

## SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Full Cabinet
<b>Meeting date:</b>	12 November 2015
<b>Subject/Report Title:</b>	<b>LOCAL PLAN REVIEW INITIAL CONSULTATION</b>
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Policy and Spatial Planning
<b>Report Author/Lead Contact Officer:</b>	Gary Palmer & Maurice Barlow

### **1. Update Note**

- 1.1 Attached to this note is a copy of Appendix B which was marked to follow. The document is a non-technical summary of the main document and does not contain any new material that is not in the main document.
- 1.2 The illustrations on pages 155 and 156 (the two growth options that include potential expansion of rural villages/settlements) should be amended to indicate expansion of Blythe Valley Park as a potential option. All settlements that are inset from the Green Belt (or have significant parts of them excluded from it) should be included as noted in the text. The corresponding illustrations in the non-technical summary have been amended.



# Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future

*Solihull Local Plan Review 2015*

*Scope, Issues and Options Consultation - Summary*



**November 2015**

Many planning documents can appear quite complicated and use a lot of jargon. Often this is necessary due to the technical nature of the subject and the issues that are being considered. This summary is intended to provide a plain English outline of the main issues the council is currently seeking views upon. Please refer to the full consultation document if you require more detailed explanation of any of the issues.

## Introduction

It is important that councils have an up-to-date local plan in place. This is so that the development needed for their area can be met whilst preserving the character of the area. The production of a local plan allows communities to shape the way that their area changes and is used.



The council's existing local plan was adopted in 2013 and is now in need of review. This consultation marks the start of the process to review the existing plan. The consultation responses will help the council prepare a draft plan for consultation in 2016. It will then publish the final version of the plan in 2017 before which it is examined by an independent inspector.

The current consultation will run from **30th November 2015 to 22nd January 2016**. A series of questions are set out in the document to help guide those wishing to provide comments.

## Key Issues

In this summary the Council has identified the 3 key issues that the review of the plan should consider that are likely to be of key interest. Please take time to look through the full consultation document to see all of the issues described in more detail.



## Housing

Agreeing the number and location of new homes is usually one of the most challenging issues in the plan. The starting point is to understand what the housing needs for the area. The council is undertaking this work in conjunction with other councils in the area. This is an important part of producing a plan as the council must cooperate with its neighbours as it plans for the future of the borough.

A study has been completed for the council areas in and around Birmingham. This has shown that the area needs over 37 thousand more homes between now and 2031 than is currently planned to be built. Most of the shortage arises from Birmingham, but all the councils, including Solihull, also contribute towards the shortage.

Using this emerging evidence, the council believes it will need to plan to accommodate at least 13,500 new homes over the period 2011 to 2031. Through the existing local plan the council has

been able to identify how 9,000 can already been built. This means that through the review of the local plan it will be necessary to accommodate at least an additional 4,000 homes over and above those already identified in the existing local plan. By way of a comparison, 4,000 dwellings is over twice the size of Dickens heath.

Further evidence needs to be gathered and the council will do this as part of the local plan review. It would also be necessary for the council to consider to what extent it can help meet the housing needs of the Wider area. Other areas will also have to see how they can help. Therefore the 4,000 additional homes should be considered as a minimum.

### **High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) Interchange & UK Central**

The government's plans for high speed rail are currently passing through Parliament and have reached an advanced stage. The first station outside of London is to be built in Solihull on land next to the M42 and opposite the NEC. Works are scheduled to start in 2017 and construction should be complete by 2026. The station will be constructed on land that it is currently within the green belt.

The HS2 Interchange station represents a major opportunity to maximise the economic and social benefits for the borough and wider area which would not be delivered to the HS2 proposal alone - including around 16,500 new jobs and 2000 new homes. The existing local plan does not provide an adequate framework for maximising the benefits presented by this opportunity. Therefore the local plan review will need to address this.

### **Green Belt**

Green Belts are very important as they help prevent unsuitable urban expansion by keeping land permanently open. The boundaries of the Green Belt should only be changed in 'exceptional circumstances'. If there is a shortage of land to accommodate an area's housing needs, then this could be a reason to change the boundaries of the Green Belt.

