

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Representations on the draft Core Strategy were submitted by Pegasus Planning Group on behalf of Mr & Mrs Hawkes, who own land at Manor Road, Saltford, although the Respondent is listed in the Council's list (CC7/2) as Richard Morison (an employee of Pegasus).
- 1.2 Crest Homes (SW) now holds an option on Mr & Mrs Hawkes' land at Manor Road, Saltford, which is listed in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as Site SAL 2. The appraisal appears in the Rural Settlements volume of the SHLAA. The SHLAA indicates that the site is outside the Local Plan Housing Development Boundary and is in the Bath and Bristol Green Belt. The settlement policy for Saltford in the Submission Core Strategy is Draft Policy RA.2.

2. GREEN BELT AND SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

- 2.1 This Core Strategy Examination Hearing is not concerned with specific sites. However, individual sites like Manor Road, Saltford, highlight questions about the soundness of the Core Strategy's approach to settlement strategy and Green Belt in the light of objective assessments of housing requirements for the District and the wider Sub-Region.
- 2.2 This statement therefore needs to be seen in the light of evidence presented in relation to Issue 1 on housing needs and evidence presented in relation to Issue 2 on limitations in the spatial strategy. The representation was originally expressed in relation to rural settlement policy. However settlement strategy is inseparable from Green Belt policy, which is simply a policy for limiting the sizes of settlements.
- 2.3 Development at Manor Road, Saltford could achieve a modest expansion of the village to serve local housing needs, including affordable housing needs, without compromising strategic objectives of the Bath and Bristol Green Belt, such as the separation of Saltford and Keynsham. It is an example of the kind of site that should be considered in a comprehensive review of the Green Belt.

- 2.4 The Council's approach appears to be that all Green Belt sites are of equal significance. They appear to have tailored their housing targets to this presumption, without recognising that the scale of unmet housing need and demand in the District and Sub-Region are very special circumstances that can justify changes to the Green Belt boundary in specific cases.
- 2.5 The Core Strategy is unsound because of its approaches to housing need, settlement strategy and Green Belt. A fundamentally different approach is needed that is founded on an objective assessment of housing need and wide-ranging review of the Green Belt and settlement strategy.

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