



**Warwick District Council New Local Plan**  
**Revised Development Strategy**

**June 2013**

Representations submitted on behalf of Mr H E Johnson  
in respect of land at Red House Farm, Lillington, Leamington Spa, CV32 7UA

Prepared by:

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## **Appendices**

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|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Landscape and Visual Assessment      | FPCR Environment & Design Ltd |
| 2. Ecological Appraisal                 | FPCR Environment & Design Ltd |
| 3. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment | CGMS Ltd                      |
| 4. Agricultural Land Use and Quality    | Land Research Associates      |

## **Plans**

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|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Objection Site (Drawing ref: 5600-P-01) | FPCR Environment & Design Ltd |
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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 These representations are made on behalf of Mr H E Johnson who owns a substantial area of land at Red House Farm, Lillington, Leamington Spa. This holding includes an area which was identified by Warwick District Council as appropriate for residential development in the Preferred Options document. This was published by the Council in May 2012 as an important stage in the preparation of the New Local Plan for the District to cover the period 2014 to 2029.
- 1.2 Bruton Knowles has been engaged to submit representations in respect of this next stage in the evolution of the Local Plan i.e. the Revised Development Strategy (RDS). It is recognised that this document is not a statutory stage in the Local Plan process but we regard its publication as a helpful step and welcome the opportunity to comment accordingly.
- 1.3 We note that there is also an Interim Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) issued for comment. We have not made separate submissions on that document since much of its content and many of its conclusions are repeated in the RDS. We have, however, addressed the specific points made in the ISA in respect of Red House Farm in these submissions.
- 1.4 We also note that Warwick District Council has published a Draft CIL Charging Schedule for consultation. Our Client welcomes the opportunity to be engaged in that process and has made separate representations to that document which cross refer to the representations made in this document.
- 1.5 The submissions that follow take a number of forms and the context for each representation is made clear at each stage. We have restricted ourselves to making comment on certain aspects of the document, but we have also expressed our support for a number of the proposals and the justification for those proposals. In addition, there are some specific objections raised in relation to our Client's land holding. A number of appendices are attached to support the submissions and provide further information.
- 1.6 Our intention in making these submissions is to indicate to the Council that our Client wishes to play an active role in the further stages of Plan preparation and that our Client's land is readily available for development and can be brought forward at an early stage in the Plan programme. It is hoped the representations will be seen as constructive and will result in further dialogue between the parties as a means of ensuring the most appropriate form and scale of development at Red House Farm.

## **2. Strategic Vision**

- 2.1 The objectives set out in Section 3 Strategic Vision are supported in general. Specifically, the requirement to ensure that the growth of the local population is provided for is strongly supported and indeed is an important requirement of NPPF.

- 2.2 Management of local development, and particularly as it relates to the regeneration of areas in need of improvement, is also strongly supported. This has a bearing on the Red House Farm site, given its location adjacent to the Lillington area which is recognised at 5.3.25 of the RDS as an area badly in need of improvement and regeneration. Our client fully recognises the role which RHF can play in an integrated approach to the regeneration of this area and is wholly supportive of the Council's intentions.
- 2.3 As set out in Section 3, we believe that the level of housing growth currently envisaged by the Council may be understated. We believe that more than 550 new homes per annum may be required to meet local housing needs (paragraph 3.5 of the RDS). Even if the Council's current estimate eventually proves to be the correct figure we believe that more land needs to be allocated to ensure that needs are met.
- 2.4 We do, however, support the other key social elements of sustainable development i.e. providing for diversity, good design and carbon efficient homes. We also entirely support all of the environmental elements that the Council is pursuing in the Local Plan Strategy.

