



**CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION
BLACK COUNTRY CORE STRATEGY
AT
LAND SOUTH OF CASTLE ROAD, WALSALL WOOD
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF**

[REDACTED]

Date: October 2018

Ref: 18.235

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Appendix 1 – Site Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cerda Planning have been instructed to make representations in relation to the Black County Core Strategy 'Call for Sites' exercise on behalf of Mr Ray Rowan.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to promote land to the south of Castle Road in Walsall Wood as a suitable development site for residential development. The site plan is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The site currently lies within Green Belt but inside the settlement envelope of Walsall Wood. This statement demonstrates that the site should be released from Green Belt and is suitable to be considered as an allocation for residential development in the emerging Black Country Core Strategy.

2. Site Summary

- 2.1 The site comprises a broadly rectangular shaped parcel of land, located to the south of Castle Road and spans an area of approximately 1 hectare.
- 2.2 Castle Road is largely residential in nature, characterised by mid-20th century semi-detached properties.
- 2.3 The site is designated as Green Belt and has relatively flat land levels throughout.
- 2.4 The site comprises limited natural assets and its boundaries are lined by mature hedgerows.
- 2.5 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, therefore has a low probability of flooding.
- 2.6 A small number of corrugated iron structures are located at the site.
- 2.7 Aldridge Fire Station and a small business unit are located to the west of the site, fronting onto Northgate. Both Castle Road and Northgate would serve as viable access points to the site.
- 2.8 Green Belt land extends immediately to the south and east of the site.
- 2.9 In terms of the site's wider context, it is largely residential in character. Aldridge town centre is located less than 2 miles south of the site which possesses numerous facilities and amenities.
- 2.10 The larger town of Walsall is located less than 5 miles south east of the site. Bus route no. 7A runs operates every 10 minutes and runs to Walsall town centre, with bus stops being within a short walking distance from the site.
- 2.11 Walsall also comprises a train station, which offers regular services to Rugeley Trent Valley and Birmingham New Street, and possesses other essential amenities such as educational institutions and a hospital.

3. Policy Context

3.1 As a starting point, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will be used to provide context for this call for sites submission.

3.2 The need to achieve sustainable development underpins the key principle of the NPPF, and Paragraph 8 identifies three clear objectives to sustainable development:

- **An economic role** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- **A social role** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **An environmental role** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

3.3 Paragraph 11 highlights that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development for both plan making and decision making, this comprising approving proposals that adhere to Development Plans without delay, or where the Plan is absent or irrelevant granting permission unless negative impacts would outweigh the positives for development.

3.4 In relation to housing, Paragraph 59 states that in order to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed,

that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

- 3.5 Paragraph 133 puts forward that great importance is attached to the Green Belt within the UK. The policy's fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 3.6 Paragraph 134 sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.7 Paragraph 143 proposes that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 3.8 The site lies within the jurisdiction of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and the Black Country Core Strategy forms part of the Local Development Scheme for the area. This is a planning and regeneration plan for the whole of the Black Country, of which four Black Country Councils are involved in (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton).
- 3.9 The Plan's strategy promotes economic growth and plans for new housing to meet the Borough's needs.
- 3.10 **Policy CSP2** states that the areas outside the Strategic Centres and Regeneration Corridors will be maintained to promote urban renaissance, asserting that Green Belt boundaries will be maintained and protected from inappropriate development.
- 3.11 **Policy HOU1** puts forward that sufficient land will be provided to deliver at least 63,000 new homes over the period 2006-2026. Additional housing capacity will also be sought elsewhere in the Black Country through allocations and planning permissions on suitable sites.

- 3.12 **Policy CEN2** categorises Walsall Wood as a District and Local Centre, with Aldridge being designated as a Town Centre.
- 3.13 In 2017, GL Hearn and Wood were commissioned by Birmingham City Council to undertake a Strategic Growth Locations Study by the 14 local authorities that comprise the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market. The final report was published in February 2018.
- 3.14 The Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study finds that there is a minimum housing need for 208,000 new houses up to 2031 and a need for 258,000 houses by 2036 across Birmingham and the Black Country.
- 3.15 The current evidence suggests a current provision of between 205,000 – 246,000 homes across the Birmingham HMA to 2031 and 256,000 – 310,000 homes to 2036.
- 3.16 In terms of developable land required to meet this need there is a developable land supply to provide 180,000 new houses by 2031 and 197,000 by 2036. Bringing together the need and currently identified supply, there is an outstanding minimum shortfall of 28,150 dwellings to 2031 and 60,900 dwellings to 2036 across the Birmingham HMA.
- 3.17 The report concludes by advising that new strategic allocations will be required to address this shortfall across the whole HMA which includes a potential requirement to release Green Belt land to accommodate new housing.

