

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND (SOCG) BETWEEN: SOLIHULL MBC (SMBC) and BROMSGROVE DC (BDC)

1. Introduction

1. The content of this SOCG is to inform the submission of the SMBC local plan and ongoing works associated with the delivery of The UKC Hub development proposals in particular.
2. This SOCG has been prepared in accordance with national guidance and is intended to cover matters of strategic importance relevant to the signatories to this SOCG. It covers both areas of agreement and areas that remain subject to further discussion.

Period Covered by SOCG

3. From July 2015 when SMBC commenced work on updating the current adopted development plan (the Solihull Local Plan Dec 2013) and it remains a live document to be updated as necessary.

2. Areas Solihull MBC & BDC are in Agreement

Solihull Local Plan Review

4. It is acknowledged that SMBC have published consultation material relating to its Local Plan review process at the following dates and stages:
 - Scope, Issues and Options – November 2015
 - Draft Local Plan – November 2016
 - Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation – January 2019
 - Draft Submission Plan – October 2020
5. In each case BDC have been consulted on these documents and have engaged as they felt appropriate at the time.

Housing Need

6. Both Solihull MBC and Bromsgrove DC are authorities that form part of the Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (HMA).
7. Solihull MBC Council and BDC have been active members of the GBSLEP HMA Technical Officers Group since it was created and have contributed to all discussions relating to the delivery of unmet housing need with the HMA
8. This engagement has been ongoing and effective in so far as it has resulted in unmet housing need (to 2031) within the HMA being reduced from 37,572 dwellings in 2015 to 2,597 dwellings as at 2019. This is as documented in the HMA Position Statement no. 3 July 2020. Whilst BDC have not formally endorsed the position statement, they do not dispute any of the factual positions set out in the statement.
9. BDC have not raised any concerns through the R19 consultation to Solihull's approach to dealing with unmet need from elsewhere in the HMA.

Employment Land

10. BDC has not approached SMBC to ask for assistance in accommodating employment land that cannot be accommodated within BDC.

Policy BL1 and Infrastructure Development Plan

11. The only representations BDC made on Solihull's Draft Submission Plan were in relation to policy BL1 (the site allocation for a residential development of some 350 dwellings on land west of Dickens Heath close to the boundary with Bromsgrove district) and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
12. The concerns relate to the accessibility of Whitlock End train station for pedestrians accessing it from the site, and the overall capacity and safety of the road junctions in this broad location particularly along Tilehouse Lane.
13. The representations indicate that BDC believe that the plan is legally compliant and complies with the duty to cooperate. In relation to soundness, BDC believe that subject to changes the plan is sound.
14. The changes outlines in BDC's representation helpfully highlight suggested changes to Policy BL1 parts (2) and (3) through the provision of additional text that relates to safe access to the train station and potential highway improvements along Tilehouse Lane. The former issue is also covered in suggested amendments to the IDP at section 3.1.6.
15. It is agreed the SMBC endorse these changes and suggest a modification to the Solihull Local Plan.

Duty to Cooperate

16. BDC agree with SMBC that the Council has complied with its legal obligations under the duty to cooperate and if there is a difference between Solihull and other authorities in the HMA, this is around the issue of the soundness of the plan.

3. Areas Subject to Ongoing Discussion

17. Both SMBC and BDC will continue to engage through the examination process with a view to supporting the Inspector in identifying appropriate and justified amendments to Policy BL1 (and any associated supporting text/documents) to ensure that (a) safe accessibility for pedestrians using Whitlocks End station is achieved and (b) that the policy highlighted the potential for appropriate highway improvements along Tilehouse Lane.
18. This continued engagement will be undertaken alongside Worcestershire County Council.