### **3. Revised Development Strategy**

- 3.1 The Council has quite properly stated that the level of growth adopted in the RDS is an interim one. It is quite likely to change once the further SHMA work is completed. The Deposit version of the Plan may therefore require further land simply to meet the future numerical requirement. Even as things stand, the Council is adopting a level of growth which is less than the higher end of the previous SHMA assessment and also less than previous economic and demographic forecasts have indicated. It is contended the Council is being excessively cautious in its assumptions for future housing need.
- 3.2 Since the housing requirement figure is likely to change before the Plan is placed on deposit, it would not be appropriate to raise formal objections to the current assumptions at this stage. However, we reserve our Client's position on this matter and will wish to comment further and in more detail at the Deposit stage.
- 3.3 Of equal concern is the Council's approach to identifying new allocations (paragraph 4.2 of the RDS). A top down approach starting with the requirement and then subtracting the various known sources of supply to arrive at an allocation requirement and then to assume that all of that allocation requirement will come forward in the required period is unrealistic. This assumes that all the known sources of supply will deliver their full requirement. Past experience shows that there is always a drop out rate from windfall and small urban sites. Even commitments very seldom produce all of their capacity. Therefore there is a need to allocate beyond the bare arithmetical requirement to ensure that needs are met in the required period. This is a fundamental part of the Local Plan Strategy and is an absolute requirement of NPPF i.e. to ensure an adequate supply of housing at all times (s6. paragraph 47).

- 3.4 The reliance on an extremely high proportion of the total allocated area, effectively in one broad location to the south of Warwick, (3195 dwellings out of 6630 or approximately 50%) also makes the Council extremely vulnerable to delayed delivery, a factor all too common on large sites. The Council requires major infrastructure investment in this area and this will take some time to provide and is quite likely to slip. Also large single sites are always subject to marketing constraints. Put simply, several smaller sites, more widely distributed, will always sell at a quicker rate than one large site in a single location. This factor can therefore result in a further delay in development coming forward from a large site at the required rate to meet needs.
- 3.5 Taking the above into account, there is a great deal of uncertainty as to whether or not the current level of allocation will meet the anticipated requirement, assuming of course that this requirement is correct in the first instance. Therefore we believe that the Council needs to fully recognise the fact of non-take-up and slow delivery and allocate further land for development in sustainable locations. The exact extent of allocations will of course be determined by the final housing needs figure emerging from the revised SHMA.
- 3.6 In terms of the broad location of development, we note that following further work since the Preferred Options stage, including the Morrish Report and the Strategic Transport Assessment, the Council has retained an allocation at Red House Farm. This is supported strongly. Also it is noted that there was virtually no objection to the Red House Farm site being identified at the Options stage; unlike the sites to the north of Warwick and Leamington. The Council has therefore accepted that the release of land from the Green Belt at Red House Farm is fully justified taking into account the potential harm to the defined functions of Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 80), balanced against the benefits that the site can bring in assisting in the urban regeneration of the Lillington area.
- 3.7 In relation to the overall distribution of allocations, we therefore do not object to the spread of sites but, as is stated above, we believe that further land needs to be allocated. Section 4 following identifies further land at Red House Farm which could be allocated to provide sufficient land to meet the specific needs arising from the regeneration of the Lillington area.

#### **4. Strategic Development Site: Red House Farm**

##### *Allocated Site*

- 4.1 The Council has identified land at Red House Farm in the RDS as a site capable of accommodating up to 250 dwellings and suitable for development in the first phase of the Local Plan period. We fully support the Council's allocation of this site and the recognition of its increased capacity and need for early release which was not fully reflected in the Preferred Options document.

