

Village Housing Options and Settlement Boundaries Consultation

Warwick District Council

November 2013

Report

Land at Hatton Green

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1. Purpose of the Report

This report and the accompanying form and plans are submitted in response to the document published by Warwick District Council in November 2013 which invited comment by 20th January 2014.

The report is submitted to comment objectively on the document which has been published and also to further our client's position in respect of land at Hatton Green which has been promoted before. It has been considered, but we feel inadequately, in the review process.

2. Local Plan Issues

2.1 Prematurity

It is clear that at this stage of the proceedings is being rushed through and in advance of clearly defined planning policies from the Revised Development Strategy (RDS) and Core Strategy. By the Council's own admission (Executive Committee Report November 2013) there are still a great number of issues to be resolved before the village strategy can be resolved. As is indicated in the Executive Committee Report, the Revised Development Strategy has not been finalised and there are still major points to resolve in terms of the housing numbers following recent reviews and assessments. We have outstanding objections on the RDS particularly on the village settlement hierarchy and the distribution of the housing growth

It has been assumed that the proposed RDS strategy is accepted. This means that other sites have not been considered fully and there are sites being promoted which are not as sustainable as the land which we are promoting. Fundamentally the number and distribution of the growth and the settlement hierarchy has still to be confirmed. Also of particular significance is the way in which Hatton is evaluated in terms of growth and how this interlinks with other Hatton Park key Central Government and Local Plan policies.

2.2 Site Scoring

Because of Prematurity, other sites have not been considered in the detail they should. Fundamentally the system that has been deployed is deficient and does not produce an adequate scoring system to compare the merits of the individual sites. Weighting should be applied to the various factors in order to establish which would be the

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preferred sites both in terms of their conformity with the emerging Local Plan policies and also with Central Government guidance. Although it is flawed, the villages selection for the draft hierarchy report have been scored and a similar system should be put in place for the site selection process

2.3 NPPF

The way the Plan has been formulated does not adequately reflect key considerations in the NPPF. We refer you in particular to the statement made at 2.10 on page 14 of item 10 in the Report for the Executive meeting on 13th November 2013.

Because of the significance of this we repeat what is said in paragraph 28 of the NPPF:

Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable and new development. To promote a strong rural economy local and neighbourhood plans should:

- *Support the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*
- *Further to promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be located “where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities” this can include supporting development in one village to support services in a nearby village (paragraph 55).*

2.4 Hatton Parish Plan

We have considered the Hatton Parish Plan and for ease of reference a copy of this document is attached. There are some significant issues in this Report which we do not feel have been adequately reflected in the District Council’s consideration of the site evaluation and development proposals. They are interlinked with some of the points which we make in relation to the site proposals set out at 3 below.

There has been, in our opinion, insufficient regard to the enhancement, maintenance and provision of services to support local communities.

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The plans attached to this Report at Appendix 1 & 2 are very much indicative at this stage to illustrate the potential of the areas in question. It is accepted that the quantity of housing will be restricted but the schemes proposed offer the District and the local community two schemes that will deliver sustainable development in the area. The density of the housing across the site could be reduced. This is a sought after area and would help deliver diversity to the housing supply, this being one of the other key considerations of the Local Plan review.

We would be happy to engage with Officers and Members and indeed the local community to discuss our proposals. The main points which we would particularly wish to draw to your attention at this stage are:

Site A (Birmingham Road)

- Very accessible to the main road network and bus services.
- Relates well to the village of Hatton Green.
- Grade III land.
- Contained site interlinking with community facilities.
- It adjoins routes of bus services both on the Birmingham (A4177) and Hockley (B4439) roads. These are two important roads in the locality giving good access to all the major conurbations and services nearby and to both the M40 and M42.
- Adjoins or is close to a wide range of local community facilities and in particular:
 - The Church (Holy Trinity Church) (Grade II*);
 - Village Hall;
 - Ferncumbe Primary School;
 - Falcon Inn and Hatton Arms;
 - Employment centres - See by way of illustration the list of local businesses, etc. on page 14 of the Hatton Parish Plan (Appendix 3). Further information on employment issues is to follow.
 - Leisure and recreational facilities – see Hatton Parish Plan.

An illustrative scheme has been drawn up to demonstrate the following:

