

Historic England response to the Draft Submission North Warwickshire Local Plan, 31 January 2018

Local Plan reference and relevant extract	Historic England comment on the relevant issue of Soundness	Recommendation/ suggestion / advice to support the soundness of the Plan
	<p>Historic England considers that the Draft Submission of the Plan in its current form does not demonstrate that it is been sufficiently positively prepared in relation to the historic environment. We consider that it has not been founded on a robust and credible evidence base, is unjustified in parts, is inconsistent with national policy and would as a consequence be ineffective in the delivery of sustainable development. As consequence we consider the Plan to be unsound.</p>	<p>Historic England would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our concerns with the local authority to support a positive resolution and ensure a robust Plan which accords with the relevant tests of soundness in the NPPF. We believe the issues of concern are not unsurmountable.</p>
<p>H2 Land to north west Atherstone off Whittington Lane, Atherstone</p>	<p>Historic England welcome the preparation of the Historic Environment Assessment (LUC 2017) used to inform the Plan. However, we would encourage NWBC to carefully consider whether the limited depth and clarity of this evidence is proportionate to provide a reasonable level of assurance that the scale of development proposed is deliverable without causing considerable harm to the significance of various designated and undesignated heritage assets, thereby demonstrating that the Plan accords with national policy and the delivery of sustainable development.</p> <p>The Historic Environment Assessment (LUC 2017) indicates that development would have a “significant negative effective” (highest level of concern - red) on designated heritage and non-designated heritage assets including the setting of the Coventry</p>	<p>Historic England would respectfully request consideration of the updating of the SA to reflect the findings of the Historic Environment Assessment (LUC December 2017).</p> <p>Historic England would suggest that NWBC considers whether the provision of a greater level of information, illustration and application of national policy is required to demonstrate an understanding of the sensitivity of the historic landscape and significance of affected heritage assets (see NPPF</p>

	<p>Canal, its listed locks, bridge, Whittington Farmstead, and considerable below ground archaeology. However this does not appear to be reflected in the Sustainability Appraisal and therefore may result in an incorrect assessment of the relative impact/sustainability.</p> <p>To address statutory and national policy matters (see below), NWBC will need to consider whether it needs to demonstrate more clearly, and at this plan making stage, how such a major development and infrastructure could take place in an appropriate location and form, as it may well affect fundamental planning matters such as the potential location and quantum of development.</p> <p>Historic England notes that Policy H2 includes a series of conditions (key design principles) to inform a future concept /master plan and overcome potential harm. However it is not clear how NWBC has come to its conclusions and how it considers the level of development anticipated can safeguard the significance of the heritage assets and their settings due to the limited evidence provided. The application of Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Edition II December 2017) would help in this respect as it provides a robust methodology to establish and explain how the setting of heritage assets can be determined to establish the relative impact on significance and potential mitigation.</p> <p>Planning Policy Guidance (PGG) is clear that evidence needs to inform what is in the plan and shape its development rather than being collected retrospectively. Therefore the implications for</p>	<p>paragraph 158, 169 and 170, and definition of significance in the NPPF Glossary); how that significance would be affected; the extent to which any harm could be avoided/reduced to a minimal extent mindful of the potential alternative sites which may exist.</p> <p>Can NWBC demonstrate that it has paid sufficient regard to the need to conserve the historic environment?</p>
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	<p>the setting of heritage assets should not be overlooked or 'parked' to a later application stage. Where this may be appropriate in some situations, the PPG is clear that where sites are proposed to be allocated in a development plan, sufficient detail should be given to provide clarity about the nature and scale of development (addressing the 'what, where, when and how' questions).</p> <p>We refer to the following statutory and policy tests.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs (though, for example the allocation of sites for development), unless specific NPPF policy relating to e.g. designated heritage assets, indicate development should be restricted (NPPF Paragraph 14).2. Great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets (NPPF Paragraph 132);3. Special regard must be given to desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building and special attention must be given to desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in the exercise of planning functions (S66 & S72, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990);4. Development will be expected to avoid or minimise conflict between any heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (NPPF Paragraph 129);	
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	<p>5. Harm (significant adverse impacts) should be avoided. Only where this is not possible should mitigation be considered (NPPF Paragraph 152). Any harm and mitigation proposals need to be fully justified and evidenced to ensure they will be successful in reducing harm.</p> <p>Evidence as to whether the historic environment has been appropriately considered will help determine whether the Plan has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.</p>	
H7 Land to the east of Polesworth and Dordon	<p>Historic England's comments in relation to Policy H2 similarly apply in this case. Whilst there is likely to be scope to positively respond to the heritage assets affected, as the extent of the setting of Dordon Hall and the Obelisk has not been established in the Historic Environment Assessment (LUC 2017), it is difficult to appreciate whether harm could be satisfactorily addressed.</p>	As above re H2
H5 Land at Blythways, Coleshill	<p>The site is part within the Conservation Area and setting of the Grade 1 Listed St Peters Church. As with Policy H2 and H7 the local authority will need to be assured that it is clear how the site contributes to the significance of the affected heritage assets and therefore how development of 40 new homes could/should respond to ensure compatibility.</p> <p>We note that there appears to be an ancillary building to the former historic smithy formerly on the site which may merit further investigation and protection.</p>	<p>As above re H2</p> <p>In addition the inclusion of further key design principles would be justified to ensure a high quality and responsive development is secured.</p>