- 4.2 In paragraph 5.3.3 of the RDS, however, the net developable area of the site is given as 7.7ha. Further work referred to below and undertaken by FPCR on behalf of our client indicates that a greater area of this site is available for development. Therefore we believe that the capacity of the site as proposed to be allocated by the Council is nearer to 300 dwellings, excluding that section of the site in the Glebe Farm ownership.
- 4.3 With regard to this latter ownership at Glebe Farm, we are not convinced that this portion of the allocated site is either necessary or desirable to achieve a successful development at Red House Farm given its more prominent position and other constraints outlined in the SHLAA 2012, particularly in the light of the additional land that is identified below. We therefore reserve our position in respect of this land.
- 4.4 The Council sets out in paragraphs 5.3.9 to 5.3.22 the sustainability credentials of the Red House Farm allocation. These are further reflected in the ISA. We acknowledge the analysis that has been carried out but we have also done more detailed work on a number of the matters considered (see below). The site can be readily serviced by either existing infrastructure or by infrastructure that is capable of being improved and augmented at economic cost. The Council notes at paragraph 5.3.21 that *'there are no insurmountable constraints to the provision of utilities for this site'*.
- 4.5 The Council equally accepts that this site could play an important role in helping to provide excellent footpath and cycleway links to the rural area; high quality green infrastructure which could have major positive benefits such as the creation of diverse habitats, open space and a beneficial effect on the harsh urban edge of Lillington; and potential for community facilities.
- 4.6 All of the positive attributes of the Red House Farm site identified by the Council are agreed. Furthermore, we believe that the allocated site has an important role in the regeneration of the Lillington area and discussions have already commenced between the Council and our Client to ensure that regeneration of the Lillington area is secured within the early stages of the local plan period. While the site is currently in the Green Belt, it is our view that the site does not offend the functions of Green Belt set out in paragraph 80 of NPPF because the sustainability credentials of the site and the significant benefits it can deliver in terms of urban regeneration outweighs the normal presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 4.7 Having expressed our general support for the allocation of land at Red House Farm as set out in the RDS, we now turn to our most significant concern. It is our view that there is additional land at Red House Farm which should also be allocated for residential development. This land is identified in Plan 1 attached to these representations and extends to some 17.52ha. gross and could accommodate approximately a further 150 dwellings. **The omission of this land is therefore the subject of the formal objection of our client to the RDS.**

### *Objection Site*

- 4.8 As stated above, the Council has already accepted that development at Red House Farm is appropriate. This has taken into account landscape considerations, Green Belt issues, the need for regeneration, constraints on development and availability of infrastructure as set out in the RDS and ISA. We have also considered similar issues in respect of the objection site, and conclude that the additional area is equally appropriate for development since it benefits regeneration of Lillington by providing additional community and green infrastructure opportunities and a definable future Green Belt boundary.

### *Landscape*

- 4.9 With regard to landscape issues, attached to these submissions is a Landscape and Visual Assessment prepared by FPCR (see Appendix 1) which examines both the allocated site and the objection site and concludes that in the form suggested there are no significant landscape constraints which would prevent the objection site also being released for development. Moreover, the proposed southern boundary of the recommended site can be defined in such a form as to be entirely compatible with the need to designate a future Green Belt boundary which is clearly definable on the ground and can have the required degree of permanence.
- 4.10 The LVA has demonstrated that a combination of existing landscape features, (hedgerows and trees) combined with the effects of the topography of the site, provides a robust framework which can successfully assimilate a larger area of built development than was originally envisaged. Furthermore, significant additional benefits can also be brought forward with a generous green infrastructure network which builds on the existing features to contain development, protect the wider countryside from encroachment and greatly enhance both biodiversity and recreational access. Existing features on the ground can readily be employed to define a new Green Belt boundary, with the green infrastructure lying inside that boundary, to ensure a satisfactory settlement edge transition zone. This will be far superior to the current abrupt and harsh edge that exists at Lillington.
- 4.11 An illustrative master plan has been prepared to demonstrate how effective this approach will be (see Appendix 1 Fig.5). The conclusions of the LVA are then confirmed by supporting illustrative cross sections and a photomontage, all of which demonstrate the successful containment which is created by the green infrastructure. Strategic footpath and cycleway linkages can also be delivered as a result of this approach, both on a north-south axis from the heart of Lillington down to Butt Bridge and Radford Semele, and east- west from Welsh Road and The Runghills Wood across to Newbold Comyn.

## *Environment*

- 4.12 Further studies addressing ecology, archaeology, and agricultural land use and quality are also appended to these submissions. (see Appendices 2,3 and 4). They confirm that these matters of acknowledged importance are also not demonstrably harmed by development coming forward in the manner demonstrated in the illustrative master plan.
- 4.13 With regard to archaeology, Appendix 3 confirms that there are no matters of archaeological interest which would have a negative effect on the development of the site. While Appendix 4 confirms that there is an element of grade 3a land likely to be lost because of development, most of the grade 3a loss will be on the allocated site already deemed suitable by the Council for development. Much of the objection site is grades 3b and 4 lands and therefore is not the best or most productive land. In any event, the grades of land at Red House Farm are generally lower than around many other parts of Leamington.
- 4.14 Finally, in respect of ecology, while more detailed work is required at application stage there is nothing to suggest that either flora or fauna identified on the site to date would offer any undue impediment to future development.

