and function of this vulnerable area of Green Belt, and could also lead to pressures for further development on land to the south of Stratford Road.
- 3A.125 I realise that Site MO53 is partly developed, but many of the properties have relatively long back gardens and there is a considerable area of undeveloped backland plots, which contribute to the open character of the locality and continue to perform important Green Belt functions. This is particularly important in the case of Sites MO52 & MO53, which maintain the physical and visual separation between Shirley/Solihull and Cheswick Green, where the Green Belt gap is at its narrowest. I also understand that the development of some of these sites was rejected at previous UDP inquiries, largely on the grounds of inevitable merging of settlements and poor relationship to existing development [CD129: p.60; CD128: p.95]. Apart from the issue of long-term housing needs and reference to other sites removed from the Green Belt (such as Dickens Heath/BVP), no exceptional circumstances are advanced in support of the development of these sites, and so I consider they would conflict with long-standing national policy in PPG2.
- 3A.126 In terms of PPG3 (¶ 31), since these sites adjoin the urban edge of Shirley/Solihull and lie along a major road, they are well located in terms of local facilities, employment areas and access to public transport. The development of these sites could also contribute to the local community, by supporting local facilities and providing affordable housing. Vehicular access is unlikely to be a serious problem and, apart from possible school capacity problems, there seem to be no overriding infrastructure, environmental or physical constraints. However, parts of these sites contain higher-grade farmland, and the northern parts experience traffic noise. More particularly, although parts of Site MO53 might fall within the definition of *previously developed land*, the remainder are greenfield sites. All would represent *urban extensions* in the Green Belt, which would not lie at the top of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3. Furthermore, the sites would not perform well against the latest regional strategy, particularly since urban extensions are not favoured in Policy CF3 and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration.
- 3A.127 Consequently, I conclude that, in the absence of any exceptional circumstances, there are sound and clear-cut reasons to reject the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their allocation for housing development, either in the current Plan period or to meet longer term housing needs, especially in view of the conflict with national policy in PPG2

& PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy. I deal with the objectors' criticisms of other sites elsewhere in my report.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.128 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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### **Site CG55 - Land at Vicarage Road, Cheswick Green**

#### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H2]: 1376/921; [H.2/1]:1376/922; [C1]: 1376/920 – Hedgerow Farms

#### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing this land from the Green Belt and safeguarding it to meet longer term housing needs.*

### **Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

3A.129 This is a large (19.4ha) area of farmland, fields and woodland lying in the countryside to the south of Cheswick Green, between Vicarage Road and Ilshaw Heath Road. It lies in the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in this Review. Hedgerow Farms seeks to remove the land from the Green Belt and allocate it to meet longer term housing needs.

3A.130 Apart from the question of designating sites to meet longer term housing needs, no exceptional circumstances are advanced to justify the removal of this land from the Green Belt. This site lies within the swathe of Green Belt to the south of Solihull/Shirley, and in its present undeveloped condition performs important Green Belt functions, by helping to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and maintaining the separation between settlements in the Green Belt. Removal from the Green Belt and subsequent designation to meet longer term housing needs would eventually result in an isolated development in the Green Belt, only tenuously connected to Cheswick Green, eroding the open character of the Green Belt and undermining its overall integrity and function. Consequently, I consider it would conflict with long-standing Green Belt policy in PPG2. It would also result in a major area of development outside existing settlements, contrary to national guidance in PPS7.

3A.131 The site also performs very poorly against the criteria in PPG3. It is isolated from the main urban area and other settlements, some considerable distance from local facilities and with poor accessibility to public transport. Although the site is large enough to contribute to the local community, providing affordable housing and additional local facilities, it would be poorly related to Cheswick Green and the main urban area. Apart from problems with secondary school capacity, there seem to be no overriding infrastructure, physical and environmental constraints. However, this site would lie towards the bottom of the site-selection hierarchy in PPG3, since it is a greenfield site in the Green Belt, isolated from the urban area and away from a node along a good public transport corridor. Its isolated location would also put it some way down the list of potential housing sites, should additional sites be needed in the longer term. Furthermore, the site would perform poorly against the latest regional strategy, since it lies away from the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration.

