

## 2 Site Description and Proposed Development

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This ES accompanies the submission of an outline planning application for land between Tamworth Road and Bennetts Road South, Keresley. The planning application which this ES supports seeks the following:

*“Outline application for the erection of up to 800 dwellings, with associated Local Centre comprising Convenience Store (Class A1) Retail/Commercial Units (Class A1, A2, A3, A5 and/or D1); a Primary School; Public Open Space (including equipped play area); allotments; nature conservation area; and landscaping; with all matters reserved except for means of vehicular access to the site from Tamworth Road and Bennetts Road South”.*

- 2.1.2 A site context plan is provided at **Figure 1.1** at the end of this chapter.
- 2.1.3 This Chapter describes the context and location of the site and then gives consideration to alternative sites and alternative uses, which in turn provides reasoning for choosing the land at Keresley for the proposed development. The Chapter then goes on to set out a description of a development proposal for the outline planning application and provides a parameters assessment plan against which the environmental impact assessments are tested against. The site is contained between the Tamworth Road (B4098) to the west, Sandpits Lane to the south, Bennetts Road South forms the eastern boundary and the northern boundary is formed by the Hall brook. It has an area of 42.2 Ha. All of the land is open and in use for varying agricultural purposes and for the keeping of horses. It contains various trees, hedgerows and other landscape features.
- 2.1.4 Immediately to the south of the site on the opposite side of Sandpits Lane is the Cardinal Newman School and associated areas of playing fields. Sandpits Lane also contains the John Reay Golf Centre which consists primarily of a golf driving range and assorted facilities.
- 2.1.5 Adjacent to the site on Bennetts Road South is a ribbon development of housing constructed during the inter-war period. The northern portion of Bennetts Road South is predominantly open and forms part of the application site. Immediately to the north of the site is Manor Farm and its associated buildings. Bennetts Road South rises from Manor Farm in a southerly direction towards Sandpits Lane. A public footpath following the line of the Hall brook runs from Bennetts Road South immediately adjacent to Manor Farm in a west/east direction. This forms the northern boundary of the site. A further footpath runs to the south of Keresley Manor and this forms the northern boundary of the application site. Keresley Manor is set back from Tamworth Road and is located within an area of woodland. The western side of Tamworth Road, opposite the site, contains linear residential development comprising of detached houses. Further to the south the land becomes more open and this includes Coundon Hall Park, a very large area of public open space including substantial playing fields. Tamworth Road also contains the Royal Court Hotel which represents a significant feature in the surrounding area.
- 2.1.6 The wider area surrounding the site is characterised as part of the Coventry Urban Fringe. Notable features include various areas of residential development including Keresley Newland to the north, areas of Holbrook to the southeast and in particular Prologis Industrial Park to the northeast. Prologis is urbanising feature being in a prominent location and having bold colours used in the design of buildings.
- 2.1.7 Other notable features within the site include the electricity line on substantial pylons which cross the site in a southeast/northwest direction. The Hall brook is another feature and this flows northwest/southeast. The brook corridor contains numerous trees and other vegetation.
- 2.1.8 The site is gently undulating. The highest point is located in the vicinity of Keresley Manor with levels generally dropping towards the east. The land rises towards the southern portion of Bennetts Road South.
- 2.1.9 Parts of the eastern part of the site are in use for equestrian purposes. Fields are often sub-divided to provide smaller areas of grazing for horses. The remainder of the site is largely in use for agricultural purposes in a mix of arable and pasture fields.

- 2.1.10 The site also contains three existing ponds. The first is located to the north of the Royal Court Hotel site close to Tamworth Road. Two of the ponds are located centrally within the site. These ponds would be incorporated within open spaces within the development and will be maintained as wetland areas.

### 2.2 Alternative Sites

- 2.2.1 In the applicant's scoping request to Coventry City Council it was suggested that alternative sites considered by the Planning Inspector undertaking the examination into the first Coventry Core Strategy (2009) be used as the basis for alternative site analysis within the EIA process. In this regard the Inspector considered the following sites which were located within the Coventry Green Belt;

Land at Cromwell Lane

Land at Lentons Lane

Land at Hawkesbury/Sutton Stop

Land at Gibbet Hill

Land at Duggins Lane

#### Land at Cromwell Lane

- 2.2.2 This site, located within the Green Belt, is west of Cromwell Lane and south of the railway line and Tile Hill Station. It is located on the western edge of the City and was identified in the first Core Strategy 2009 as a reserved site for new housing with a capacity of about 390 units.

