



LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Planning Department
Coventry City Council
PO Box 7097
COVENTRY CV6 9SL

17 September 2025

Dear Coventry City Council

Reference: Outline Major Planning Application: PL/2025/0001302/OUTM – the expiry date it appears, but is not clear, to be 22 October 2025.

Outline application for the erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3); creation of associated vehicular and pedestrian/cycle access off Fivefield Road, ecological enhancements, highway improvements; parking, landscaping, drainage features, open space and all other associated works/infrastructure, with details of means of access to be discharged and details of appearance, landscaping, layout to be reserved.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum to this major outline planning application. Coventry City Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the DEFRA Guidance for Local Access Forums, to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its statutory role, duty and functions.

This forum may advise local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate on access issues in respect of land use planning matters and give advice on the recreation and access implications of individual planning applications. We are required to have regard, in carrying out our functions, the needs of land management both rural and urban and the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area for which it is established including the flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area. We also advise on improvements to public access to the countryside and public rights of way and recognise the mental and general health benefits of open-air recreation and enjoyment of an area including its irreplaceable ecology and biodiversity.

On occasions it may be appropriate to give advice of a more cautionary, challenging or critical nature while trying to remain constructive in our approach.

<https://planandregulatory.coventry.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=273917>

<https://www.richborough.co.uk/2025/06/13/new-promotion-agreement-signed-for-keresley/>

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/new-masterplan-reveals-another-350-32018294>

You may also be aware of this related e-petition to 'Object to 350 new homes being built on Hounds Hill - the highest point in Coventry':

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=606&RPID=124217768&H PID=124217768>

In the City's Sustainable Urban Extension Design Guidance – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted in August 2019, Appendix 1 shows the existing Indicative Masterplan for the Keresley SUE and states:

'The indicative Masterplan itself is not intended to be rigid or fixed. It is intended to provide a clear steer as to the key developable areas and key areas of green infrastructure.'

'The creation of a publicly accessible green and blue corridor focused around the Ancient Woodlands, Hounds Hill and Hall Brook. This corridor should run north-south between the Burrow Hill Fort to the north and the Jubilee Woodland to the south east.'

'The Green and Blue Infrastructure Corridor. This corridor is clearly shown running through the centre of the site from the Burrow Hill Fort in the north along Hounds Hill (between the ancient woodlands and then picking up the Hall Brook sweeping round to the south east of the site toward the Jubilee Woodland. The identification of this corridor reflects the landscape character and sensitivity as well as heritage value and considerations relating to the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) at the Burrow Hill Fort. The principle of the corridor has been developed in partnership with Historic England whilst the element around Hall Brook has also been developed in partnership with the Environment Agency and the Lead Flood Authority. This corridor will be the focal point for on-site green infrastructure within the SUE as a whole. It should provide a mixture of formal and informal green spaces, which, where appropriate, should be multi-functional to maximise land efficiency. Where appropriate and in accordance with wider Green Infrastructure requirements and landscape design of individual phases, developer contributions towards green infrastructure within this corridor will be accepted. This will have regard to land ownership and how the specific phase of development relates to the targeted corridor.'

The Masterplan also highlights **Hounds Hill** adjoining Bunson's Wood (a scheduled Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site) as a '**High Point/Vantage Point**' approximately 500 feet above sea level and includes the well-used Public Footpath (M309). The high-quality Ancient Arden landscape in proximity to **Pikehorne Wood & The Alders ancient woodlands and Keresley Mere** is designated a **Local Wildlife Site** and is the source of the Hall Brook; an area that regularly floods in the winter months. This area is recognised by the City Council as the most sensitive part of the Ancient Arden landscape within the Parish of Keresley and for this reason was not included within the Keresley SUE development parcels in the indicative Masterplan.

This Outline application for up to 350 dwellings on this land, therefore, represents a significant departure from the Keresley SUE proposals and Local Plan Policy DS4 (Part C).

The Masterplan also states:

'8. Key View Points. These are highlighted at Burrow Hill Fort and the top of Hounds Hill. These are considered of strategic importance linked to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Other key view corridors should be considered as part of wider design considerations within respective phases of development.'

