

## Baginton and Bubbenhall Neighbourhood Plan Submission Consultation

21<sup>st</sup> July 2017

### Policy BAG1 - Land north of Rosswood Farm

This representation is made on behalf of the landowners of land north of Rosswood Farm. The land owned is SHLAA site C20 which comprises the original Site H19 (land to the north of Rosswood Farm), as proposed in the submitted Warwick District Local Plan, but not the further land added to the south. SHLAA site C20 is available and can be delivered in isolation or in conjunction with neighbouring land to the south.

We support the policy to support the Warwick District Plan allocation of land north of Rosswood Farm, as shown in Map 2 (on page 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan) which shows site H19 as per the Warwick District Local Plan Proposed Modifications 2016. We assume that the policy wording of “*Appropriate new development*” as opposed to a specific quantum of development is to enable the Neighbourhood Plan to be in accordance with the Local Plan, once adopted and reflects the Parish Council support for a smaller area of the site only to be allocated. We agree with this approach since the Inspector’s Final Report is still pending. To include a specific quantum of development could risk inconsistency with the Local Plan, once adopted. We also assume that Map 2 will be updated should a different version be adopted prior to the making of the Neighbourhood Plan.

We support allocating this site in accordance with the emerging Local Plan. This is fully in accordance with Basic Condition e. as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement under paragraph 184 to be in “*general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan*”.

Despite this broad support for this policy, we do have some concerns regarding the detail of the policy which place excessive requirements and restrictions on development of the site over and above those contained in the emerging Local Plan or National Policy. Whilst Neighbourhood Plans are able to add detail and/or a distinct local approach to shape and direct development outside of Local Plan strategic policies, they must do so in the context of contributing to sustainable development and should not undermine strategic policies. Our concern is that the additional policy burdens proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan will provide a disincentive to development and have the effect of undermining the strategic policies such that they enable less development than set out in the Local Plan. This would fall foul of Basic Condition a. to have regard to national policies and advice. Furthermore, we do not consider these policy requirements to be underpinned by robust evidence and therefore would fall foul of Basic Condition d. to contribute to sustainable development.

**Part 1** of the policy requires the development to comprise smaller family units (1-3 bedrooms). The policy is not clear whether this applies to all dwellings or the affordable dwellings only, however, the implication is all dwellings.

This policy appears to be contrary to the emerging Local Plan housing mix policy and it is not clear what alternative evidence is available to justify a departure in the Neighbourhood Plan policy.



Emerging Local Plan policy “H4 Securing a Mix of Housing” requires a mix of market housing which contributes towards a balance of house types and sizes across the District, including the housing needs of different age groups, in accordance with the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The latest SHMA and principal evidence source in relation to housing mix underpinning the Local Plan is the Coventry & Warwickshire Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (November 2013) and the associated update from September 2015.

This recommends the following mix for affordable housing:

1-bed properties: 30-35%  
2-bed properties: 25-30%  
3-bed properties: 30-35%  
4+ bed properties: 5-10%

It recommends the following mix for market housing:

1-bed properties: 5-10%  
2-bed properties: 25-30%  
3-bed properties: 40-45%  
4+-bed properties: 22-25%

The SHMA found that delivery of larger homes (such as those with 3 or more bedrooms) can be beneficial in not just meeting the needs of households with an acute housing need, but also in releasing smaller properties to meet the needs of other households. Additionally, the supply of four bedroom accommodation to rent in the private rented sector is limited.

According to the recommendations of the SHMA, 5-10% of affordable dwellings and 22-25% of market dwellings should be 4+ bedrooms, in order to serve the District’s needs. The 3 bed restriction in the Neighbourhood Plan policy is in conflict with this.

The Baginton and Bubbenhall Neighbourhood Plan evidence base includes the Planning Policy Background and Evidence Base Review Update June 2016 by Kirkwells. This reviews only the Warwick Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Final Report, March 2012 which has been superseded by the 2013 Joint SHMA. However, this still provides no justification for the restriction on dwellings sizes. This refers to an estimated 42% of overall housing requirements (market and affordable) being for 3-bed properties, 20% for 4 or more bedrooms, 26% for 2-bed properties and 12% for 1-bed properties. Around 60% of requirements are thus for family housing with 3 or more bedrooms. The Review recommends that this mix should be taken into account in considering the ‘portfolio’ of sites taken forward through the Plan. It is assumed that the justification for this policy is to provide for local needs, however, there is no evidence to suggest that local need is for smaller dwellings only.

