



## Dickens Heath Parish Council

For the attention of:  
Kelly Akins – Independent Programme Officer

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October 14<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear Kelly

### **Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan – October 2020 Examination in Public**

The following supplementary statement, presented by Chair Trevor Eames, was approved by Dickens Heath Parish Council on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021:

#### **Supplementary Statement on Matter 6e Site BL1 by Dickens Heath Parish Council.**

In respect of Solihull Council's Draft Proposals for additional housing sites in the Dickens Heath Parish, the Parish Council has considered the proposals very carefully after adopting a responsible approach and liaising closely with Solihull Planning Officers throughout the Local Plan Review Process.

The Parish Council understands fully the needs and obligations involved in meeting the Local Plan housing obligations within the Solihull Metropolitan Borough.

Over the Plan Review Period the Parish Council have consistently made it known that within the parish there has been and remains widespread community concern and objection over the loss of the sports ground in site BL1.

While during the review process there have been significant reductions in housing numbers, and the relocation of a site to BL3 has been made, the Parish Council cannot overstate the very considerable concern that still persists over the loss of the long established Tythe Barn Lane sports grounds in site BL1.

Should the proposals for the development of the sports grounds be confirmed, the issue for the Parish Council will be one of mitigation by retaining the sports ground facilities within the parish area for the reasons set out below.

In this respect the Parish Council has been working with the Landowner's support to seek a plan modification to mitigate the loss of Sports Grounds by compensatory measures within the immediate area and have set this out in the concept plan attached as appendix 1 after consultation with the Land Owner (David Horne) and related Developer interests.

Dickens Heath Parish Council is now seeking the Inspector's support to re-designate an area of land - shown to the North of Tythe Barn Lane, that incorporates existing sports grounds fronting the Whitlock's End Station on Tilehouse Lane - to a new Sports Ground Multi-User Complex with modern facilities that would relocate the existing clubs and greatly enhance their present sub-standard facilities.

All the land involved is in a common ownership and the project is supported by the landowner, that would lead to an enhanced modern shared Sports Hub fully funded out of the development process.

This would retain the sportsground facilities within very clearly determined boundaries and importantly with a high level of connectivity.

The location also enjoys good transport and communications links and is within the Parish curtilage on land that is not designated to Green Belt or would be accessible for public use within the proposed Local Plan.

The proposal would also provide an environmental benefit in line with Solihull Council's current policy, in addition to removing the uncertainty for the future of the sports clubs involved in site BL1.

The proposal also prevents the provision, by a further incursion to an undetermined location, of new Sports Grounds in a Green Belt/Countryside location that is unrelated to its existing community base.

It is also most unlikely for such a site to be as accessible as this proposal and would invariably lead to extended additional journeys mainly by private car which is contrary to current environmental policy.

In addition the proposed location will not impact on the Draft Local Plan BL1 site housing proposals and goes a long way to accommodating a fit for purpose sporting and recreational sports hub in the immediately adjacent location.

Dickens Heath Parish badly lacks the level of community/recreational facilities that should rightly have followed the extensive new housing development in the original creation of the Dickens Heath Village settlement.

The proposal provides the opportunity for an extended community use, with access to convenient healthy recreational facilities, while also providing the

opportunity to enhance the link between the rail station transport hub, the BL1 new developments and Dickens Heath Village facilities while encouraging greater use of the extended Rail Station Bus Interchange and its additional Parking facilities with its direct rail links into the greater Birmingham Conurbation and beyond.

### **Horse Rescue Charity Appendix 2**

The scheme would also accommodate the established Voluntary Horse Rescue Charity Field that is of some local importance with its present very substandard facilities that would be relocated within the overall scheme to a suitable site by the Landowner

### **Parish Council Conclusions**

It is the Parish Council's conclusion that this concept plan provides an efficient use of land while enhancing the access to the village and complements links with the Rail Station.

The combined developments and sports hub would then form a natural and much improved curtilage to the village and help to cement its wider identity.

There would also be incorporated extensive greening and tree planting measures, together with public access, in addition to facilitating healthy community recreation use as being positive gains in respect of climate change and attenuation measures that mitigates the loss of the existing sports grounds and their visual amenity.

The conclusion is that this modification addresses shortcomings in the draft proposals on replacement of existing facilities that merits serious consideration as a positive alternative to the submitted BL1 draft scheme.

It is considered a practical change to the draft proposals, that do not provide a significant positive benefit for the existing or new community - the draft plan largely retains existing substandard football club facilities with very unsuitable community access.

Dickens Heath is a dynamic community that is both forward looking in outlook and keen to work with the planning authority during the ongoing development through the Local Plan period.

Dickens Heath Parish Council sees its role as assisting and being closely involved with the delivery of a well-rounded, comprehensive development in a way that better accommodates the needs of the existing and an extended village community.

We want to see a plan that provides the Dickens Heath community with 21st Century infrastructure and facilities, that addresses present shortcomings, together with transport & communications links and services that have been carefully planned in.

## **Addendum**

### **Dickens Heath Parish Council Views on the Proposals for a New Settlement at Fulford Green in Tidbury Green Parish by Summix Ltd.**

Dickens Heath Parish Council has received indicative details of the proposals by Summix Ltd for an 1800 new village housing settlement at Fulford Green adjacent to the Earlswood Rail Station.

This implies that the council would have a shortfall in its Local Plan Housing Provision with which the Dickens Heath Parish Council would strongly disagree and are supportive of the numbers within the Draft Solihull Plan.

Housing Numbers finally are a matter for the Inspectors to test on evidence in the current hearings.

The view of Dickens Heath Parish Council is in opposition to these proposals and members have attended a number of public meetings with local residents groups together with other Parish Councillors from adjacent Parishes.

