



3 September 2016

To: Lisa Albrighton, Programme Officer, Coventry City Council  
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Submission of Matters and Issues for Examination – Session 8 Greenbelt - Responses

1. a) At the initial consultation with Coventry City Council (CCC), the only justification for building on the greenbelt was for the benefit of ‘providing aspirational homes, which will attract money to the city.’ They insisted there was a need for housing numbers based entirely on figures supplied by the ONS. When these figures were repeatedly questioned, suggesting they were incorrect and would most certainly be amended at a future date, the Planning Officers refused to provide any alternative plans and admitted there is ‘no Plan B’.
  
- b) The Planning Officers appear to have worked backwards, fitting any study results into the already decided plan. The revised green belt study plan was not produced until AFTER the Draft Local Plan was made public, without any consultation, although this had been promised to us. Despite the original 2009 study which recommended the area at Eastern Green along Slipperside Valley should remain in the Green Belt, a 2015 follow up moved the goal posts to make it suddenly desirable to remove it and approve it for development. No documentation was made available to those who would be directly affected by this; indeed, the Planning Officers have made it very difficult to obtain information from the beginning, enabling only those with the necessary time, money and understanding of complex planning issues to follow procedures. Even obtaining relevant documentation by Freedom of Information was stymied. This has all lead to a lack of trust within the community of both the Planning Officers and some of the elected Councillors, who are driving the development.
  
- c) No. Whenever questions were raised about the use of brownfield sites within the city, much of which is abandoned or derelict or of very poor quality housing, the Planning Officers advised us that a lot of smaller brownfield sites were less attractive to developers than one large greenfield site.
  
- e) The Eastern Green site proposal would remove the remaining Meriden Gap within the Coventry boundary. When pointed out to CCC, they insisted there would still be ‘enough Gap left to fit Coventry City into.’ Incorrect. There would be a narrow stretch of farmland between the Coventry/Solihull boundary, running along the back of Meriden village to where the recent grade separated junction has been built at Packington – a distance of only

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1.8 miles (according to DEFRA magic mapping.) After this point the land comprises the private Packington Estate, followed by the A452 Coleshill to Kenilworth dual carriageway incorporating the Stonebridge island flyover, alongside which is presently a gravel quarry and will subsequently become the HS2 hub. This backs on to the NEC site and Birmingham Airport. To conclude, the Meriden Gap will no longer exist within the Coventry boundary and will have only a distance of 1.8 miles from the proposed development to the built up area of Meriden/Packington as described. In addition, Berkswell and Balsall Common are presently compiling a Neighbourhood Plan which will allow for housing to be built within the area to the west of the Eastern Green boundary and south of the Parish of Meriden, within the borough of Solihull. At the time of writing, no decision has been made about the development area but must be considered as potentially increasing any development within what is considered to be the Meriden Gap.

As an area sited alongside three local authority boundaries – Coventry City Council, North Warwickshire BC and Solihull Metropolitan BC, the Parish of Allesley is affected by the plans for all of these, which is often not considered but could have a detrimental impact on our community.

f) I am not qualified to comment on this matter.

g) Yes. This is an area of great concern. Initial plans showed an innocuous traffic roundabout on the A45, with the single distributor road crossing to the Easter Green site. When questioned about this on every occasion I met them, the Planning Officers and indeed Councillor Maton himself, denied any knowledge of this and tried to ignore the issue. I pointed out that a main arterial route of such speed (60mph presently), which would potentially be taking large volumes of traffic off at 90 degrees, would not be a small roundabout as shown, but a large grade separated junction, which would have a devastating effect on the area, even greater than it has at Meriden/Packington, where traffic is light. I was promised clarification of this but it was not given.

Such a large junction on the northern side of the A45 would not only be of considerable size, but noise and light pollution would have a high impact on both wildlife (skylarks return each year to breed on the hill and it is within 1000m of a Local Nature Reserve, of which Coventry has very few) and those living in the Pickford/Harvest Hill/Pinketts Booth communities. There would be 24 hour lighting and permanent traffic noise which would erode further the benefits of the green belt at a point where the Ancient Arden presently provides a green oasis on the edge of a large conurbation.

h) The present protection, once removed, would allow for developers to continually apply for ribbon development or other encroachment, with precedent. It can only be assumed that the entire area of Allesley/Easter Green would be at constant risk of such applications.

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i) I am not qualified to comment on this matter.

j) Yes, the extent of land to be removed is most important, especially with residents' low confidence in the planning officers and Councillors and the need for greater transparency.

k - n) I am not qualified to comment on these matters.

Mrs Amanda Davies