4. Site Credentials

- 4.1 The site is suitable for allocation for residential development as it is available, viable, suitable and deliverable. Its location provides an excellent opportunity to sustainably develop a small parcel of Green belt land and help to alleviate the Borough's, significant housing shortfall.
- 4.2 The site is sustainably located within a highly sustainable location containing a variety of local services and facilities located in nearby Walsall as shops, services, schools, and community facilities as well as high quality public transport links.
- 4.3 The site abuts existing residential development, and so would serve as a logical extension to the built form whilst not impeding the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 4.4 The site, and proposed residential development upon it, is put forward as comprising sustainable development. The site must be considered in the context of the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.5 Sustainable development should proceed without delay, particularly in the context of the NPPF requirement to boost significantly the supply of housing land, a requirement which applies to every local planning authority.

5. Site Assessment against the Five Purposes of Green Belt

5.1 In justifying the site for residential development, it is necessary to assess the site against the five purposes of the Green belt set out at paragraph 134 of the NPPF. The five purposes are set out and considered further in turn below.

1) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Firstly, the site is a clearly defined area of land with Castle Road and associated dwellings running along the northern boundary and further built form enclosing the site to the west. Partial containment along the southern boundary is made by hedgerow. It is evident that the site is physically contained on most of its boundaries therefore preventing 'unrestricted sprawl' from taking place.

2) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The site is positioned as such that if it were to be released from the Green Belt for the purpose of residential development, remaining Green Belt located to the south would still serve as a substantial barrier preventing Walsall Wood and Aldridge from merging together. Therefore potential residential development at the site would not go against Green Belt principles as set out in the NPPF.

3) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The site is not part of open land and its small size of approximately 1 hectare does not comprise a large area of open countryside. Due to its contained nature and being flanked on two sides by urban development it would not encroach into open and undeveloped countryside.

4) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

As previously set out, development at the site would not encroach into the historic setting and character of the local area. The site is not within or does not adjoin a conservation area or any heritage assets. Therefore development of the site would not result in any harm to the historic environment.

5) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Whilst it is acknowledged that development of the site would result in the loss of greenfield land there is a lack of suitable and available brownfield sites within the borough and wider West Midlands as identified by the reports and studies, therefore other sources of land need to be identified in order to meet the housing need for the area. The site at Castle Road is a site that has the potential to deliver additional housing.

- 5.2 From this it can be determined that the removal of the site from the Green Belt will not undermine the purposes of Green Belt, therefore consolidating the site's potential to be released for the purpose of residential development.

6. Assessment against Sustainability Considerations

6.1 The site presents itself as an opportunity to adhere to the key principle of the NPPF, the adopted Black Country Core Strategy and saved policies of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan, of which is to favour sustainable development. A potential residential development at the site would adhere to sustainable development criteria set out in the Framework, as follows:

- **An economic role** – the site provides an excellent opportunity to meet the existing housing need of the borough and the wider West Midlands area, in turn helping to boost economic growth across the region. In addition to this, development at the site would increase local job prospects during the construction phase.
- **A social role** – the site has been demonstrated to be sustainable in terms of nearby services and amenities and so supports the local community's needs and supports its health and social and cultural wellbeing; and
- **An environmental role** – under assessment the site has fared well against the five purposes of the Green belt, demonstrating that residential development at the site would not erode the openness of the Green belt nor negatively impact upon local natural environment.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The land to the south of Castle Road, Walsall Wood provides an excellent opportunity for residential development which would form a logical extension to existing residential development along Castle Road.
- 7.2 The site is favourably located within close proximity of Walsall and Aldridge's provisions such as shops, schools and public transport links, enabling a development which would integrate sustainably into the community.
- 7.3 Although located within the Green Belt, the release of the site from Green Belt for residential development would not cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt as justified in section 6 of this document. It has been previously noted that in order to deliver houses that are required, it is necessary to release a suitable parcels of land from the Green Belt.
- 7.4 Residential development at the site would go far to meet the Borough's housing need over the next 15 - 20 years.



Brookland Rd

Brookland Grove

Brookland Rd

Lawnwood Dr

Salters Rd

Castlefort Rd

Tribute 2

Castlefort Rd

Castle Rd

Vigo Terrace

Vigo Rd

Vigo Rd

Vigo Rd

Vigo Rd

B4152

Castle Rd

Castle Rd

Castle Rd

Sunnyside

Sunnyside

Northgate

Aldridge Motor Boccies

Aldridge Fire Station

MHP Computer Services Limited

Taylors Auto

Google