Therefore, the evidence base upon which the Neighbourhood Plan relies for this policy is out of date and has consequently led to a policy position which differs from that contained in the Local Plan evidence base. As such, this policy, in restricting house sizes, undermines the strategic policies of the Local Plan relating to the new homes needed in the area. Whilst the Parish Councils may have aspirations to provide for local needs only through limiting the size of dwellings, the allocation of the site by Warwick District Council is intended to



serve the strategic needs of Warwick District plus a contribution to overflow from Coventry City. An allocation of this scale cannot be justified to serve local needs only.

As such, this part of the policy should be deleted and require a housing mix based on the most up-to-date SHMA in conjunction with a Local Needs Assessment, should one be available.

**Part 3** of the policy requires 9% of market dwellings to be specialist housing for older people; we consider that there is insufficient justification for this.

As above, this policy appears to have stemmed from the Planning Policy Background and Evidence Base Review Update June 2016 which refers to the 2012 SHMA findings that 9% of market demand (37 homes per annum) will be for specialist housing, particularly for older people. However, the 2013 Joint SHMA updates this to 17% for Extra Care Housing (ECH) but takes a much more nuanced view and this figure is only an estimate for requirements for ECH moving forward. The Inspector's Main Modifications (March 2017) refer to the 2013 SHMA and requires that the mix of residential development provides for all age groups including older people, but does not include a specific percentage.

Therefore, the evidence base upon which the Neighbourhood Plan relies for this policy is out of date. As such, this part should be replaced with a commitment to provide for housing for all age groups, without a prescriptive requirement.

**Part 4** of the policy restricts development to the roadside only; we consider this restriction unjustified and unnecessary.

This element of the policy is unjustified since the evidence for this restriction comes from the *"Landscape Sensitivity and Ecological & Geological Study, 2013"*. The recommendations contained in this document have been considered through the Local Plan preparation process and weighed against other considerations, it's requirements have been tempered in light of other evidence.

The study concluded as follows:

*"Due to the high visibility of this zone, and its proximity to the Conservation Area and area of designated Open Space to the north, development should be restricted to roadside only, with a landscape buffer of native tree planting to the west. Any development should not extend any further south than the pub."*

Firstly, this evidence work was prepared in support of the Warwick District Council Village Housing Options Consultation which proposed allocation of SHLAA site C20 with a *"high level of environmental screening"* and a developable area of 1.22 Ha. The entire site extends to 1.8 Ha meaning a total area of only 0.58 Ha of landscape buffer which would enable a far greater area of the site than the *"roadside only"*, to be developed.

Secondly, this roadside only restriction which appeared in earlier versions of the Local Plan has not been carried through to final submitted version of Local Plan or modifications proposed by the Local Authority or Inspector. This suggests that it was not considered necessary or appropriate and as such, should not be included in the Neighbourhood Plan policy.



Furthermore, the allocation of further land to the south through the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan in 2016 is contrary to the recommendation of the Landscape Sensitivity and Ecological & Geological Study since it extends development further south than the pub. It is assumed that the need for housing was considered to outweigh the recommendations of this study and it is therefore inappropriate to apply other restrictive policies based upon the evidence contained within it which is clearly out of date.

Notwithstanding the above, this element of the policy is unnecessary since any planning application for the site will be accompanied by a landscaping plan and a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment with a full landscape mitigation strategy. This will enable the landscape impact of the site to be fully considered in the context of the proposed scheme, as opposed to placing a blanket restriction on development to the west of the site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared for SHLAA site C20 in support of the allocation. This LVIA concluded that taking into account the site conditions, visibility and the nature of the development proposals assessed, the site could be developed without causing unacceptable harm to the landscape or result in an unacceptable visual impact. It found no justification for developing a reduced area and considers the whole 1.8 hectare site. The mitigation proposed comprised perimeter tree planting, so an increase in the developed area of the site would have no greater impact, provided it still sits within the perimeter planting.

The LVIA is submitted with this representation. This was prepared to support the proposed allocation of 35 dwellings on SHLAA site C20 only but an updated version will be submitted with a planning application on the site, to reflect the specific proposals and allocation of further land to the south.

Similarly, policies BAG3 and BAG4 make reference to key views and the setting of Local Green Space; the impact of development of the site on these is most appropriately considered through a LVIA accompanying an application.