

## **Discussions between Rugby Borough Council and Coventry City Council on the removal of Walsgrave Hill Farm from the emerging Local Plan**

### **Introduction**

1. Walsgrave Hill Farm was proposed for allocation in the Preferred Options Local Plan. This note sets out when and how Coventry City Council were informed by Rugby Borough Council of the removal of Walsgrave Hill Farm site from the Local Plan at the Publication stage.

### **Duty to Cooperate**

2. Examination document LP05 (Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Co-operate) details the ongoing engagement with DtC bodies, including Coventry City Council through the development of the Local Plan. Paragraph 3.8 details the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Association of Planning Officers (CSWAPO) which is comprised of the Head of Planning (or their representative) from the eight Councils within Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. CSWAPO is a long established group that since the 2010 Localism Act has taken a lead role in driving Duty to Cooperate discussions and activities. Local Plans updates are standing items on each meeting agenda. This provides the opportunity for each authority to update on content and timescales of plan making. Both Coventry City Council and Rugby Borough Council attend these meetings that approximately are held monthly.
3. In addition to CSWAPO both authorities also attend the Local Enterprise Partnership Planning and Housing Business Group which meets every two months. This attended by more senior positions and again provides the opportunity to update the group on plan making.

### **Walsgrave Hill Farm discussions**

4. Two separate discussions have informed CCC of RBC intension to remove WHF from the emerging Local Plan at the Publication Local Plan stage.
5. The first was a conversation between Rob Back, Head of (at the time) Planning and Recreation at RBC and Martin Yardley at CCC Deputy Chief Executive (Place) on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, 4:30pm. In this RBC explained the key issues surrounding the WHF site and SHLAA submission at the Preferred Options stage of the Local Plan of a non-Green Belt alternative. RBC also highlighted concern at the inclusion of employment as part of Roxhill's proposal for WHF.
6. The second engagement was at a meeting with CCC, RBC, Highways England (HE) and Roxhill, the promoters of Walsgrave Hill Farm. This took place on Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 2016, at Rugby Town Hall. This meeting explored HE's Road Investment Strategy funding programme and the implications for the WHF site where RBC expressed concern at the potential impact on the timescales and on uncertainty of delivery. RBC also explained that alternative sites within the countryside had come forward which would need to be considered prior to GB release which would result in serious consideration of the proposed allocation.
7. Notes from both discussions are appended to this note.

## **APPENDICES**

1. Rugby Borough Local Plan: Walsgrave on Sowe -call note
2. Emerging Rugby Borough Local Plan: Walsgrave on Sowe – meeting note

## APPENDIX 1

### Rugby Borough Local Plan: Walsgrave on Sowe

#### CALL NOTE

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March, 4:30pm

Call between: Martin Yardley (Director of Place, CCC)  
Rob Back (Head of Planning and Recreation, RBC)

- RB provided update on Walsgrave on Sowe and emerging Lodge Farm proposal
- RB outlined key considerations:
  - Green belt impacts
  - Employment allocation beyond identified need
  - A46 works
  - Political concerns
- Non GB site submitted as part of PO SHLAA call for site which would need to be considered before any GB release – consequences for WHF.
- MY expressed concerns from CCC perspective
  - Viability of Coombe Country Park
  - Roxhill opportunity – lack of strategic investment sites
  - UHCW second access
- MY queried availability of Walsgrave site for single large investor – meeting next day and wanted confirmation of whether Walsgrave could be discussed.
- RB/MY discussed implications of Coventry Gateway decision and deliverability of GB sites.

#### Actions

- MY to update following meeting with investor
- Need for large employment sites to be discussed at CWLEP Planning Group

## APPENDIX 2



### Emerging Rugby Borough Local Plan – Walsgrave on Sowe

#### MEETING NOTE

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2:30pm  
Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Rugby

1. Introductions and welcome All/RBC

Attendees: RBC, CCC, HE, Roxhill

2. Rugby Borough Local Plan – update RBC

- Preferred Options reps and sites

#### **Rationale for proposed allocation**

RB - Road Investment Strategy 2015/16 – 2019/20 grade separated junction improvements to the A46 opening up access to the site. Therefore envisaged development would commence in 2022 with 750 dwellings being delivered by 2031. Following HE response that the completion date of the scheme could be 2025 or beyond unless significant contributions can be secured. Impact being that development would not occur 2027 at the latest delivering 150 dwellings. Further to this Oxalis in previous meeting with LPA indicated that the residential allocation would be insufficient to fund the junction improvements. Alternative sites within the countryside have come forward which would need to be considered prior to GB release.

Therefore serious consideration of the proposed allocation is now being had.

HE- timescales have now changed will be delivered by 2022 but should the proposed allocation not go ahead then this could put the scheme in jeopardy as the case for the scheme based on growth principle is devalued. HE would therefore need to take this back to Dft.

RB – Sought clarification on this matter as from his understanding the improvements to the junction was always in the pipeline and it was only in December 2015 that it was made public about the proposed allocation at Walsgrave.

CCC and Roxhill – expressed concern that Coventry would not get its access therefore making its own allocation undeliverable and the benefit of blue light access would be lost.

HE – made the assumption that some form of development would take place on the Rugby side based on discussions with Cov and WCC. Highlighted that some scheme could go ahead but it would be a lost opportunity if housing allocation didn't carry through. Clarified that the blue light access road is not part of the HE scheme though its access could be made, delivery reliant on the LPA and developer.

Stated that the A46 has been identified as a “motorway express” and if designated as such no further access would be made on to the network. N.B after the meeting HE stated that such a designation would not come into effect until 2040 but DFT are asking for this to be applied now (no basis).

Roxhill- will pursue the housing allocation though highlighted that employment should still be pursued and a report will be sent to the authority highlighting increased employment does not impact on housing numbers,

HE- supportive of joint funding

Roxhill – happy to be part of joint venture

RB- Transport scheme provided by Roxhill will need to be revisited as this was based on employment allocation.

Oxalis – agreed will work something up.

## **Actions**

HE to revise response on timescales of the graded junction

HE and Oxalis to work up scheme.