

## **Minutes of Forum Meeting held at Arden Academy on 07.12.2016**

### **1. Agenda Item 1 – Chairman’s welcome**

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Gary Palmer and Cllr Ian Courts (SMBC) to the meeting along with Michael Davies of Savills and Martin Murphy of Arden Academy representing the two proposed housing sites at Hampton Road and the Arden Triangle respectively.

Cllr Courts addressed the meeting and stated that the Draft Local Plan Review was a non-statutory consultation exercise. Following which, a Pre-Submission draft would be prepared which would then go forward to public examination. He stated that the evidence base is still developing but that the aim of the Council is that a Pre-submission draft should be available in Spring 2017. Once approved, the Plan aims to cover the period up to 2033. He stated that greater housing provision is needed for a number of reasons including the fact that people are living longer and in smaller households. He stated that in numbers, the Solihull area is looking at approximately 6000 additional houses, 4000 from Solihull’s own need and a further 2000 as a share of the greater Housing Market Area (Greater Birmingham area) as the council has a legal duty to cooperate with neighbouring councils in order to meet housing need. He said that the Council had a balanced approach to new housing but that if you “sprinkle” development you get all the downside and none of the benefits.

Gary Palmer (SMBC planning officer) reported that the Council’s approach was a balanced one between concentrated and dispersed development, that site boundaries were not fixed and that a concept masterplan would be developed which would include more detail.

Andrew Freeman (KDBH forum) stated that the Council had failed to meet the balanced methodology they claimed, as 1050 out of 6150 new houses across Solihull had been concentrated on two sites in Knowle and that this number took no account of the 350 houses which the KDBH area has already delivered as part of the 2013 Local Plan. Knowle currently has 3900 houses so, even discounting the 2013 allocations and any windfalls, this number represents an increase in size of 27%. He asked why other sites which have better access to transport and jobs (A34 corridor, JLR site, UK Central Hub etc.) have been rejected. He also went on to say that the two site option goes against the wishes of residents as expressed in the survey. With regard to Green Belt sites only 4% supported development of 100-500 dwellings such as proposed Hampton Road and a mere 2% supported sites of more than 500 homes such as Arden Triangle. He explained his dispersed strategy which could deliver in excess of 600 houses within the KDBH area without the requirement for any large sites, which is what the residents supported. He also raised the issue of density and stated that 58% of local residents wished the current lower than average density to be maintained and suggested that the Council’s suggested 38 houses per hectare is too high. The other issue is affordable housing where 62% of residents felt that social housing for rent is not relevant for the KDBH community.

Michael Davies of Savills presented the case for the Knowle football club's proposed move at Hampton Road along with 300 new homes. He stressed that the current facilities were outdated and inadequate and the new pitches and clubhouse could be a community facility

Martin Murphy and Amy Fallis presented the case for a new secondary school which forms part of the Arden Triangle proposal, along with 450 new houses. The school/houses land swap is a one-off opportunity to provide a new £30 million school which could provide many additional benefits for the community, including a 4G football pitch, theatre, swimming pool and state of the art educational facilities.

## **2. Question and answer session**

There followed a lively session with a variety of views being expressed by the audience.

## **3. Thanks**

The Vice-Chairman thanked all the presenters and attendees, reminded people to fill in the cards provided which would give the Forum an idea of public opinion and also urged people to individually respond to the Council's proposals before the end of the consultation period on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017. He stated that a draft of the Forum's proposed response to the Local Plan would be presented at the next Forum meeting on 11th January 2017 and urged everyone to attend in order to discuss this.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.