3A.132 Consequently, in the absence of any exceptional circumstances or overriding housing need, I conclude that there are sound and clear-cut reasons to reject the removal of this site from the Green Belt and its identification for long term housing, particularly given the conflict with national policy in PPG2, PPG3 & PPS7 and the latest regional strategy.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.133 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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### **Site CG56 - 35 Ilshaw Heath Road, Ilshaw Heath**

#### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H1/1]: 1455/538; [C3]: 1455/539 – Mr & Mrs Letby

#### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

[H1/1]: 1455/353/R, 414/R-415/R; [H2/1]: 1455/353/R, 362/R; 407/R-415/R – Mr & Mrs Letby

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify allocating this site for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, particularly in view of its location in the approved Green Belt.*

#### **Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

3A.134 This is a small plot of undeveloped land between Nos. 21-35 Ilshaw Heath Road in the small settlement of Ilshaw Heath. It lies in the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in this Review. Mr & Mrs Letby seek a housing allocation on this site, for development either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.

3A.135 Ilshaw Heath is a small settlement in the south of the Borough, washed over by the Green Belt. In terms of Green Belt policy, it is not considered suitable for further development, including infilling, and so any development has to be considered against the terms of SUDPR Policy C2. Although this site adjoins existing houses grouped around the triangle of roads in Ilshaw Heath, most of these are long-established and pre-date modern planning control. In its current largely undeveloped condition, the site makes a limited contribution to the remaining open character of the Green Belt. In any event, this site is below the 0.4ha threshold which is the minimum size for a specific housing allocation. If any development did come forward in the future, it would be considered as a windfall site. However, the site is poorly located in terms of local facilities and public transport and performs poorly against the locational and sustainability criteria in PPG3 and against the latest regional strategy.

3A.136 Consequently, in view of the small size of the site, the conflict with Green Belt policy and its poor performance against PPG3 and the latest regional strategy, it would be inappropriate to identify this site as a specific housing allocation, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.137 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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### **DICKENS HEATH**

3A.138 Dickens Heath is effectively a new village lying to the south of the main built-up area of Solihull. Originally proposed in the adopted UDP [CD111] following two inquiries, the settlement is inset from the Green Belt, the detailed boundaries having been established in the adopted UDP following its previous *Interim Green Belt* status in earlier development plans. Originally expected to provide 600-850 new dwellings, current estimates envisage over 1,500 new dwellings, largely as a result of increased densities. The UDP Review carries forward the committed developments in the adopted UDP (Site 11), along with two Long-Term Housing Sites (j) & (k). The area also includes Tidbury Green, a compact settlement to the south-west of Dickens Heath, where the adopted UDP proposes two Long-Term Housing Sites (a) & (b). These sites, along with the existing Green Belt boundaries, are carried forward into the UDP Review. I deal with the proposed housing sites, including safeguarded long-term sites, in Chapter 3 of my report.

### **GREEN BELT SITES**

#### **Site DH57 - Land at Dickens Heath Road, Dickens Heath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1]: 1356/919; [H1/1]: 1356/916; [H2]: 1356/918; [H2/1]: 1356/917; [C1]: 1356/915 - Baroda Consortium

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Site DH58 - Land at Cleobury Lane, Dickens Heath Road and Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1/1]: 1364/541; [H2/1]: 1364/545; [C1]: 1364/540 – Catesby Property Group; [H2/1]: 1313/626 - Prowting Projects; [C1]: 1005/571 – Redrow Homes; [H1]: 1445/1116; [H1/1]: 1445/1117; [H2]: 1445/1118; [C1]: 1445/1120 – Mr P Barnard

**Objections to Revised Deposit** [C2]: 1364/88/R – Catesby Property Group

#### **Site DH59 - Land at Birchy Farm, Birchy Leasowes Lane, Dickens Heath**

#### **Site DH60 - Land at junction of Tilehouse Lane/Birchy Leasowes Lane, Dickens Heath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H2]: 1449/987; [H2/1]: 1449/986 – Mr A J Upton; [H2]: 1442/980; [H2/1]: 1442/891 – Mr E P McEvilly

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Site DH61 - Land at Tythebarn Lane, Dickens Heath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1]: 1430/1085; [H2]: 1430/1086; [C1]: 1430/1088 – Mr D F L Harrison