Based on the emerging evidence, the Council believes that some development will have to take place on land that is currently in the Green Belt. As part of the review of the plan the Council will look at which parts of the Green Belt contribute most to preventing unsuitable urban expansion. This is so that if land does have to be taken out of the Green Belt, it is the land that makes least contribution that will be considered first.

In addition, if the need to High Speed 2 Interchange is to be realised, then this will require the development of Green Belt land.

### **Review of Existing Policies**

The existing local plan was only adopted two years ago, and so many of its policies are still up-to-date and can be used to decide planning applications. This consultation is seeking views on which policies can be retained, either as they are or with minor amendments, and which need significant amendments or replacing in full. The Council believes that only policies relating to 'Supporting Economic Success' (P1) and 'Provision of Land for Housing' (P5) need substantial amendments or replacing. All the other policies can be retained either as they stand or with some minor amendments.

### **Where Should the Growth Take Place ?**

At this stage the Council does not have a preferred option to accommodate the area's additional development needs. The purpose of this consultation is to set out what options there may be and

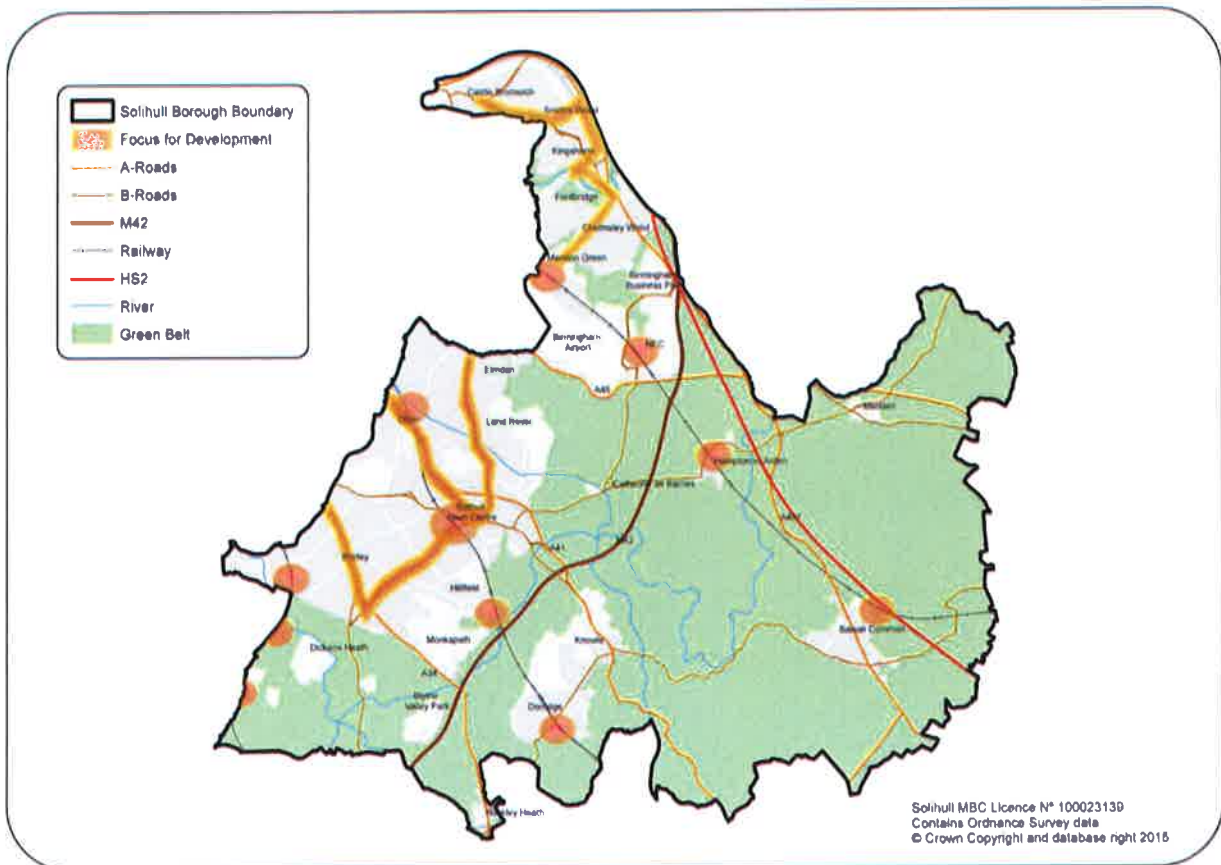


to invite comments upon them. These comments will then be taken into account as a preferred option is developed during the next stage.



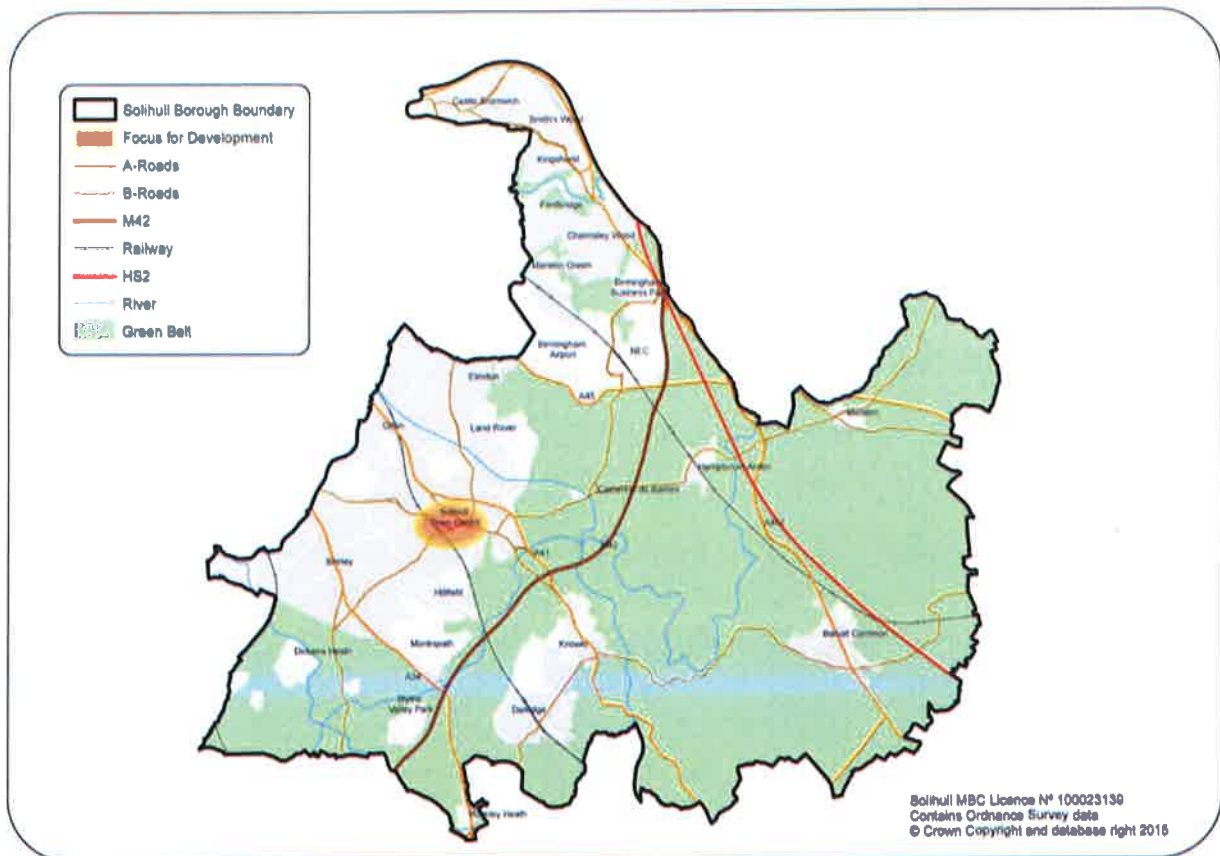
The full consultation document looks at high level potential options of how future development can be accommodated, and these are summarised below. Each option will have its advantages and disadvantages and there may not be a perfect solution. It may also be the case that more than one option is needed. In considering the options it is worth bearing in mind what level of growth is to be accommodated (i.e. at least 4,000 additional dwellings) as some of the options may only have limited potential.