## *Transport*

- 4.15 Further work has also been carried out on the capacity of the existing infrastructure to accommodate the additional dwellings likely to be generated by the objection site, which we estimate will be in the order of 150 dwellings. Preliminary work on highways, public transport, drainage and education, the main factors considered by the Council in the RDS, have revealed no major difficulties in either existing provision or suitably improved provision dealing with the additional increase.
- 4.16 A dialogue with Warwickshire County Council commenced during 2012 in which options for a vehicular access to the Red House Farm site were discussed. Further work is in progress with the County Council, but early indications are that adequate vehicular access can be provided to service both the allocation site and the objection site.
- 4.17 Any residential development at Red House Farm will create additional traffic flows on the local road network. In due course, a Transport Assessment (TA) will be prepared to study the safety and operation of the local road network for any proposed development. However at this stage on-going work is being undertaken by transport consultants to assess the broad implications of additional traffic and establish mitigation measures. A preliminary assessment suggests that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place to address any increase in vehicular movements.
- 4.18 Accessibility by modes of transport apart from the private car are important and a Travel Plan will be able to identify and support walking, cycling, and public transport measures to limit any increase in vehicular movements.



### *Drainage*

- 4.19 New residential development at Red House Farm would require new foul and storm water infrastructure. Consultations with Severn Trent Water will focus on the capacity of the local foul water network and whether or not upgrades to the existing sewers may be required. The topography of the site will necessitate the construction of foul water pumping stations, whatever scale of development is envisaged, a commonplace occurrence in residential areas.
- 4.20 Current guidance states that storm water run-off should be attenuated to be compatible with green field run off. The detailed proposals for this area will therefore include a number of measures to promote a sustainable storm water drainage strategy to include attenuation ponds where possible and soakaways to provide a controlled discharge to a local water course. All designs and calculations would be submitted for approval to the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water.

### *Education*

- 4.21 With regard to educational requirement, it is not believed that there are any issues in accommodating the proposed increase in dwelling numbers through the development of the objection site. Discussions with Warwickshire County Education Department have indicated that both primary and secondary education needs can be met by extensions to existing schools.
- 4.22 County Education has confirmed that up to 250 houses, as initially envisaged, would not require any additional school facilities at either primary or secondary level while an addition of a further 150 dwellings approximately on the objection site would require extension of both Lillington Primary and North Leamington School. However, there is sufficient scope within the sites of both schools to allow satisfactory works to be carried out. Appropriate contributions for these extensions will be the subject of detailed negotiation at planning application stage through the Section 106 process when the precise nature of the housing mix and the development programme are finalised.

### *Summary*

- 4.23 It is our view, therefore, that the objection site should also be allocated for residential development and that there are no planning, infrastructure or landscape reasons why this should not be the case. While the additional area is currently in Green Belt, the Council has already decided to release adjacent land and define new boundaries in this area. This has been proposed at the Preferred Options stage as well as at this current stage, on the basis that the benefit of releasing the land in fostering and supporting significant urban regeneration outweighs the loss of a limited area of Green Belt. In our view the additional area will not cause any further impact on Green Belt functions and will of course provide a greater contribution to addressing the Council's aspirations for regeneration by providing greatly improved access to, and recreational opportunities on, the edge of the rural area and opportunities for further community infrastructure.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 We believe that these submissions are a constructive and helpful response to the RDS. As stated at the beginning, we have provided a mixture of comment, support and objection. Our client is more than happy to discuss these submissions with the Council and provide any further information that the Council feels would be helpful in fully understanding the opportunity that exists at Red House Farm to produce a high quality development that will be a positive asset to the Leamington area.
- 5.2 Not only will Red House Farm site meet general housing needs but it has an important, and possibly fundamental, role in the Council realising its ambitions for the regeneration of the Lillington area. We would go so far as saying that without Red House Farm it will be almost impossible for Council to achieve its objectives. It is this inextricable link between the site and the Lillington area that supports both the allocation and the extension now proposed by our clients.

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