

Birmingham Development Plan Public Examination Matter G

Policy GA8 Eastern Triangle – Former Yardley Sewage Works

Introduction

This site forms part of the former Yardley Sewage Works which was operational from approximately 1900 to the 1970s. Following decommissioning, only limited remediation took place and parts of the site were used for the landfill of demolition and construction waste. The site now comprises a generally featureless area to the south of the River Cole. Although included within the Green Belt as part of the Cole Valley Green Wedge and linear open space, the site has restricted access and limited environmental, recreational or nature conservation value. Principal sporting and recreational sites are located elsewhere in the Cole Valley corridor and are more accessible to local communities.

Draft Core Strategy 2010

Draft policy E11 of the December 2010 Consultation Draft proposed that the site be released from the Green Belt and developed for housing. It also noted that an investigation of ground conditions and potential contamination would be required to determine the development potential of the area.

Implications for the Green Belt

The development of this part of the former Yardley Sewage works site will not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- The site plays a limited role in restricting the urban sprawl of large built up areas due to its location within the Cole Valley which is a Green Belt corridor which penetrates deep into the existing urban area.
- The site would not result in the merging of neighbouring towns into one another. The site does separate two parts of the same city. However this separation would still be achieved without the site.
- The impact of encouragement into the countryside is limited due to the brownfield nature of the site. The site also has clearly defined boundaries which will provide a permanent Green Belt boundary and limits the risk of further encroachment into the countryside which forms part of the Cole Valley.'
- The development of the site would not affect the setting or special character of an historic town.
- The site is part of a former sewage works and as such is a brownfield site within the Green Belt which has been subject to only limited remediation. The development of the site would incorporate the recycling of a contaminated site and would contribute to the continued transformation and regeneration of the wider Eastern Triangle area.

The provision of a sufficient quality and quantity of housing to meet the City's growing population is a central part of the strategy of the BDP and there is a demand for new housing to meet local needs within East Birmingham. Redevelopment in the wider area has delivered a high degree of social and affordable housing to meet immediate re-housing requirements in this area. The former sewage works provides a much larger development opportunity that can deliver a broader range of accommodation that will further improve the attractiveness of the housing offer and regeneration potential of the area (in terms of the diversification and widening of choice within the local housing stock). Development would also assist in promoting urban regeneration by providing housing in a sustainable location that would have beneficial links with surrounding development, including enhanced and improved centres at the Meadway and Shard End Crescent, and existing smaller centres such as Glebe Farm.

Development would secure opportunities for the improvement of access to the heart of the Cole Valley for surrounding communities; opportunities to improve facilities within the wider area as part of the delivery of new residential development; and the retention and further enhancement of the most attractive aspects of the Valley.

The site is located in a sustainable location accessible by public transport. Lea Hall train station is three quarters of a mile to the south and it is proposed that the Metro will be extended through East Birmingham connecting the City Centre and proposed HS2 station to the Airport and NEC area.

Although included within the Green Belt as part of the Cole Valley Green Wedge and linear open space, the site currently has restricted access and limited environmental, recreational or nature conservation value. Its development for housing will promote continued regeneration in East Birmingham. For these reasons the Council considers that there are exceptional circumstances justifying the removal of the site from the Green Belt.

Deliverability

The River Cole road bridge at Cole Hall Lane has already been upgraded with funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in order to facilitate regeneration opportunities in this area and to encourage better public transport services.

An investigation of ground conditions and potential contamination has concluded that the site has the potential to be developed for residential use.

Funding has been secured through the City Deal Asset Accelerator (a joint initiative with the HCA) and consultants have been appointed to assist in progressing the site for residential development. This will include the detailed strategy for the remediation of the site and the preparation of a master plan for its development.

Summary

Throughout the consultation process on the Birmingham Development Plan there have been very few objections to the proposed release of the former Yardley Sewage Works site from the Green Belt and none on the Pre-Submission Version.

The limited capacity of the urban area to meet the needs of the City's growing population and the regeneration benefits that will be secured for the local area represent the exceptional

circumstances that justify the release of land from the Green Belt for housing at the former Yardley Sewage Works site.

Proposed Additional Modification

Add the following to the end of para 5.93

The limited value of the Yardley Sewage Works site in terms of the role and function of the Green Belt, the shortage of land for housing in the City, together with the local regeneration benefits and the potential for significant enhancements to the Cole Valley represent exceptional circumstances which justify the release of the site from the Green Belt.