- 2.2.3 Notwithstanding support given to the site at the time by the City Council as demonstrated by its identification as a reserved housing site, the Inspector concluded that development of the site would amount to urban sprawl and encroachment into the open countryside and the reduction of the Meriden Gap. The Inspector concluded that this land properly fulfils the purposes of Green Belt Designation. The Inspector also concluded that there were not any firm features on the ground along which to establish a new clear boundary to the Green Belt and consequently there was a risk that some form of precedent might be set for development to extend further westwards, thereby exacerbating the harm to the Meriden Gap in particular and the Green Belt objectives as a whole.

- 2.2.4 In view of the clear conclusions of the Inspector that the development of the Cromwell Lane site would be unacceptable in Green Belt terms, the site is not a reasonable alternative to the Keresley proposal. Furthermore the site would only have the capacity of around half the dwellings proposed now at Keresley and consequently the site would not provide a significant contribution towards meeting the strategic housing requirement.

#### Land at Lentons Lane

- 2.2.5 This site was originally included as an allocation of greenfield land, south of Lentons Lane and north of the M6, for 160 units of new housing. However it became clear to the Council that the extent of previous shallow mining works on the site was such that the necessary remediation works would render new housing development economically unviable for the foreseeable future. The Inspector concurred with this position and endorsed the removal of this site as an allocation.

- 2.2.6 As a consequence of the Inspector removing the site as a housing allocation due to its non-viability, and the fact that it is substantially smaller than the site at Keresley and so cannot fulfil its role in meeting strategic housing needs, this does not represent a reasonable alternative to the proposed development.

#### Land at Hawkesbury/Sutton Stop

- 2.2.7 This site was identified as a reserved site and suitable for about 55 dwellings. Consequently in terms of its size it is not capable of accommodating the Keresley proposal or making a significant contribution towards meeting the strategic housing requirements within Coventry. Whilst the Inspector endorsed its allocation as a site for housing in the first Core Strategy, due to its scale it is unsuitable to meet the strategic housing requirement of the City which can be accommodated and justified at Keresley.

Land at Gibbet Hill

- 2.2.8 The Inspector concluded that the site was suitable for housing in principle and endorsed its removal from the Green Belt. However in view of its scale it is not able to deliver the amount of new housing necessary to make any significant contribution towards meeting housing needs. This contrasts with what can be achieved in Keresley.

Land at Duggins Lane

- 2.2.9 This site which is west of Station Road and north of the railway adjacent to Tile Hill Station was reserved for about 50 new dwellings in the first Core Strategy. The Inspector endorsed the allocation as a housing site. However due to its scale (50 dwellings) it is not capable of accommodating the Keresley proposal nor would it contribute significantly to meeting the City's strategic housing requirements which justify the release of Green Belt land.

Land north of Eastern Green

- 2.2.10 This site was one of two sites (with Keresley) identified as potentially suitable for new housing in the Coventry Green Belt Review. It was capable of delivering about 1500 new homes on land to the north of the ribbon of housing along Lower Eastern Green Lane, east of Pickford Green Lane and west of the Allesley Green estate. The Inspector concluded that on a number of issues the site was suitable for a major new residential-led development.
- 2.2.11 However the Inspector noted that the potential development of the site, including comparison to Keresley, was debated at the 2009 EiP into the West Midlands RSS Phase II Review. The RSS Phase II Panel Report recorded that it would be contrary to the long established strategy of maintaining the separation of Birmingham/Solihull and Coventry to contemplate the release of development land that is clearly within the Meriden Gap. The Meriden Gap has no formal definition on a plan, however the Inspector undertook a detailed analysis of the site in terms of its potential to impact on the Meriden Gap. He noted that whilst development at Eastern Green would not reduce the specific width of the remaining open land between settlements, new building on this scale must by definition significantly reduce its physical extent. He also concluded that the actual detrimental effect on the gap would be reinforced by the clear public perception of a significant reduction in spacing between built-up areas, particularly arising from the visual intrusion of the new road splitting the otherwise undeveloped land south of the A45 and north of the Slipperside Valley. The Inspector also had concerns that the proposal would not provide a new logical, firm and a defensible boundary to the Green Belt. The Inspector considered it more likely that the presence of the new road associated with the development would almost inevitably lead to further pressure for more land south of the A45 to be released.
- 2.2.12 The Inspector was satisfied that the Eastern Green site contributes strongly to Green Belt objectives in that it helps to prevent urban sprawl, safeguards the countryside from encroachment, helps to preserve the setting and character of the Meriden Gap as well as encouraging the recycling of previously developed land. The Inspector concluded that there were clearly preferable sites in and around the City and that the Council's judgement that the land should not be reserved for development but retained in the Green Belt was endorsed. In view of the harm to the Green Belt which would accrue as a consequence of major housing development at Eastern Green, even if the proposed development was reduced from the 1500 dwellings identified in the Core Strategy to something closer to that proposed at Keresley (800 dwellings), there is still evidence that the concerns raised by the Inspector relative to harm to the Green Belt would remain.

