

Warwick District Local Plan – Modifications

Part B - Your Representations

Please note: this section will need to be completed for each representation you make

7. Please give details of why you consider the Proposed Modifications to the Submission Warwick District Local Plan are not legally compliant or are unsound. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Proposed Modifications, please also use this box to set out your comments.

4. To which proposed Modification to the Submission Plan or the updated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) does this representation relate?

Modification or SA:

Mod. Number: 35

Paragraph Number Policy DS19

Mod. Policies Map

Number:

5. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

5.1 Legally Compliant? Yes

5.2 Sound? Yes No NO

6. If you answered no to question 5.2, do you consider the Proposed Modification is unsound because it is not:

(Please tick)

Positively Prepared: ✓

Justified: ✓

Effective: ✓

Consistent with National Policy: ✓

7. Please give details of why you consider the Proposed Modifications to the Submission Warwick District Local Plan are not legally compliant or are unsound. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Proposed Modifications, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Policy DS19 Green Belt

The changes now proposed to the Green Belt represent a very substantial departure from previous plan proposals. This adds greatly to our concerns, as previously submitted, about the impact on the Green Belt. The proposed new and amended housing applications amount to an additional 500 hectares of Green Belt land to be taken in addition to earlier proposed removals such as the proposed removal of 124 hectares of Green Belt for the proposed Sub-Regional Employment Site (Policy DS16). Even more land is proposed for removal through policies DS NEW1, DS NEW2

and DS NEW4. The cumulative impact of this excessive development in the Green Belt would be immense and is not justified.

Although the Joint Green Belt Study of June 2015 ('JGBS') is listed in the Evidence Base¹, its findings are effectively ignored in the Proposed Modifications and more generally in the proposed Local Plan. The associated Sustainability Assessment Addendum ('SA') makes a single mention of the JGBS with reference to Baginton as a growth village. In Baginton, the SA recognises that the JGBS "found that the parcel of land represents the principal protector of the countryside from further encroachment" and consequently the SA concluded that development in Baginton would have "major negative effects on SA Objective 5" (Prudent Use of Land and Natural Resources). This conclusion relates to a site of 4 hectares for 80 dwellings in Baginton.

The same JGBS finding applies to other Green Belt sites which have much greater impact than a 4ha site. For example, the proposed Sub-Regional Employment Site in Baginton is 235 hectares, over 50 times the size of the proposed housing sites in Baginton, so it is of much greater impact but the JGBS's conclusions have effectively been ignored in the proposed Local Plan. This issue is explored below through two examples, showing that the proposed plan is unsound because it has not taken the Joint Green Belt Study properly into account.

The Joint Green Belt Study assessed parcels of land for their performance in terms of the national policy, specifically rating them against the five purposes defined in the NPPF. These parcels were also grouped into broad areas which were assessed for their strategic Green Belt designation. The proposed sub-regional employment site covers parcel C10 and the proposed King's Hill housing site covers parcel C14, all within Broad Area 3. Broad Area 3 is assessed as making a considerable contribution to all the purposes of the Green Belt².

All parcels scored full marks against the objective to assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. Parcel C10 (the proposed sub-regional employment site) is rated³ as a higher-performing Green Belt parcel and is cited as an example of land bordering the southern edge of Coventry as contributing significantly to the purposes of the Green Belt. It highlights the good 'intervisibility' with the historic core of Coventry, contributing to the visual setting of the historic city⁴. The study notes that the A45 "represents a significant boundary helping to protect the countryside within the parcel from encroachment from Coventry" and "the Green Belt within the parcel represents the principal protector of the countryside"⁵.

Parcel C14 (the proposed King's Hill site) is similarly rated in the JGBS⁶ as a high performer against the objectives of the Green Belt. This land is assessed as having the characteristics of the countryside, contributing to the setting of the historic city of Coventry. The SA acknowledges⁷ that

1 - http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/downloads/download/744/joint_green_belt_study_2015

2 - Paragraph 4.12 of Joint Green Belt Study Stage 1 report, June 2015

3 - Joint Green Belt Study Appendix 1 Warwick Part 1

4 - Paragraph 4.20 of Joint Green Belt Study Stage 1 report, June 2015

5 - JGBS Appendix 1 Warwick Assessments part 1: parcel C10 assessment

6 - JGBS Appendix 1 Warwick Assessments part 1: parcel C14 assessment

7 - Sustainability Assessment Addendum paragraph 3.24

the proposed urban extensions south of Coventry would have cumulative and potentially major negative effects on landscape, visual amenity and openness through loss of Green Belt and that these would remain even after so-called mitigation.

The Joint Green Belt Study concludes⁸ that the West Midlands Green Belt continues to meet the purpose of encouraging recycling of urban land, “noting that there remain some significant areas of previously used land in the urban areas.” Development in the Green Belt is excessive and is not justified, particularly when the chosen sites are some of the most sensitive – highest performing – parts of the Green Belt around Coventry.

The Joint Green Belt Study confirms that the proposed developments would cause immense harm to the Green Belt. It would need incredibly strong exceptional circumstances to clearly outweigh such harmful and inappropriate development. There is no evidence that these sites, driven in part by excessive demands arising outside Warwick District, have been selected as the best available after a top-down sustainability assessment for the whole Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership area and Strategic Housing Market area. Brownfield sites and other sites outside the Green Belt are suitable alternatives.

Both of the above examples, which are very substantial areas, were first proposed for removal from the Green Belt in late stages of the development of the emerging Local Plan. Public consultation on these proposals has been constrained solely to the issues of soundness. There has been no adequate public consultation on these key proposals at a stage when the Council was open to considering changes to its proposals. The consultation process has not allowed effective engagement of interested parties. This process is seriously flawed and does not comply with the necessary procedures for preparation of a Local Plan. Lack of adequate consultation renders the plan legally non-compliant.

The recent Joint Green Belt Study has confirmed that the proposed Green Belt changes would cause immense harm to the purposes of the Green Belt. The cumulative impact of the proposed changes would devastate the Green Belt south of Coventry. There are no exceptional circumstances that justify exceptional harm.

The proposed policy is unsound. The Green Belt should be protected and development that is really justified – not excessive - should be directed towards urban areas and land outside the Green Belt.

8. Please set out what change(s) you consider necessary to make the Proposed Modifications to the Submission Warwick District Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified at Question 5 above where this relates to soundness. You will need to say why this change will make the Local Plan/Sustainability Appraisal legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Delete Modification 35 and delete the proposals to remove land from the Green Belt under this Modification (p11-12 of the Modifications document).

Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested changes, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations. Further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination.

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9. If your representation is seeking a change, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination?

No, I do not wish to participate at the oral examination
Yes, I wish to participate at the oral examination

10. If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

To advance the arguments put in this representation and to respond to statements made by the local planning authority and any development interests taking part

11. Declaration

I understand that all comments submitted will be considered in line with this consultation, and that my comments will be made publicly available and may be identifiable to my name/organisation.

Signed: M A Sullivan for CPRE Warwickshire

Date: 20 April 2016

Copies of all the comments and supporting representations will be made available for others to see at the Council's offices at Riverside House and online via the Council's e-consultation system. Please note that all comments on the Local Plan are in the public domain and the Council cannot accept confidential objections. The information will be held on a database and used to assist with the preparation of the new Local Plan and with consideration of planning applications in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

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