1. Community benefits can be achieved by:

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- 1.1 Making land available for the much needed expansion of the Ferncumbe School. This is already at capacity and is favoured locally as is illustrated by reports produced by the Council and the Parish Council.
- 1.2 Creating new improved points of access from both the A4177 and the B4439, the Birmingham and Hockley roads. This would serve both the community facilities (existing and improved) and the development.
- 1.3 Reinforcing and improving the setting of the Grade II* listed Holy Trinity Church and providing much needed parking facilities directly adjoining the Church. There is a significant problem with parking in this area on the busy road (services and weddings, etc).
- 1.4 Providing car parking for the School, particularly for dropping off and collecting children. Providing additional land will help release land immediately adjoining the existing School for classroom extensions/expansion and also a playing field that could be shared both between the School and with the local community. Green Lane, the road through Hatton Green, is particularly congested in the morning and afternoon and there is often a conflict between local users and those trying to access the School. See page 11 of the Hatton Parish Plan.
- 1.5 By controlled highway improvements, other highway benefits can be achieved and in particular with regard to:
 - 1.5.1 Visibility and other junction improvements at the junction between the B4439 and A4177;
 - 1.5.2 The turning from the A4177 into Hatton Green. The development would be self-supporting because of new junctions proposed and would also provide the opportunity of taking steps to improve highway safety on existing junctions;
 - 1.5.3 Improving and/or reducing the volume of traffic using the perilous junction between the B4439 and Green Lane being the road running through Hatton Green.
- 1.6 Much needed off-road parking for residents and other housing in the locality – Starmer Place particularly. A new access off the A4177 for this would help congestion on Green Lane.
- 1.7 Affordable housing can be provided to reflect local need (confirmed in other reports).
- 1.8 The site could deliver allotments – as is illustrated on the Plan.
- 1.9 Provide overflow car parking for the Village Hall – the same client owns land immediately adjoining the Village Hall to the north. We understand that at times the Village Hall is short of car parking facilities, particularly

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when functions are taking place, and this could be accommodated in discussions with the community

- 1.10 Consideration will be given to assisting the Church authorities with repairs needed to the external fabric of the Holy Trinity Church.
 - 1.11 The provision of a shop.
2. That a self-contained attractive and desirable development can be achieved close to the transport network and other community uses and employment.

Site B (Hockley Road)

This has many of the attributes of Site A given its close proximity to the centre of the village. It is a self-contained site with no major landscape and amenity considerations.

To deliver planning gain and community benefits, many of the comments on Site could also be delivered by discussion between the owners of the site, the Planning Authority and the local community.

Again this is an easily identifiable site and there is a good point of access from the Hockley road. This could also interlink with the village of Hatton Green to give pedestrian and cycle access to local facilities. Land could also be made available in part out of Site A for the community services/ facilities.

Generally

Site A

1. There could be one or two points of access from the A4177 Birmingham Road. The principal residential access would require a right-hand turn lane and given the fact that the whole of the site to the south of the Birmingham road is owned, then there is adequate land to facilitate this. Unlike other sites which have been promoted, there are no third party ransom issues and the need to seek agreement of others to procure points of access or the visibility splays needed. Some of these sites may not be deliverable.
2. It would be expedient to review downwards the speed limit on the A4177 Birmingham Road extending the lower limit north and west to a point beyond the crossroads by the Village Hall. This will benefit the community generally and it would also help improve junctions where the B4439 meets the A4177, the crossroads in the village of Hatton

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- Green by the Village Hall and entrances to residential and other properties along the A4177 including the Church, Village Hall, etc.
3. Emergency access could be provided to Site A from Starmer Place and also the Hockley Road. With the entrances mentioned under 1 above, this would facilitate four points of access and this would be reviewed with the Highway Authority and the District and Parish Authorities. It is expected that not all of these would be needed but certainly safe points of access and egress could be provided and this would also result in other highway benefits.

Site B

There is a wide verge along the Hockley Road which would facilitate an access, and a right turn lane, from the south. It is accepted that there would not need to be any additional traffic flowing from this site through into the village of Hatton Green; therefore, it is proposed this becomes an emergency access only but it would facilitate a pedestrian and cycle access to the local facilities, i.e. School, Village Hall, Church, etc.

A report has been commissioned to consider the highway issues which might influence the transport position. A copy is attached at Appendix 4. A meeting is being arranged with the highway authority to look at the highway position. This will help shape and influence the final design and masterplan for any development scheme.

Engagement with the local community on the two schemes would be beneficial so that a positive interaction can start. The wider benefits of one or both of the submitted schemes can then be explored and considered which, in our opinion, reflect good sustainable development with possible significant community benefits. This is in line with Central Government guidance, most of your planning policies and the principles of good planning.

4. Other Sites

Prematurely the Report identifies a preference towards sites at both Hatton Park and Hatton Station.

We have undertaken a preliminary review of what is proposed and aligned with our comments on prematurity and also the mechanism by which the sites had been reviewed. We would make some initial observations on what is proposed.

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We have not at this stage commented on all the other sites proposed and this scrutiny will follow. Preliminary indications show that with the benefits that will flow from the schemes we are promoting on our clients' sites are much more attractive, readily deliverable and sustainable than some of the other sites proposed.

Hatton Station

The Reports produced highlight the inappropriateness of this development and the settlement hierarchy review gives this area a very low mark (14) and Hatton Green, before the additional benefits our scheme would bring, 24. It appears it is only there to provide a site which is linked to the Station itself but there are other significant problems. What the Report fails to address, insofar as the Station is concerned, is that if it is to be supported for wider community benefits then the one thing the site would benefit more from is additional parking and improvements to the road network, particularly from the B4439. The access is very poor as is identified in the background papers.