### Growth Option A - High Frequency Public Transport Corridors and Hubs



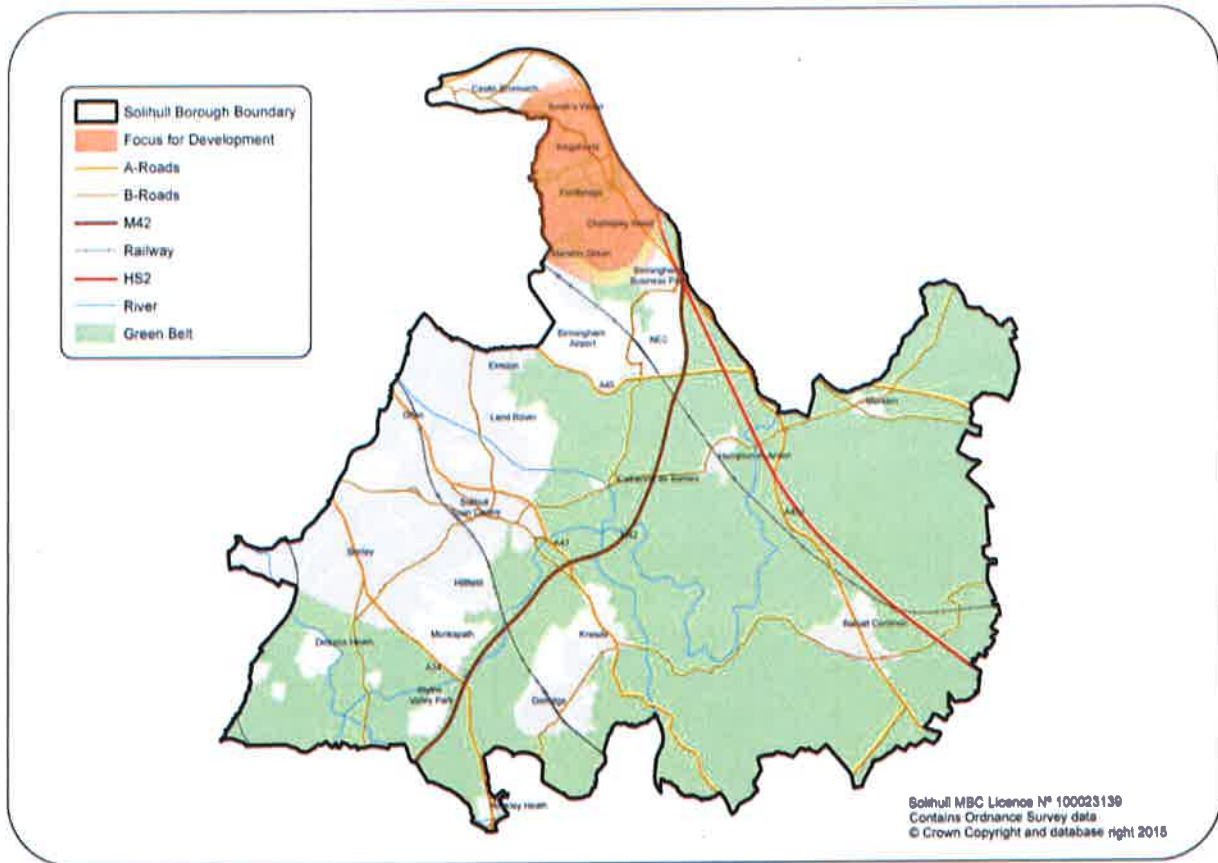
Option A looks to focus development along high frequency public transport corridors and hubs. Whilst this could provide for a sustainable pattern of development, capacity may be limited for those areas in the urban area. Outside of the urban area, the existing Green Belt boundary acts as a constraints.