<p>H10 former Polesworth Learning Centre site, High St, Polesworth</p>	<p>Historic England accepts the potential development within this brownfield site. However any proposal on such a sensitive and historic site would usually demand a much greater level of evidence to inform the capacity and form of any future development. In this respect it is unclear how the capacity of 14 new homes has been determined.</p>	<p>As above re H2.</p> <p>The inclusion of further key design principles would be justified to ensure a high quality and responsive development is secured.</p> <p>Due to the considerable sensitivity and significance of this site, Historic England would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further and support a robust and sound allocation.</p>
<p>H15 Land at Church Farm, Baddesley</p>	<p>Evidence gathered by the local authority has consistently indicated the significance of this farmstead (Church Farm). The reasonable condition and cohesive arrangement of buildings would enable an appropriate residential conversion. There is a clear historic association between the Church (St Nicholas Grade II listed), Church House (Grade II listed) and Church Farm. Historic England consider that there is a strong case to ensure that, as part of the Plan's positive heritage strategy (NPPF Paragraph 126) that Policy H15 is explicit in requiring the retention and conversion of Church Farm and its collection of agricultural and domestic buildings. There appears to be no justification not to retain these heritage assets.</p> <p>We refer to our comments in relation to Policy H2 that equally apply in this case.</p>	<p>As above re Policy H2.</p> <p>The inclusion of further key design principles would be justified to ensure a high quality and responsive development is secured.</p> <p>Due to the considerable sensitivity and significance of this site, Historic England would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further and support a robust and sound allocation.</p>

	<p>The proposed allocation site includes not only the aforementioned Church Farm buildings but also ponds that appear on historic maps of the village and an extensive pastoral setting to the Church. Due to the limitation of the Historic Environment Assessment (LUC 2017) it remains unclear how a figure of 47 new homes has been determined and how this level of development could be located on this site and ensure the significance of the Church, Church House and Church Farm would be conserved in accordance with legislation and national policy.</p> <p>Similar to the above sites at Polesworth and Blythways in particular, a thorough understanding of the historic significance of the site and its surroundings is essential at this stage to inform the capacity and key design principles.</p>	
H19 Hartshill	<p>Historic England's comments in relation to Policy H2 similarly apply in this case. Whilst there is likely to be scope for such a large development to positively respond to the setting of Holy Trinity Church, as the extent of its setting has not been established in the Historic Environment Assessment (LUC 2017), it is difficult to appreciate if and how this may occur with any degree of confidence. This suggests the evidence gathered is insufficient.</p>	As above re H2
H24 Manor Farm, Newton Regis	<p>Historic England previously raised the following concerns in relation to this proposed allocation, they still apply. The comments in relation to policy H2 above also apply.</p>	<p>As above re Policy H2.</p> <p>To inform the principle, and without prejudice the appropriate design</p>

	<p>“Similar to the design philosophy advocated in respect of the affected farmsteads at Baddesley Ensor, Historic England would support a heritage led regeneration that conserved both designated and non-designated heritage assets, employing their characteristics to inform and inspire new complimentary development that both preserved and enhanced the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p> <p>Historic farmsteads and their buildings make a fundamental contribution to the character of the Borough, and illustrate the long history of farming. The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project and guidance for the conversion of traditional farm buildings may provide useful references to include in the Plan.</p> <p>The site is within the Conservation Area and adjacent to Listed Buildings, therefore S66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 needs to be satisfied; and great weight applied to the conservation of affected heritage assets.</p> <p>We remain concerned that the local authority is unable to demonstrate that sufficient evidence has been gathered and applied to indicate that the significance of the affected heritage assets and their settings has been appreciated and can be protected and enhanced; and without prejudice, the Plan should indicate in a greater level of detail the appropriate design response consistent with NPPF paragraph 129 and PPG Paragraph: 010 ID: 12-010-20140306010 “Where sites are proposed for allocation, sufficient detail should be given to</p>	<p>response, Historic England would recommend that statutory provisions and national policy are addressed; that appropriate evidence is gathered and applied; and more explicit policy requirements are included in the Plan.</p> <p>Due to the considerable sensitivity and significance of this site, Historic England would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further to support a robust and sound allocation.</p>
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	<p>provide clarity to developers, local communities and other interests about the nature and scale of development (addressing the 'what, where, when and how' questions)."</p> <p>Due to the lack of evidence there appears to be a leap of a faith in the suggestion that the site can accommodate 21 new homes whilst satisfying statutory and national policy tests, and the desire for a high quality design that positively responds to the historic character and appearance of the site and its surroundings.</p> <p>There appears to be a number of historic farm buildings within the site that should be retained including those either side of a narrow access to the site due to their positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting to Manor Farmhouse (Grade II listed). Is the highways authority comfortable with such an arrangement?</p>	
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