



Dickens Heath Parish Council

Policy & Spatial Planning
Managed Growth & Communities Directorate
Solihull MBC
Council House
Manor Square
Solihull
B91 3QB

Correspondence to:
Helen Marczak, Clerk
1 Wharf House
Waterside
Dickens Heath
Solihull
B90 1UE

Via email to psp@solihull.gov.uk

dickensheathpc@hotmail.com

March 14th 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref. Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation January 2019

Dickens Heath Parish Council set out their response below to this consultation, following the same format as the SMBC questionnaire, while responding only to those issues relating to the Dickens Heath Parish or policies on which a view has been taken.

The Parish Council also wishes to draw attention to the concerns raised by residents. The Parish Council has received numerous objections by email, and at our Annual Parish Meeting on 12th March, to the proposed development on site 4 - these relate to the adverse impact on infrastructure, services and loss of the sports grounds plus the serious existing congestion and parking issues in the village centre and the rail station.

It is understood that a petition containing 1,150 names is being lodged by Councillor Hawkins along those lines.

Introduction

The purposes and scope of the consultation are noted – it is the intention of Dickens Heath Parish Council to respond to those policies and sites which more

directly impact on the Parish itself, adjacent area sites and the character and needs of our area.

Of significant concern to the Parish Council is also the need to address shortcomings in existing highways infrastructure that would need to be built into any planned additional developments together with addressing the severe parking issues in the village central area.

Q1. Local Housing Need – we agree with the council’s view on using the standard methodology to arrive at the Local Housing Need.

Q2. Site Selection Methodology – we agree with the council’s site selection methodology.

Blythe

Q11. Infrastructure Requirements

- * Agree higher population provides potential for improved public transport.
- * Support improved Pedestrian & Cycling connectivity proposals.
- * Highway Improvements at Dicken Heath are a critical factor to address the existing village congestion and new housing sites with highway capacity and junction improvements being essential features.
- * Parking Improvements – we welcome indications of additional off-street parking at Dickens Heath which should be in close consultation with the Parish Council.
- * Note the proposed primary school provision is adequate to meet the scale of development proposed.
- * Note that Health Provision is still in early stages of discussion between SMBC and the Clinical Commissioning Group and will expect to be consulted on these proposals as information becomes available.
- * Sports & Recreation – the Parish Council believe the replacement of existing sports ground facilities should be a priority provision and within site 4 and to an improved standard with access, to better support the health and well-being of the community. It is important they remain within the wider village envelope.
- * Play and Open Space – proposed adequate areas with good access within new development is supported.

* Concept Master Plans – The Parish Council welcomes the reduced house numbers on site 4 and deletion of site 13 replaced by site 26 on the reduced scale.

* Green Belt Enhancements, Community Levy and Affordable Housing issues are noted. It is the Parish Council's intention to prioritise the preparation of a village Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council can give only qualified support to the Blythe Infrastructure requirements as identified due to concerns over the proposed loss of the locally accessible sports grounds which have important links to the village.

Q12 Site 4 Land West of Dickens Heath

In principle the Parish Council welcomes reduced housing numbers but has reservations over site 4 that is strongly opposed by the community.

The smaller site between the canal, Tythe Barn Lane and Akamba would be difficult to oppose for development along the lines proposed for around 100 homes.

The larger site is far more sensitive and any development would need to carefully respect existing woodlands, hedgerows and the existing appearance of openness which characterises the area as indicated in the landscape assessment and in keeping with the original village concept.

Our views would be very much dependent on the details of the final scheme should the site be approved.

However we regard there to be a very practical obligation for the re-provision of permanent sports pitches and facilities for Highgate United FC, Leaffield FC and Old Yardleians Rugby Football Club to be made within site 4 for which we believe there is adequate land available.

We see no planning benefit in relocating these clubs onto more remote countryside at some undisclosed Green Belt location invariably serviced by a network of country lanes – such a proposal is harmful by definition to the purposes of the Green Belt and the possible viability of the clubs.

Site 4 has the benefit of good access, public transport links and parking facilities to much better safeguard the long term future of the clubs with improved community facilities while retaining a pleasant aspect in the approach to the village.

Q13 Site 11 The Green – this is outside the parish but impacts on village access but given that planning consents for housing supersedes the previous B1 Offices consent recently granted and is by definition now an allocated site.

Q14 Site 12 Land South of Dog Kennel Lane – this is outside the parish but impacts on our key access route and we see significant requirements to attenuate traffic issues, subject to which we see no sound planning objections given the policy criteria not to include site 12 as an allocated site.

Q15 Site 26 is in parish – the substitution of the much smaller site 26 at 300 homes to replace the withdrawn site 13 for 600 homes is a very significant improvement. It reduces our concern over the access onto the heavily congested Tanworth Lane Traffic Islands out of the village by decanting onto a separate road network at Bills Lane. It is also in close pedestrian access to Shirley Rail Station and Bus network and links to adjacent South Shirley estates.

The allocation change is supported with the reservation of a preferred lower housing number provision of 250 homes.

Q34 Washed Over Green Belt Settlements – we accept the logic of removing washed over green belt status on these settlements particularly so on the Whitlock's End site back through to the Park & Ride with indications that local residents would support this.

Q38 Amber Sites – we would support the further review of all the Amber Sites being included in principle – very positive on ref A3 Whitlock's End, some reservations at Cheswick Green where Flood risks would need careful assessment.

Affordable Housing Policy – we oppose change to the unit basis of calculation and consider the existing unit basis at 40% for the affordable element is already considered exceptionally high.

We support the retention of the unit housing measurement as a clearly understood basis given the system is already required to meet housing size, mix and accommodation standards set down by the local authority.

Yours Faithfully

Helen Marczak
Parish Clerk and RFO