## Growth Option B - Solihull Town Centre



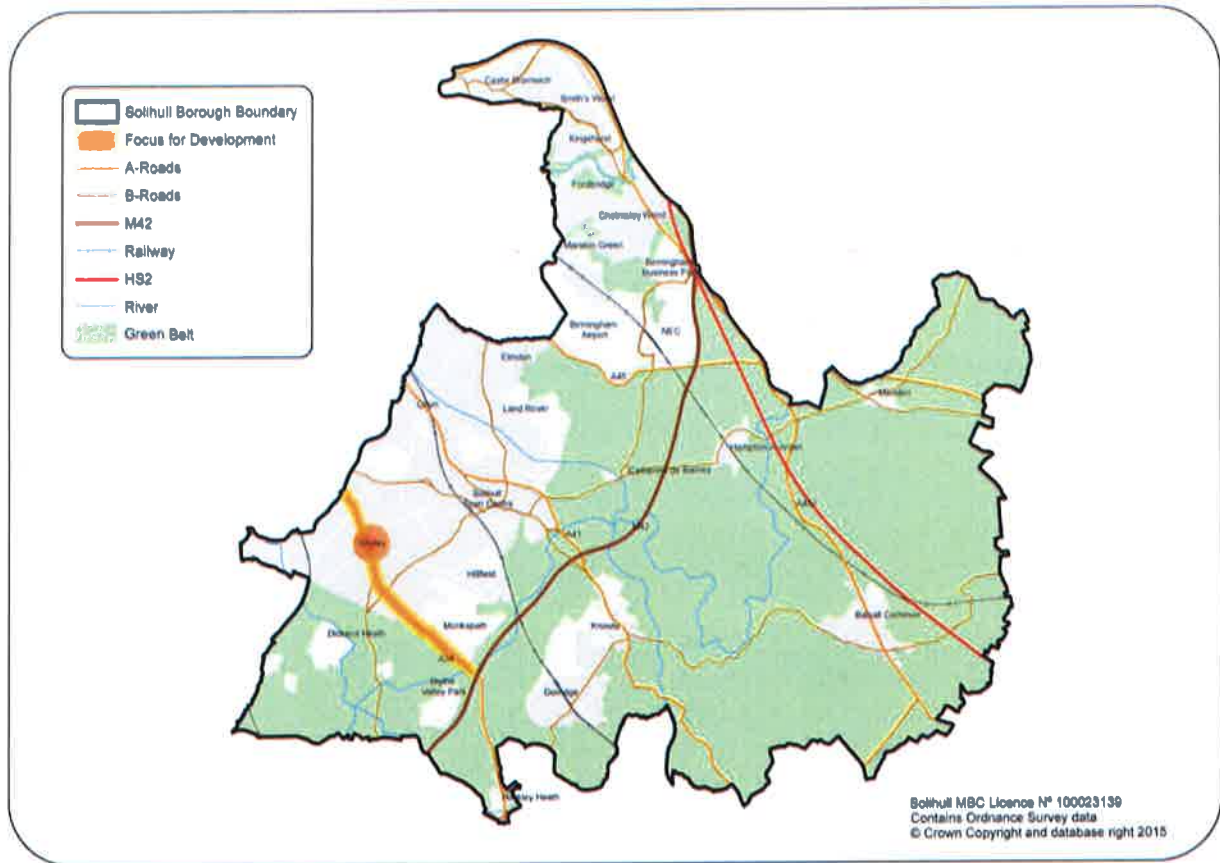
Option B considers focusing development in and around Solihull town centre. Again this can lead to a sustainable pattern of development, but there is likely to be limited additional capacity.

## Growth Option C - North Solihull/ Chelmsley Wood



Option C reviews the potential to focus development in and around North Solihull/Chelmsley Wood. Once again this could lead to a sustainable pattern of development, but again there is likely to be limited additional capacity. Development in the area would also assist with on-going investment/regeneration of the area.

