**Neighbourhood Plans – assessment of development options**

**Specific advice in relation to Wilmcote and Pathlow NDP**

In producing a Neighbourhood Plan, it is necessary to carry out an appraisal of development options, including whether or not to allocate sites. The basis of any decision to allocate development sites needs to be an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria. A decision not to allocate sites needs to be explained and fully justified.

When considering options, it is important they are realistic and achievable, based on technical, viability and availability grounds. It is not necessary to assess in detail those options that are not reasonable although, for completeness, it is worth covering these in the assessment to show why they have been rejected.

In identifying and assessing options it is important to check them against the adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy) to make sure there is consistency in terms of location, scale and type of development.

This is particularly relevant in the case of our Plan in relation to the Green Belt. This is because the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy adopted in July 2016 does not make provision for a scale of housing development in Local Service Villages located in the Green Belt that would be contrary to the provisions of paragraph 89 in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The submitted Core Strategy (June 2014) identified in Policy CS.16 a specific dwelling requirement for each Local Service Village. In the case of Wilmcote, which is a category 2 LSV, this figure was 51 to 75 homes. However, it was evident to the independent Inspector who examined the submitted Core Strategy that this scale of development could not be provided through development that was consistent with the NPPF. To achieve such a figure would likely require larger sites to be identified that would, in turn, necessitate the removal of the village from the Green Belt.

This situation was confirmed in the Inspector’s final report published on 10 June 2016 in which he stated that “the [Local Service Villages] should not be excluded from the Green Belt: there has been no evidence, e.g. in the form of a Green Belt review, to justify such an approach.” (para. 450)

This overriding position is reflected in the adopted Core Strategy whereby the final version of Policy CS.10 is consistent with the NPPF. Furthermore, the achievement of the dwelling requirement for each category of Local Service Villages, as now set out in Policy CS.16, does not require allocations to be identified in those settlements in the Green Belt in order for that requirement to be met.

Other than the identification of small-scale infill sites within the physical confines of Wilmcote, in accordance with Policy CS.10, there is no expectation or requirement that housing development is provided in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

On the basis of the above, we come to the clear and appropriate conclusion that, in the circumstances, it would be inappropriate to identify development sites in our Plan as this would be contrary to the recently adopted and up-to-date Core Strategy, specifically Policy CS.10.