Dickens Heath Parish Council views this development proposal as an inappropriate further erosion of Greenbelt in an area with inadequate highway, transport links and infrastructure to accommodate such a large scale new settlement.

The proposal is seen to have a serious adverse impact on the Dickens Heath Parish highway and infrastructure network of secondary lanes that are already experiencing significant levels of congestion.

Attention is also drawn to existing experience of flooding within the Dickens Heath village, causing extensive damage to residential properties and raising concerns that further local intensive development of this nature would adversely impact on the village.

Attention is also drawn to the fact that the Blythe Ward Area is already the subject of a disproportionate level of new housing concentration, approaching some 40% of the proposed new housing allocation within the Draft Local Plan.

The Parish Council view is that in the event that additional housing was to be required then alternative locations should be considered elsewhere in Solihull.

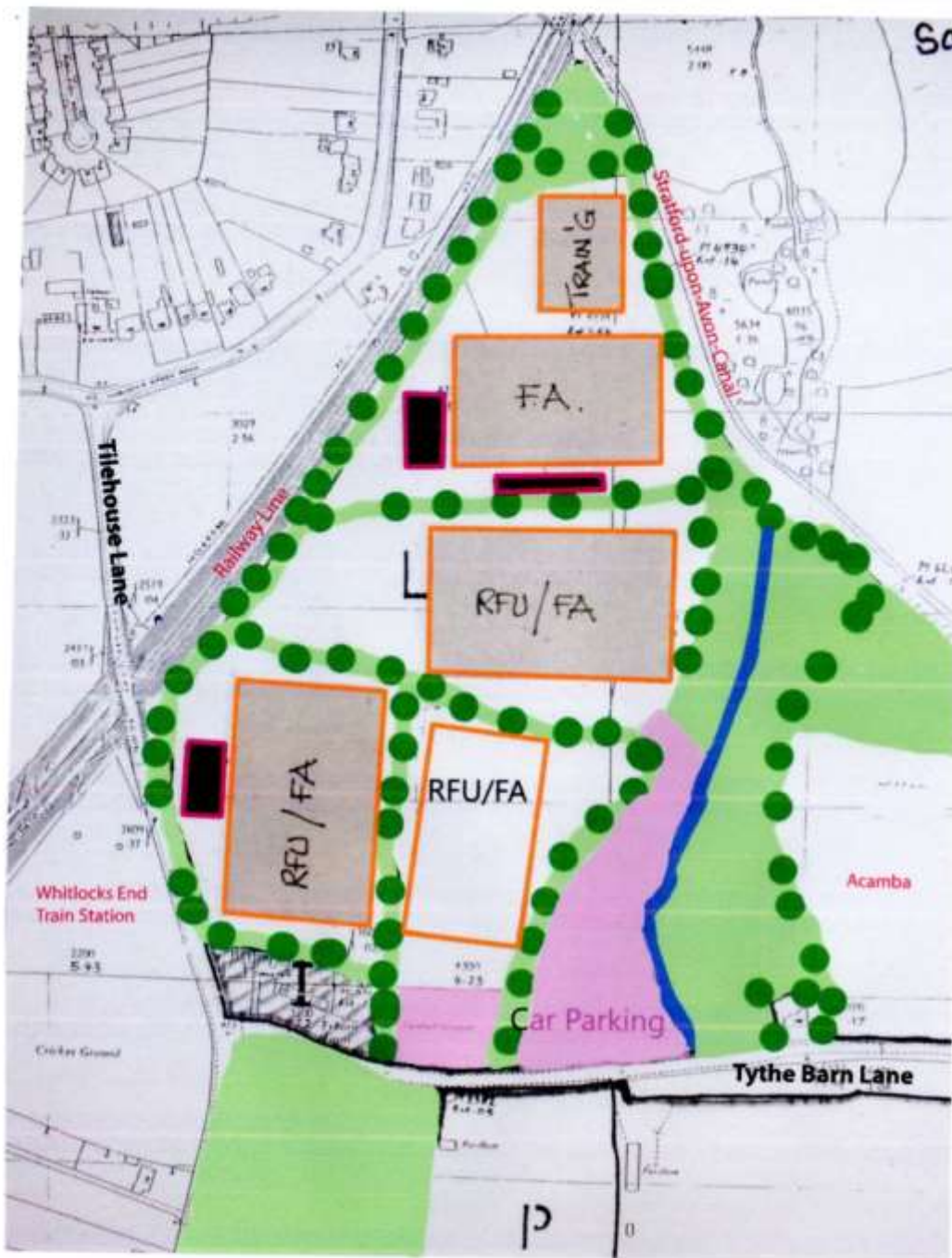
While the Parish Council are uncertain of how this submission will be addressed within the present examination, the Parish Council believes it important that its views are brought to the Inspectors' attention.

Yours Sincerely



Helen Marczak  
Parish Clerk and RFO

# Appendix 1 SITE BL1 Concept Sports Ground & Amenity Land Site



-  Green space and landscape (including existing Local Wildlife Sites)
-  Existing watercourse
-  Indicative car parking and associated sports facilities
-  Indicative clubhouse and changing facilities
-  Proposed sports pitches - comprising:
  - 4 x Full-size Football/Rugby Pitches + 1 x Junior Pitch.
  - Full-size pitches double to provide 2 x Junior pitches making 9 pitches in total.
  - 2 x pitches to be Desso GrassMaster style all-weather hybrid playing surfaces.

Dickens Heath Parish Council  
**Alternative Concept Sports Pitch and Facilities Scheme**  
**on part site BL1 West of Dickens Heath**

**Appendix 2 Horse Rescue Charity Field Tythe Barne Lane**