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/30879/sustainable-urban-extension-design-guidance-spd>

Policy DS4 (Part C) 'Keresley SUE Specific Masterplan Principles' in the statutory Local Plan, states:

'iv. Establish a comprehensive green and blue infrastructure corridor focused around the Ancient Woodlands, Hounds Hill and the Hall Brook. This corridor should run north-south between the Burrow Hill Fort to the north and the Jubilee Woodland to the south east.'

https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/25899/final_local_plan_december_20

The photograph included on the front cover of the City Council's 'Local Plan Review, Green Belt Technical Update Study' published in July 2024, shows the sensitive Ancient Arden landscape in proximity to Hounds Hill and Keresley Mere off Fivefield Road, which is the subject of this Outline application:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/44100/coventry-green-belt-review-technical-update-july-2024>

Google Maps

https://www.google.com/maps/place/Fivefield+Rd,+Coventry/@52.4559574,-1.5438336,528m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m6!3m5!1s0x48774c924cfc48d:0x4610988426018a1c!8m2!3d52.4543808!4d-1.5429083!16s%2Fg%2F1tf9sb6x?entry=tту&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDcyMy4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw%3D%3D

The land the subject of this application has been owned by Queens College Oxford since approximately 1529. The book *'Stepping into the Past'* (historical walks in Allesley, Coundon & Keresley) published by the Coventry & District Archaeological Society (CADAS) in 2012, provides further information about the historical importance of Hounds Hill, Keresley Mere (former medieval fish ponds), and the adjoining ancient woodlands, with links to the Burrow Hill Iron Age Hillfort site. CADAS highlights that: *'Mesolithic people lived at Hounds Hill because of a different, distinctive type of flintwork which they left behind known as microliths.'* The importance of this 'Historic Landscape' was also highlighted in 'A Guide to Walks in Keresley Parish' previously published by the City Council:

'At the north-eastern corner of the valley, Bunsons Wood and Hounds Hill stand about 500 feet above sea level. From Hounds Hill, there are suburb views over Keresley with Coventry spires in the distance.'

Furthermore, the application does not reflect the spirit and priorities of the emerging 'Nature Recovery Strategy for the West Midlands, being produced by the West Midlands Combined Authority to help 'safeguard and improve nature' and supported by Coventry City Council.

'Our region's nature is under pressure from a range of risks including, habitat loss due to land development, poor land management and fragmented ecological networks, pollution from roads, industry and agriculture, invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, recreational pressure damaging sensitive habitats and climate change accelerating habitat degradation and species loss.

Addressing this will require urgent and large-scale action.'

'Our West Midlands Local Nature Recovery Strategy is a call for action. For the first time, we now have clear priorities, and locations, where we see the need to safeguard and improve nature. We also have clearly identified actions that

everyone can get involved in delivering, from large organisations down to individual people and communities.

<https://cloudcdn.wmca.org.uk/documents/wmca/greener-together/west-midlands-Inrs-public-consultation-draft.pdf>

If this latest application is approved, the distinction between rural and urban for those and future generations walking on public footpath M309 within the Parish of Keresley and still able to enjoy these 'suburb views' would be lost forever, only to be replaced by soulless suburban sprawl!

The additional traffic that would also be generated by this latest car-centric application for up to 350 dwellings and up to 700 cars, together with the suburban highway infrastructure that would inevitably be required, including access for service vehicles and possibly a bus service, as clearly demonstrated by the emerging **Arden Glade** development off Fivefield Road, would completely destroy the remaining quiet rural character of this **Ancient Arden Lane**.

It is disconcerting that the metal kissing gate to public footpath M309 leading up to Hounds Hill, has been lying damaged on the ground since 2024 owing to lack of maintenance by the City Council; blocking the legal access to this public footpath (**Google Street View**), and the footpath signpost is also completely obscured by vegetation.

Furthermore, there does not appear to be any planning notice erected in proximity to this well-used public footpath from Fivefield Road, advertising this major outline planning application? Public Notifications are required by planning law.

We exercise our statutory advisory remit, role and duty to **OBJECT** to Outline Application **PL/2025/0001302/OUTM** for all the reasons as stated above.

We also advise that this major application is brought before the Coventry City Council Planning Committee for determination on the public platform of a Planning Committee Meeting.

Should Coventry City Council be minded to approve this latest outline application, we are reminded of a few lines from the poem written by the poet and novelist Philip Larkin, born just down the road in Radford (Coventry) about three miles from the application site:

Going, Going

I thought it would last my time -
The sense that, beyond the town,
There would always be fields and farms...

It seems, just now,
To be happening so very fast;
Despite all the land left free
For the first time I feel somehow
That it isn't going to last...

And that will be England gone,
The shadows, the meadows, the lanes...
There'll be books; it will linger on
In galleries; but all that remains
For us will be concrete and tyres.

We request an acknowledgement of receipt of this **OBJECTION** and an assurance the Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum will be kept informed on its passage through the planning system and advanced warning of when it will come before the CCC Planning Committee for determination as we will wish to request to attend and speak.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheila Cooper". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the bottom.

Sheila Cooper

Acting Chair of the Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum

Please Respond Directly to: sheila.ann.cooper41@gmail.com

Copy to LAF Secretary: charlesbarlow@warwickshire.gov.uk