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

#### **Site DH62 - Land at Tythebarn Lane, Dickens Heath**

**Objections to First Deposit** [H1]: 1410/376 – Shirley Estates (Developments) Ltd; [H2/1]: 1441/567 – Mrs D Morris

**Objections to Revised Deposit** There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify removing any of these sites from the Green Belt and allocating them for housing development, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.*

#### **Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

3A.139 These sites lie around the new village of Dickens Heath, and generally comprise grazing land, farmland, woodland or underused land. Site DH57 is bounded by the canal, Dickens Heath Road/Tanworth Lane and extends to over 20ha. Site DH58 lies on the southern fringe of the village, opposite Long-Term Housing Site (j), whilst Sites DH59, DH60, DH61 & DH62 lie on the western side of the village along Birchy Leasowes Lane and Tythebarn Lane. The objectors seek to remove these sites from the Green Belt and allocate them for new housing, either within the current Plan period or to

meet longer-term needs. Formerly *Interim Green Belt*, these sites are designated as full Green Belt in the adopted UDP, a designation carried forward into the UDP Review.

- 3A.140 Dealing firstly with Green Belt matters, these sites lie within the relatively narrow wedge of Green Belt surrounding Dickens Heath, the main urban area of Solihull, Tidbury Green and Whitlocks End. In their present mainly undeveloped condition, they fulfil important Green Belt functions by preventing the outward spread of Dickens Heath, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and maintaining the separation between Dickens Heath, the main built-up area of Solihull and the nearby settlements. I realise that most of these sites are well contained and adjoin existing or proposed housing and, to some extent, development could be seen as a rounding-off of the new village. However, the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and subsequent development for housing would significantly narrow the rural gap between the village, the main built-up area of Solihull and the surrounding settlements, and erode the open character, integrity and function of this vulnerable area of Green Belt. It would also breach well defined Green Belt boundaries, and in some cases, would result in the consolidation of the built-up area of Dickens Heath beyond its present limits and lead to pressures to develop adjoining land.
- 3A.141 Apart from the general issue of housing land supply, the balance between greenfield and brownfield sites, and the *Barker* report, no exceptional circumstances are put forward in support of the development of these sites. Consequently, I consider that the removal of these sites from the Green Belt would conflict with long-standing Green Belt policy in PPG2. Where there are some existing buildings, such as on Sites DH58 & DH61, their future is best considered under the terms of SUDPR Policy C2. I also note that some of these sites were considered at the previous UDP inquiry, and were rejected mainly due to visual prominence and impact on the Green Belt between Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green/Whitlocks End [CD128; p.41-42].
- 3A.142 In terms of PPG3 (¶ 31), most of these sites are reasonably well located to existing facilities, including those being developed in the new village centre. Bus services are currently sparse, but may be improved. The development of these sites could contribute to the local community, by supporting local facilities and providing affordable housing, and there are no overriding local infrastructure, physical or environment constraints. However, there are possible problems with secondary school capacity in this area and parts of these sites may contain higher grade farmland. Development may also have an impact on the local landscape, particularly since several of these sites typify the *Arden Pastures* landscape type. At Site DH58, although some additional boundary planting has been provided, this would not completely overcome the visual impact of development. At Site DH61, existing woodland, protected by TPO, might also constrain development.
- 3A.143 More particularly, these are all greenfield sites, which would represent *urban extensions* to a settlement which lies beyond the main built-up area. Since current housing requirements can be met from existing brownfield and other land within the main urban areas, it is not necessary to identify further greenfield sites like these. Consequently, these sites would not perform well against the site-selection criteria in PPG3 and would also perform poorly against the latest regional policy, particularly since they lie outside the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not support urban regeneration. The development of these sites would also result in a significant loss of open countryside in the relatively narrow rural gap between Dickens Heath, the main urban area of Solihull and Tidbury Green, contrary to PPS7.
- 3A.144 Consequently, in the absence of any exceptional circumstances and given the current adequacy of housing land, both now and in the longer term, I

conclude that there are sound and clear-cut reasons to reject the removal of these sites from the Green Belt and their allocation for new housing, either during the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs, particularly given the conflict with national policy in PPG2, PPG3 & PPS7 and with the latest regional strategy.

