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**Solihull Local Plan Statement of Common Ground**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Adam Kent
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Report Author Mike Dunphy	Job Title: Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Contact email: m.dunphy@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881325
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Affordable and Sustainable Homes</li><li>• Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green</li><li>• The Green Thread runs through the Council Plan</li></ul>
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet RECOMMEND to Council that:-**

- 1.1 The Statement of Common Ground at Appendix A, is signed by the Leader of the Council and submitted to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) submitted the Solihull Local Plan (SLP) to the Planning Inspectorate on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021. BDC has submitted a number of representations to this plan which focussed on gaining a better understanding of the impacts of the plan on Bromsgrove District.
- 2.2 Following these representations officers from BDC, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and SMBC have worked together to address any concerns that existed. A requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework is for the authority responsible for preparing a Local Plan to prepare a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with other plan making authorities. The purpose of the SoCG identifies the matters which Councils have in common or in dispute, and helps the

Planning Inspector to form a judgement on the matters for the examination to focus on, and whether or not the Duty to Cooperate has been met. The SoCG at Appendix A has been prepared by officers at SMBC and BDC and shows an agreed position. A separate but very similar SoCG has been agreed between SMBC and WCC. The SoCG reflects the agreed changes which have previously been discussed with members at the Strategic Planning Steering Group.

- 2.3 BDC has submitted a previous consultation response to SMBC which highlighted the need to explain both the local implications of development within Solihull Borough on the infrastructure of Bromsgrove District, and also further explanation of the housing requirements. The draft version of the plan which SMBC published in November 2020 contained both an explanation of the housing requirement and information on the infrastructure implications. Some concern did still exist about the local impact of development as expressed in this Council's response to SMBC:

'The particular concern is, the accessibility of Whitlocks End station for pedestrians accessing it from these new sites, and the overall capacity and safety of the road junctions in this broad location particularly along Tilehouse Lane. Whilst the plan does have policies in place to manage these issues it was felt by BDC for the plan to be sound, that they needed to be strengthened, to that end we have worked with officers at Solihull MBC and Worcestershire CC to agree a set of changes which will allay our concerns.'

- 2.4 The Council's response was presented to and discussed with members at the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) which took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020, where it was agreed that the response should be submitted to SMBC and a SoCG entered into in due course. There has been no change in the situation since the SPSG considered this issue in November 2020. The full response can be seen at Appendix A of this report as an appendix to the SoCG.
- 2.5 The Duty to Cooperate session of the Solihull Local Plan examination took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021. BDC officers observed this session, SMBC outlined the engagement that has taken place and the fact that the wording of the SoCG was agreed by officers, but yet to be endorsed by BDC members. The inspectors requested that they are informed of the progress of the SoCG through BDC's formal processes. The examination is currently scheduled to close in December 2021.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.2 SMBC has submitted its plan in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 3.3 It is important that Bromsgrove District Council continues to engage in this process, and also beyond the adoption of the SLP when the plan is implemented by SMBC; we have agreed to this ongoing engagement.

**5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 The SoCG in itself does not have any direct implications for the strategic purposes. Although the ongoing process of the Duty to Cooperate with other councils will help to ensure that all authorities aim to plan in a coherent way which does not adversely affect the aims and objectives of other councils.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 5.2 The SoCG focuses on ensuring that the traffic impacts of the SLP are mitigated in a sustainable manner. This includes providing better access to Whitlocks End train station, encouraging more trips to be made by rail as opposed to private car, which will help to address the required decrease in carbon emissions.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 The SoCG has no Equality or Diversity implications.

**Operational Implications**

- 6.2 There are no operational implications.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 The risks associated with not signing the SoCG are that it will render the current officer agreement with SMBC irrelevant, and BDC may lose any control over the implementation of the SLP.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix A – Statement of Common Ground SMBC and BDC

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Cabinet**  
2021

20<sup>th</sup> October

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**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Adam Kent	6 <sup>th</sup> October
Lead Director / Head of Service	Ruth Bamford	6 <sup>th</sup> October
Financial Services	James Howse	6 <sup>th</sup> October
Legal Services	Claire Felton	6 <sup>th</sup> October
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	