**2.3 Alternative Uses of the Site**

- 2.3.1 As part of the environmental assessment process it is necessary to consider alternative uses of the application site. The alternative uses which have been considered relate to industrial development. Other potential uses such as retail or leisure facilities would be in immediate conflict with a raft of planning policies which direct such forms of development to other locations.
- 2.3.2 The surrounding area is already well catered for in terms of industrial development. The Prologis Distribution Park provides in the region of more than 1.5m sq ft of warehouse/industrial development. This is located in immediate proximity to the application site. Prologis Park is served by its own specific infrastructure which provides a direct link from the site to the A444, and from there immediately on to

the motorway network to the north of Coventry. No other vehicular access, other than restricted bus only routes, can be gained to Prologis.

- 2.3.3 The infrastructure surrounding the application site would require significant upgrades to be able to accommodate the large vehicles which are an immediate consequence of industrial development such as that seen at Prologis. This would have inevitable negative consequences for those residents who live in the vicinity of the application site.
- 2.3.4 Upgrades to provide for the necessary road infrastructure to serve a development of 800 dwellings will not be commensurate with the infrastructure requirements of a substantial industrial park.
- 2.3.5 In addition the site is undulating in terms of its topography. Whilst residential development which has clearly smaller footprints of new buildings in comparison to industrial developments, can be accommodated within undulating landscapes without any undue difficulties; providing the substantial single floor plates to support industrial development normally requires large scale earthworks. In view of the topography of the site this would clearly work against any industrial development as the required substantial earthworks would have a much more detrimental impact on the rural characteristics of the wider area.
- 2.3.6 Finally the proposed development at Keresley is meeting emerging strategic housing requirements. There is no such similar requirement to meet industrial/employment requirements which could necessitate development of Green Belt land in the short term. There are likely to be other much more suitable locations adjacent to major highway infrastructure which should be preferable for new industrial development. In view of the above the alternative use of the site for industrial purposes is not considered tenable.
- 2.3.7 In view of the above it is not considered that the site is suitable for industrial purposes.

### 2.4 The Proposed Development

- 2.4.1 This ES accompanies the submission of an outline planning application on land South of Keresley, Coventry. For the purposes of the EIA and this ES, details of the proposed development are provided in the following section, with further information contained in a Design and Access Statement and other supporting reports.
- 2.4.2 The application is for outline planning permission. The nature of the outline application means that the detailed design of the proposed development has yet to be fixed. This will be subject to further design stages and in due course reserved matters planning applications.
- 2.4.3 In accordance with EIA Case Law the parameters of the proposed development, have been identified to enable a robust assessment of the proposal to be completed at this stage. Any future reserved matters applications must be in accordance with the parameters tested in the EIA process or there may be requirement for a further assessment. The scheme parameters are set out in **Figures 1.2 – 1.5**. These parameters have also been incorporated into the Illustrative Masterplan which identifies in more detail the various component elements and contained in **Figure 1.6**.
- 2.4.4 The proposed development will comprise of the following:
- Up to 800 residential dwellings with a mix of size, tenures and types
  - Provision of a local centre to include small convenience store and potentially crèche, cafe and community meeting room
  - Primary school
  - Public open space and green infrastructure including children's equipped play area, nature conservation areas, informal and incidental open space, retained and new landscaping, allotments and orchards
  - Vehicular access to Tamworth Road and Bennetts Road South.
  - Associated infrastructure including surface water attenuation facilities, foul drainage and retained ponds.

- Network of pedestrian and cycle paths including greenway
- Development of village square plus other key note open spaces within the development

2.4.5 The Parameters Assessment Plan at **Figures 1.2 – 1.5** shows the layout, land uses, site access, maximum building heights, proposed urban space and indicative landscaping for the site. This plan has been assessed against base line conditions within each environmental discipline.

## **2.5 Residential**

2.5.1 The proposed development will provide residential units with a range of dwelling types and tenures of various sizes. However in view of the location of the site on the edge of Coventry, there is a desire to accommodate aspirational dwellings of large 3 and 4 bedroom homes. The precise mix of the housing will be determined at the detailed design stage but the general mix of size and tenure will be along the lines of 1/3 affordable rent, 1/3 social rent and 1/3 intermediate housing.

2.5.2 Lifetime home requirements will be met where practicable. In addition new development will accord with the relevant Code for Sustainable Homes in force at the time.