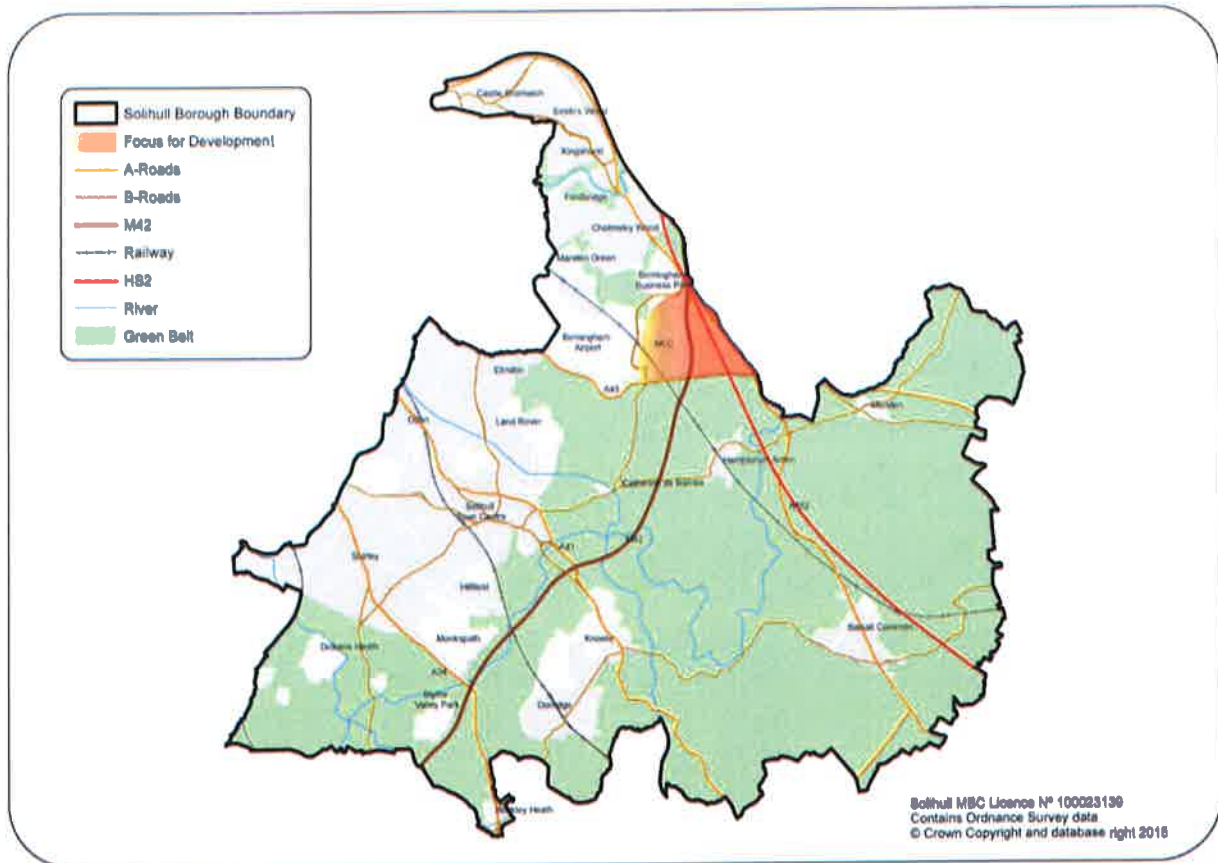
## Growth Option D - Shirley Town Centre and the A34 Corridor



Option D assesses focusing development in and around Shirley town centre and along the A34 corridor. Whilst this option would also provide for a sustainable pattern of development, it too has limited capacity, although there may be scope to look at alternative uses for some of the sites in the area.