Residential development at this location is inappropriate for a number of reasons and we cite from the papers which we have viewed:

1. Noise from the railway (railway corridor, hence major negative effects in noise, light and air quality);
2. Previous site uses and contamination;
3. Sewage and drainage systems in Hatton Station area are at capacity;
4. Very limited range of services and facilities;
5. Narrow site access;
6. Evidence of protected species on site which will lead to the site either not being delivered or significant environmental buffering and habitat protection;
7. Potential impact on residential amenity.

We find it quite extraordinary that Officers feel this site could be sustainable and deliverable.

There are no services locally and this is, in our opinion, a highly inappropriate position for development.

Hatton Park

Again a number of issues have been raised in the consultation/reporting process which demonstrates the inappropriateness of this site. A selection of these taken from reports

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submitted and in particular those produced by or on behalf of Warwick District Council, illustrate:

- Option area discussed but not generally supported by the Parish Council. The Parish indicate that they might consider a small development option, 20-30 units.
- Visibility splays are insufficient and this might involve third party landownership which might result in the site being undeliverable.
- Substantial flooding along the Birmingham Road caused in part by ineffective operation of the existing flood storage area next to the site. There are substantial problems in this area and it will increase the likelihood of flooding on Oaklands Farm.
- The Report identifies Hatton Park as a growth village – we repeat that it is not Hatton Park but Hatton Village which comprises both the land at Hatton Green (old village) and Hatton Park. Many of the services which support this community are distant to Hatton Park, particularly the Church, School, pubs and other employment/leisure facilities. Hatton Park only has a shop and a Village Hall.
- Potentially high landscape impact – very visible site particularly from the east.
- The site requires substantial environmental buffering to the north and east.

The Inspector's Report on the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 Inquiry refers to Hatton Park and we must quote from this report the following:

14.2.5Any additional development here would, I feel, be likely to put pressure on community facilities and infrastructure and would be out of scale with the setting of the site. I consider that removing the settlement from the Green Belt to facilitate future development would risk harming the special character of this newly formed community.

14.2.6 It would put pressure on land within the boundary for further development that would be likely to damage the character of the area and the setting of the community. Hatton Park has reached its natural boundaries set by the parkland of the former hospitals In contrast, Hatton Park is a 'planned community' where further opportunities for expansion are unlikely to exist.

14.2.7 I am content that there is no evidence to suggest that further development is required at Hatton Park to make it sustainable. The development is balanced. It has its own well-used shop and community hall and is conveniently located for bus and rail public transport links.....Both the CPRE (Warwickshire Branch) and

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the Warwick Society consider that Hatton Park should not have a settlement boundary nor should it be excluded from the Green Belt. I agree. I consider that the most appropriate way to control development here is to retain the land in the Green Belt.

We would submit that so far insufficient consideration has been given to Hatton Green and also the benefits that this site could deliver. Appendix 2 to the 13th November 2013 Executive meeting contains a summary of points raised in relation to the various villages and some of the sites. We quote ...

Hatton Green – this will be considered as part of the site assessment process.

We cannot find any evidence that this has been undertaken. There appears to be a lack of transparency and information. For example, in the Landscape Sensitivity and Ecological and Geological Study, there does not appear to be anything of any substance relating to Hatton Green. There are comments on Hatton Park and Hatton Station. Also at Appendix 8 to that document, the Green Belt and Green Field review (November 2013) there is a Plan for Hatton which shows Hatton Green Site HG1. There does not appear to be any commentary on this site. We would submit that, given the fact that it is a small self-contained site with housing to the west and north and two main roads to the north east and south, it is of no significant landscape benefit and also would sensibly be an area that should be removed from the Green Belt. The Site B on the west side of Hatton Green has not been considered, which is unfortunate given the fact that it is an area that has been promoted in the past, if only in part.

In the past we are informed Warwick District Council have favoured development at Hatton Green. This is a good self-contained and well screened site which would not result in any significant loss or detriment to the landscape setting.

Consideration of the scoring that would relate to the settlement of Hatton Green, in the event that our proposals were viewed favourably, should be considered. The site would adjoin, and bus stops could be provided on, the major bus routes along the A4177 and B4439. We also feel that the sites proximity to the nearby shop at Hatton Park and also the pubs, Hatton Arms and the Falcon Inn, will become more accessible and relevant. Hatton Country Park is also very close.


5. Conclusion

We look forward to engaging with Officers/Members and the local community over our proposals which we feel should be actively pursued through the Local Plan Review process.

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As alluded to in this Report, we have major concerns over the way in which the Plan is moving forward both in terms of its content and also its prematurity. Particular work is needed to make sure it is in conformity with Central Government guidance and the NPPF and to make sure that there is a credible, sustainable and defensible evaluation process for considering the selection of villages, the way these interact in terms of the hierarchy and also the allocations which are made. In turn there needs to be a clear credible scoring system to make sure that sites are properly evaluated and considered as to how they sit within the planning structure and what benefits they can bring to the community.

We consider there are significant merits of both the sites which we are promoting on behalf of our client and look forward to discussing the position with you.



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