2.5.3 The homes will vary in height with the majority being between 2 and 3 storey. Taller buildings are likely to be located in specific locations to ensure variety and aid legibility, for example in and around the local centre or close to the major formal open spaces (the Greens).

2.5.4 The proposed maximum building heights for different areas of the site are identified on the Parameters Assessment Plan. Additional information is provided within the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application. This sets out how the design will be developed to provide a comprehensive and integrated new development.

## **2.6 Education, Community and Social Development**

2.6.1 A local centre will be provided adjacent to Bennetts Road South. This facility will be available for residents of the new development but also for the existing community in the vicinity. This will contain the majority of the community, social and retail facilities. The local centre will provide a mix of the following uses:

- Convenience store (between 300 sq.m and 500 sq.m. gross floor area)
- Community building suitable for crèche/gym/health facility
- Suitable car parking within a landscaped setting
- Access to Bennetts Road South as well as to the wider development to the west

2.6.2 A site for a primary school with associated grounds including playing fields and playgrounds is identified on the east of the site, immediately to the south of the proposed local centre. The location of the school has changed following feedback from the consultation event. It is envisaged that this school could be managed by the President Kennedy School and act as a new feeder school.

## **2.7 Public Open Space and Green Infrastructure**

2.7.1 The proposed development will provide a comprehensive green infrastructure and open space network. This is based upon a series of greenways which link rural areas adjacent to the site and provide green corridors through the development itself. Other open spaces are shown on the northern boundary (Water Meadows) and along the primary spine road avenue. The design has sought to break up the development so as to provide smaller neighbourhoods well integrated with their own open spaces in the forms of village greens.

2.7.2 The open space will include nature conservation areas. Existing wetlands/water features are all retained within the proposed development and utilised as ecological resources. The Hall brook runs through the site and this will be maintained and integrated into the proposal.

2.7.3 The open spaces which permeate the site can also have a function as a nature conservation corridor, allowing wildlife to permeate through the site and into the rural areas beyond.

- 2.7.4 A more formal village square is proposed adjacent to the local centre. This will provide a landscaped setting for the local centre as well as providing a suitable gateway into the development from the east.
- 2.7.5 In addition to the main public spaces there will also be private open space. This will take the form of private gardens, balconies, terraces and communal spaces around buildings.
- 2.7.6 Formal playing fields, with the exception of land included as part of the primary school, are not provided within the development due to the over provision on land immediately adjoining the site. This includes Coundon Hall Park, Cardinal Newman School, the playing fields associated with the former Coventry Colliery and Keresley Sports Club and President Kennedy School.

### **2.8 Vehicular Access and Circulation**

- 2.8.1 The primary vehicular access route would run east-west through the centre of the site providing a new direct link from Tamworth Road to Bennetts Road South. New residential areas would be served off secondary roads linked to the primary road network.
- 2.8.2 The principle road through the development has been designed to accommodate development traffic as well as other traffic from the surrounding area which would utilise the route. New improvements are proposed to the Tamworth Road/Long Lane junction which will improve what is an already congested junction. Other modifications are proposed to the Penny Park Lane/Bennetts Road South junction and new crossing facilities for Sandpits Lane and within the site.

#### Public Transport, Walking and Cycling

- 2.8.3 The site is already served by the 16 and 16A bus services which operate along Bennetts Road South and provide six buses per hour in the inter-peak to Coventry, Keresley, Stoke Aldermore, Binley and Walsgrave University Hospital. The 735 service also serves the site which operates along Tamworth Road and Sandpits Lane. The nearest bus stops are located on Tamworth Road north of Long Lane and on Bennetts Road South north of Penny Park Lane. All stops provide timetabling information and are located within 700m of the site. It is anticipated that new bus services will be routed through the site to reduce walking distances from homes to access public transport. The detailed design of the road network will facilitate bus access through the site along the Primary Spine Road.
- 2.8.4 An existing footway with street lighting is provided on the western side of Bennetts Road South to the site and this provides a link into the village of Keresley and ProLogis Park to the north. A second footway on the eastern side of Bennetts Road South begins just north of Penny Park Land and provides links into the surrounding residential and employment areas within the Bablake and Holbrook Wards. The site is crossed by several public rights of way. Footpaths M311, M313 and M315 provide links through the site from Tamworth Road to Bennetts Road South.
- 2.8.5 On carriageway signed cycle routes are located on Campden Wedge Drive around 1.5 km southwest of the site. These provide high quality links into Coventry City Centre. Off carriage signed cycle routes are located along Central Boulevard within ProLogis Park and these link into the Ricoh Arena and the Arena Retail Park to the east. There are also numerous advisory cycle routes within the vicinity which provide suitable likely trafficked routes around Keresley and Coventry.
- 2.8.6 The new development will provide new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the site linking into existing infrastructure. The Primary Spine Road will incorporate a segregated pedestrian route/cycleway along its entire length. The design of open spaces in the site, which provide corridors between the various development zones, can be utilised to provide high quality pedestrian and cycle links. This can link up both the areas of open space but also focus on the main local centre to be provided off Bennetts Road South.
- 2.8.7 Existing and proposed public transport provision, cycle and pedestrian provision are described in full within the Transport Impact Assessment which forms part of the **Appendix 11** of this ES.

