

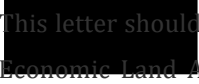
Solihull MBC
PO Box 18
Council House
Solihull
B91 9QB

19th January 2016

Dear Sirs,

SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW JAN 2016

I am writing in relations to land adjacent to Blythe House, Widney Manor Road, Solihull in respect of Solihull Local Plan Review - Scope, Issues and Options Consultation. I welcome the opportunity to comment on this document, particularly in respect of Blythe House, Widney Manor Road, Solihull.

 This letter should be read in conjunction with a site proposal form for the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment ('SHELAA') attached, together with location plan with site edged red, in order for the site to be considered for open market housing (Use Class C3) and or extra care (Use Class C2).

Blythe House, Widney Manor Road is located immediately to the east of Solihull Town Centre but outside the development boundary. The site comprises a large detached dwelling with leisure complex and grounds. The site is currently within the Green Belt as defined in Solihull Local Plan.

The site lies adjacent to residential development on either side with the M42 to the rear and Widney Manor Road to the south offering natural defensible boundaries should the land be taken out of Green Belt.

The site is available for development immediately with geo technical and ecology reports having already been undertaken and concluding there are no issues with the site.

This part of Widney Manor Road is very close to Solihull Town Centre and a relatively main route into the Centre. There is good accessibility to local services and facilities including schools, shops, and health services and is only a short walk to Widney Manor Station and a regular bus service. Bentley Heath as well as Dorridge and Knowle are also close by.

Having reviewed the Issues and Options document, we set out our detailed comments below.

1. Scope Issues and Options

Agree with the extent of the evidence base to be used however would stress that full assessment needs to be done of each. During the last plan land was taken out of the Green Belt without a full Green belt Assessment having been carried out.

2. Cross boundary and strategic Issues

We would suggest that work needs to be done with Coventry to fully understand the implications of their OAN.

3. Previous Challenges

Agree

4. Additional Challenges

Agree

5. Borough Overview

On the whole we would agree but would stress that with the reputation of being a successful, attractive and aspirational place to live there has to be a realistic approach to growth.

6. Overall Vision and Spatial Strategy

Whilst parts of the vision and spatial strategy remain valid, we would reiterate that there needs to be a realistic view towards development. With the economic potential of HS2 and UK Central driving growth and employment, new houses will need to be in line with that growth. Development should not be driven towards one area but rather be spread across the Borough. A balance needs to be created between protecting the Green Belt and ensuring we benefit from growth.

7, 8, 9 & 10. Scheme of polices to be amended

Agree

11 & 12

Agree

13. Additional Policies

Provision needs to be made for C2 uses within the plan. National policy states that we should ensure we are providing a mix of housing for all people. We are an aging population and yet there is no policy provision for C2 development, whether it be care homes or extra care.

14. 2011 Appropriate Evidence Base

Agree

15 & 16 Level of growth

Must be viewed as a minimum and cannot ignore requirements for Coventry

Preferred Option for Growth

We believe there needs to be more than one approach and would support the following;

Option A – High Frequency Public Transport Corridors and Hubs

Option E – The UKC and HS2

Option F – Limited Expansion of Rural Villages/Settlement

I set out below the reasons why we consider the other options unacceptable.

Option B – Solihull Town Centre

To simply focus development on Solihull Town Centre would result in an over burden of the existing infrastructure. It is also unlikely that Solihull itself could accommodate the amount of development required over the plan period. I am not aware of any capacity study having been carried out.

Option C - North Solihull/Chelmsey Wood

Comments above in relation to Solihull Town Centre apply. Development should not be contained to one area in order to let the Borough as a whole benefit.

Option D – Shirley/A34 Corridor

Comments above in relation to Solihull Town Centre apply. To focus development on this corridor will result in further congestion on the A34. Whilst a Centre has been created in Shirley, gaining access to the majority of shops and facilities requires driving due to its linear form.

A balanced approach to development should be taken, which will focus on various parts of the Borough, around good transport links and corridors to encourage sustainable development and also in smaller settlements which have good facilities and links in order to allow these communities to continue to thrive and avoid schools, pubs, shops etc closing.

Whilst we recognise the need for Green Belt in the Borough we consider it is both necessary and appropriate to review the Green Belt boundaries to accommodate future growth proposed in the Borough. We consider that there are sites within the Borough that do not perform an 'effective'

Green Belt function or accord with paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which could provide opportunities to accommodate growth within the Borough and contribute to sustainable communities. This should be considered in the Borough's objective of retaining an effective Green Belt.

We respectfully ask you give consideration to our comments and ask you to review Blythe House for open Market housing. Please continue to advise us of any progress on the Local Plan Review

Yours faithfully



Donna Savage

BSc Hons, Dip TP, MRTPI