
AMENDMENT

Cllr Bowes will PROPOSE and Cllr Bittleston will SECOND that Recommendation (ii) of Agenda Item 6 be amended as follows:

- (ii) **Save as for proposal sites GB9 (Land north east of Saunders Lane), GB10 (Land to the north west of Saunders Lane) and GB11 (Land rear of 79-95 Lovelace Drive) which are not to be released from the Green Belt in order to be safeguarded for future development needs or otherwise, the draft Site Allocations DPD (Appendix 3) and the accompanying revised Sustainability Appraisal report and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (copies are in the Members' Lounge) be supported for the purposes of Regulation 19 consultation to give the public an opportunity to make formal representations.**

REASONS FOR THE AMENDMENT:

1. Having read the officers' report together with its appendices and supporting evidence, and having considered the responses from both consultations in 2015 and 2017, we have concluded that there are exceptional circumstances which justify revising the Green Belt boundary in the locations set out within the draft DPD at Appendix 3 so as to meet the need for homes, infrastructure and SANGs from 2022 to 2027 in accordance with CS6 Core Strategy and paragraph 137 NPPF.
2. In accordance with paragraph 139(c) NPPF, we have then moved to address our mind to identifying areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt in order to meet longer-term development needs of the Borough, so as to ensure the Green Belt boundary would not need to be altered at the end of the plan period and would endure as a permanent boundary.
3. We have considered the available land identified for that purpose within the Green Belt Review and note that all the recommended sites would give rise to a certain level of harm to the sustainability objectives. In particular, we note that GB 9, 10 and Land east of Upshot Lane (formerly GB13 in the Regulation 18 consultation) are all within the designated "Escarpment of Rising Ground of Landscape Importance" which policy CS24 Core Strategy specifically identifies as a "key landscape" to be "conserved" and where possible "enhanced". Furthermore, whilst GB11 is not within the Escarpment designation, it is adjacent to the Escarpment and forms part of an important rural landscape setting to the southerly boundary with the urban area of Woking which we consider to also be protected by policy CS24. Moreover, GB11 together with Land east of Upshot Lane (formerly GB13) form part of the setting of the Registered Park and Garden at Pyrford Court and the Aviary Road Conservation Area (both designated heritage assets). In their present open and rural form these sites make an important contribution towards the respective heritage significance of

those designated heritage assets. Paragraph 193 NPPF requires “great weight” to be attached to the conservation of designated heritage assets. We are therefore of the view that exceptional circumstances do not exist so as to justify the release of proposal sites GB 9, 10 and 11 (and in agreement with officers, Land east of Upshot Lane, formerly GB13) from the Green Belt because the use of those sites for residential development would: (i) conflict with policy CS24 Core Strategy and thus not be in accordance with the development plan’s strategy for sustainable development contrary paragraph 139(a) NPPF, (ii) fail to protect or enhance a valued landscape in accordance with paragraph 170(a) NPPF, (iii) in the case of GB11 and Land east of Upshot Lane (formerly GB13), fail to conserve designated heritage assets and (iii), result in the permanent loss of Green Belt land assessed within the Green Belt Review as performing variously a “critical” and “major” role to check urban sprawl and a “critical” and “major” role towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment Moreover, contrary to CS6 Core Strategy, we consider that the development of GB9, 10 and 11 (and Land east of Upshot Lane, formerly GB13) would individually and certainly collectively, critically undermine the overall purpose and integrity of the Woking Green Belt.

4. We consider that there are merits to the northern part of the Martyr’s Lane site as a location to meet long term development needs, not least that development in this location would cause less harm to the landscape and Green Belt than GB 9, 10 and 11 (and Land east of Upshot Lane), would cause no harm to heritage assets and is proximate to three major employers. However, we have concluded in agreement with officers, that the fact the land is not presently available for development, or likely to be at the point it would be required, and that a CPO is not likely to be successful, exceptional circumstances do not presently exist to justify release of the site from the Green Belt for the purpose of safeguarding in order to meet the Borough’s long-term development needs.
5. We have noted that GB 4 (Land south of Parvis Road) & 5 (Land to the south of Rectory Lane) are not within or adjacent to a landscape feature of acknowledged importance or within a setting of any designated heritage asset. Furthermore, both are within a land parcel identified in the Green Belt Review as being of high suitability for release from the Green Belt, were assessed as making only a “slight/negligible” contribution to Green Belt purposes and for which Green Belt designation had “prevented expansion of Byfleet into what would be otherwise a generally suitable location”. Accordingly, we are satisfied that exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify release of proposal sites GB 4 & 5 from the Green Belt and for their safeguarding to meet future development needs, to ensure an enduring Green Belt boundary well into the next plan period.
6. We note that GB8 (Woking Garden Centre) is similarly not within or adjacent to a landscape feature or within the setting of a designated heritage asset and is presently already developed and in use as a nursery. Furthermore, it is adjacent to the new Hoe Valley Free School and Woking Sports Box (now implemented under PLAN/2015/0703) which has heavily reduced the Green Belt function of this site. We are therefore satisfied that the necessary exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify release of proposal site GB8 from the Green Belt and for its safeguarding to meet future development needs, to ensure an enduring Green Belt boundary well into the next plan period.
7. We consider that, subject to those amendments and Regulation 19 consultation, the draft Site Allocations DPD at Appendix 3 would be sound, comply with the relevant procedural requirements and will be ready for independent examination in accordance with s.20(2) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.