### **Recommendation**

**3A.145 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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### **Site DH63 - Land at 146-152 Tilehouse Lane, Whitlocks End**

#### **Objections to First Deposit**

[H1]: 1456/912; [H1/1]: 1456/914; [H2]:1456/911;  
[H2/1]: 1456/913 - Messrs Neary/Benton

#### **Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft

#### **Key issues**

- *Are there any exceptional circumstances to justify allocating this land as a strategic housing site or to meet longer term housing needs, particularly given its Green Belt status.*

#### **Inspector's reasoning and conclusions**

- 3A.146 This 1.5ha site lies at the rear of properties fronting Tilehouse Lane in the small settlement of Whitlocks End. Previously used as a haulage depot, with hardstandings, workshops and garden land, it adjoins existing housing and a football ground, with the railway line to the west. It lies in the approved Green Belt, established in the adopted UDP and continued in this Review. The objectors seek the allocation of this site for new housing, either within the current Plan period or to meet longer term needs.
- 3A.147 Although Whitlocks End is an established settlement, including a church and railway station, it lacks any other facilities. It is not designated in the SUDPR as a settlement suitable for infilling or further development, and is "washed over" by the Green Belt. This site lies on the northern edge of the settlement, in the relatively narrow gap between Whitlocks End, Dickens Heath and Majors Green. In Green Belt terms, it helps to prevent the outward spread of Whitlocks End and maintains the separation between existing settlements, important Green Belt functions. Its removal from the Green Belt and allocation for development would consolidate and extend the existing built-up area, and would probably necessitate establishing an inset boundary for Whitlocks End, which could result in pressure to develop adjoining land. Apart from the issue of housing land supply, no other exceptional circumstances are advanced in support of its development, and so I consider it would contravene long-standing Green Belt policy in PPG2.
- 3A.148 In terms of PPG3, I recognise that part of this site could constitute *previously developed land*, but it is remote from any settlement with a range of local facilities and, in my view, its future use is best considered under the terms of SUDPR Policy C2. The relatively small size of the site would be unable to make a significant contribution to the local community. I recognise that the site includes provision for a new access off Tilehouse Lane, but no details of a satisfactory means of vehicular access are provided. It would therefore perform poorly against the site-selection criteria in PPG3. Since the site lies well beyond the MUA and the loss of Green Belt would not directly support urban regeneration, it would also perform poorly against the latest regional strategy.

3A.149 Consequently, in the absence of any exceptional circumstances and in view of the location of this site within a “washed-over” Green Belt settlement, I consider it would be inappropriate to remove this site from the Green Belt and allocate it for new housing development, particularly bearing in mind the conflict with national policy in PPG2 & PPG3 and with the latest regional strategy.

**Recommendation**

**3A.150 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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**SHIRLEY AND OLTON**

3A.151 Shirley and Olton lie on the southern fringe of Solihull, within the MUA identified in the latest regional strategy [RPG11; CD51G]. The SUDPR identifies two new housing sites (Sites 3 & 13) and one long-term housing site (Site (I) - Aqueduct Road), which I deal with in Chapter 3 of my report.

**NON-GREEN BELT SITES**

**Site SO64 - Land off Westley Close, Olton**

**Site SO65 – Land off Ashorne Close, Olton**

**Objections to First Deposit**

[H1]: 1404/1203-1204 – Robin Hood Golf Club Ltd

**Objections to Revised Deposit**

There were no objections to the Revised Deposit draft.

**Key issues**

- *Should these sites be designated as proposed housing sites, to provide a greater degree of flexibility.*

**Inspector’s reasoning and conclusions**

3A.152 These sites comprise two small parcels of land on the western fringe of Robin Hood Golf Course, adjoining existing houses in Westley Close and Ashorne Close. I understand that outline planning permission was granted in January 2003 for residential development on both these sites, so it would be inappropriate for them to be specifically allocated as proposed new housing sites. Both sites lie within the main built-up area of Olton and their contribution to the overall supply of housing land would be taken into account through the allowance for windfall sites. Consequently, these objections have been overtaken by events and no specific amendments are needed to the SUDPR.

**Recommendation**

**3A.153 I RECOMMEND NO MODIFICATIONS to the Plan to meet these objections.**

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