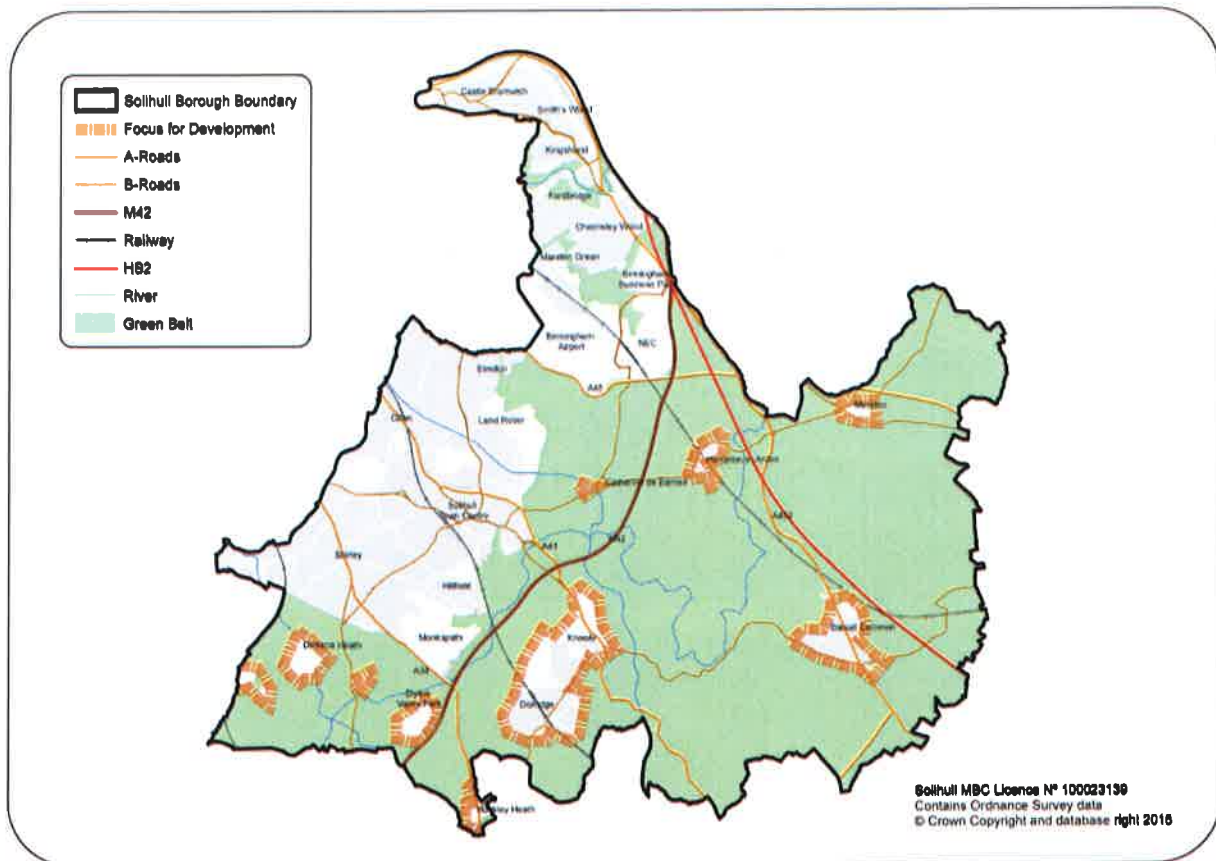


## Growth Option E - The UKC Hub & HS2



Option E looks at the potential for development around HS2 interchange. Although this would result in the loss of part of the Green Belt, it is a site that would otherwise see some development taking place anyway as a result of the high speed railway and station. Indications are that this option could provide a significant contribution towards the development needs of the Borough, although it may not be available for some years.

## Growth Option F - Limited Expansion of Rural Villages/Settlements



Option F reviews the potential for limited expansion or the Borough’s rural villages/settlements. This follows on from allocations that occurred through the existing local plan. The settlements that may be considered under this option are those that are either inset from the Green Belt, or have significant parts of them excluded from it, ie Balsall Common, Catherine de Barnes, Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath, Hampton-in-Arden, Hockley Heath, Knowle/Dorridge, Meriden and Tidbury Green.

