

CED 062 - Post examination hearing position on Oakfield and Ford Sports Ground, October 2017

The submitted Redbridge Local Plan included Oakfield and Ford Sports Ground as Development Opportunity Sites to contribute to the borough's development needs, including closing the gap on Objectively Assessed Housing Need, and providing schools on site to meet future education need arising from population growth. Proposals were put forward to remove the sites from the Green Belt on the basis that:

- neither site met NPPF Green Belt purposes, as set out in the Green Belt Review (LBR2.41) and Green Belt Addendum (LBR2.41.1);
- both sites were considered sustainable locations for development, and;
- existing pitches and facilities from each site could be relocated within the borough, as documented in CED050: Playing Pitch Provision in Different Scenarios.

On this issue, the Inspector's Post Hearing Advice Part 2 (IED012) in para 7 is that:

- as minimum housing targets can be met without developing either site, and some school provision can be made on alternative strategic sites, exceptional circumstances for the release of Oakfield and Ford Sports Ground from the Green Belt does not exist, and;
- it is unclear if sufficient playing pitch provision to meet estimated demand in the borough in 2030 could be achieved if both sites are developed.

Through the main modification consultation, the Council is therefore now consulting on the removal of both sites as Development Opportunity Sites from the Local Plan, in accordance with the Inspector's Advice Note part 2.

The Council has considered the alignment of the Green Belt boundary in light of paragraph 8 of IED012. The Green Belt Review (2.41) and Green Belt Addendum (2.41.1) demonstrate that neither Oakfield nor Ford Sports Ground meet the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. However, in order to justify the removal of these sites from the green belt, it is necessary to demonstrate exceptional circumstances. Given that the sites are not considered by the Inspector to be appropriate for development, it is now considered that exceptional circumstances to remove the sites from the Green Belt can no longer be shown.

In relation to King Solomon School (GB14b), the Green Belt Review and Addendum recommends that this parcel be removed from the Green Belt. However, the case for removed of parcel GB14b from the Green Belt is plainly linked to the status, in green belt terms, of adjacent sites and, principally, Oakfield. As such, if Oakfield is not removed from

the Green Belt, it is considered that King Solomon should also remain in Green Belt in order to provide a clear, consistent and coherent boundary in this location. If Oakfield is to remain in the Green Belt, the justification to release King Solomon School from the Green Belt falls away, indeed the benefit of retaining the site within the Green Belt becomes compelling. A modification to the submitted local plan to retain King Solomon School (GB14b) within the Green Belt is therefore proposed. Please see Main Modification (MM) 61 in CED058 for details of this change.

In relation to Seven Kings Park, the Green Belt Review and Addendum stated, in respect of the western and southern parts of parcel GB16 comprising the Ford Sports Ground, Seven Kings Park and Barley Lane Allotments, that their retention in the Green Belt does not fulfil the five NPPF Green Belt purposes. In the absence of development at Ford Sports Ground and if that site is retained within the Green Belt the context will change. If Ford Sports Ground is to be retained in the Green Belt, it is considered that Seven Kings Park and Barley Lane Allotments too should remain in the Green Belt, such that, along with Ford Sports Ground, a clear and consistent boundary will be retained in this location. There is little basis to retain Ford Sports Ground within the Green Belt but to remove Seven Kings Park and the Barley Lane Allotments. To secure a consistent and coherent Green Belt boundary in this location, both Seven Kings Park and Barley Lane Allotments should be retained, together with the Ford Sports Ground, within the Green Belt. A modification to retain Seven Kings Park and Barley Lane Allotments within the Green Belt is proposed. Please see Main Modification (MM) 61 in CED058 for details of this change.