### **2.9 Drainage and Flood Risk**

- 2.9.1 The assessment of the impact of flood risk is based on the Flood Risk Assessment prepared for the application site in accordance with the NPPF. A copy of this is enclosed in **Appendix 10**. It addresses, identifies and quantifies the risk from various sources of flood risk to the site. It draws on information

obtained from the Environment Agency, Coventry City Council, the Coventry Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, the Coventry Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, site observations and local residents input at a public consultation event. The risk associated with surface water, ground water and sewage has been assessed qualitatively using available information.

2.9.2 The Environment Agency Flood Map and the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment indicate the entire site is within Flood Zone 1. However as the catchment area of all the watercourses within the site is less than 3km<sup>2</sup> and so are not included on the flood map, modelling of the Hall Brook has been undertaken to ascertain the extent of the floodplain. The results show that the floodplain of the Holbrook within the site boundary is limited to a narrow strip along the northern boundary and that the majority of the floodplain is located beyond the site boundary on adjacent land north of the watercourse.

2.9.3 The proposal provides for a number of mitigation measures which include the following:

- Careful storage of construction materials and plant to ensure that they are managed in the event of flood and ensure they do not cause a pollution incident
- Controls on vehicle refuelling to contain any pollutants

2.9.4 Measures post development will include the following:

- Limiting post development discharge rates into the Hall Brook to existing average annual run-off rates less 20% and including the 1 in 100 year plus 30% event
- Exiting post development discharge rates into the existing surface water sewage system shall be limited to existing average annual run-off rates less 20% for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 30 year event
- Surface water drainage system will incorporate SUDS techniques to store and treat surface water
- Proposed surface water drainage system will be designed to manage adverse off-site conditions in terms of surcharged outfalls
- Designing dwellings to have a finished floor level at least 0.15 metres above adjacent ground levels
- Incorporate surface water overland flow corridors

2.9.5 The above measures and management of surface water flooding represent an improvement on the existing situation with benefits in terms of lowered flood risks downstream. Consequently the proposed development is able to provide an improvement to the wider area and assist in addressing a recognised local problem.

## **2.10 Construction Phasing of the Development**

2.10.1 It is acknowledged that the phasing of development will be discussed further at the more detailed stages, however for the purposes of the assessment it is envisaged that the proposed development will commence by mid/late 2016 and be completed by 2024. Development is likely to first commence around the proposed site access to Tamworth Road in two separate phases incorporating land north and south of the western greenway. A start could also be made on the eastern portion of the site providing the new local centre, primary school and associated residential development. For the assessment purposes this assumes approximately 100 dwellings per year over an approximately 8 year build programme (2016-2024).

2.10.2 The construction phase for the site is likely to involve Standard Construction Practices and enabling works including:

- Utilities works including diversion, upgrades and new provision
- Highway works which are likely to incorporate other infrastructure services

- Temporary access and haul routes, site compounds, hoardings, temporary signage and car parking
- Site re-grading/standard ground modelling to create the required development plateau. The development plots and sizes will be sited to work with the topography of the site to minimise the cut and fill requirements.
- Soil stripping and recycling/temporary stock piling within the site, the location and scale of which is likely to be specified and approved as part of the earthworks strategy for the development.
- The use of construction machinery such as general plant, forklifts, lifting equipment and other light and heavy haulage commercial vehicles
- Early implementation of an approved landscape scheme where appropriate; and
- Standard construction and good site management practices will be adopted prior to the commencement of construction to ensure that both statutory and non-statutory environmental commitments are adhered to. For example this could include a Code of Construction Practice and/or Construction Environmental Management Plans.

### **2.11 Summary**

- 2.11.1 This Chapter has given consideration to alternative sites and alternative uses for the application site, which in turn provides reasoning for choosing the land at Keresley, Coventry. The Chapter also provides a description of the context and description of the site including existing provision of public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes. It has also set out the development proposals of the outline application including a parameters assessment plan, upon which the following environmental impact assessments are tested against.