4. Areas Subject to Disagreement

19. There are no areas of disagreement outstanding at this stage.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Bromsgrove District Council publication stage representation



Solihull MBC Local Plan
Publication Stage Representation
Form

Ref:

(For
official
use only)

Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:

Please return to psp@solihull.gov.uk or Policy and Engagement, Solihull MBC, Solihull, B91 3QB BY Monday 14th December 23:59

Our Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/About-the-Council/Data-protection-FOI/Solihull-Council-Statement/Economy-and-Infrastructure/Policy-Engagement>

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*		2. Agent's Details (if applicable)
<i>*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation (if applicable) boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.</i>		
Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>	<input type="text"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Mike"/>	<input type="text"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Dunphy"/>	<input type="text"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Strategic Planning and Conservation manager"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Bromsgrove District Council"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text" value="01527 881325"/>	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address	<input type="text" value="m.dunphy@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk"/>	<input type="text"/>

(where relevant)

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph Policy Policies Map

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

4.(1) Legally compliant	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.(2) Sound	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox" value="X (subject to changes)"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tick as appropriate

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Bromsgrove District Council has concerns about the implications of development sites adjacent to the Councils boundaries in the Blythe Valley area. The particular concern is, the accessibility of Whitlock 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.

This response is an officer only this at stage

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

As highlighted above BDC has discussed changes to policy BL1 and the IDP to ensure that concerns of the transport infrastructure in and around Wythall are adequately addressed through the policies in the plan, these changes can be seen on the additional sheet.

We would suggest that the changes can be considered as appropriate modifications to the plan.

The Councils including Worcestershire county Council will work together on a Statement of Common Ground to formally agree a shared position.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

If felt necessary we would like appear at the EIP to explain Bromsgrove District Councils concerns in more detail, and explain why it is felt the modifications are required.

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

9. Signature:

Michael Dunphy

Date:

10.12.20

Changes highlighted in red text

Policy BL1 - West of Dickens Heath

1. The site is allocated for 350 dwellings.
2. Development of the site should be broadly consistent with the principles as shown in the concept masterplan below, which include:
 - i. A pedestrian link north of the hedgerow along Tythe Barn Lane is proposed in order to provide a safe route to Whitlocks End Station. Likewise opportunities to connect to the public footpath over the Stratford Canal are promoted.
 - ii. Pedestrian access improvements to provide a safe crossing of Tilehouse Lane and safe walking access to both platforms at Whitlocks end station.
 - iii. Connection to proposed Dickens Heath to Solihull town centre cycle route.
 - iii. Provision of 2.3ha of public open space, including children's play.
 - iv. Relocation of the existing sports provision south of Tythe Barn Lane to a suitable site in the vicinity;
 - v. Retention of Local Wildlife Sites, with potential for enhancement and appropriate buffer to Tythe Barn Coppice ancient woodland.
 - vi. Retention of trees and hedgerows within the site and along Tythe Barn Lane to conserve the character of this approach into Dickens Heath;
 - vii. Provision of suitable SuDS and flood risk management;
 - viii. On site accommodation for older people in accordance with Policy P4E
 - ix. 5% of open market dwellings to be provided in the form of Self and Custom Build Plots in accordance with Policy 4D
3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:
 - i. Financial contribution to education provision as required by the Local Education Authority;
 - ii. Developer contributions to primary care health services in the vicinity and appropriate UHB secondary care services in the wider CCG.
 - iii. Relocation of the existing sports provision;

iv. Highway improvements as required including junction improvements, speed reduction measures and access improvements along Tilehouse Lane from its junction with Haslucks Green Road to its junction with Birchy Leasowes Lane..

v. Provision of above ground SuDS features and deculverting of existing watercourse through site where feasible.

vi. Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including safe pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Dickens Heath, Whitlocks End Station and the Stratford upon Avon Canal towpath in accordance with the Council’s LCWIP.

4. Green Belt enhancements will include:

i. Enhancement of public right of way towards canal towpath.

ii. Positive management of Local Wildlife sites

iii. Replacement sports provision with enhanced facilities

5. To support sustainable development within the area, the site should be promoted in a comprehensive basis supporting the positively planned relocation of the existing sports facilities south of Tythe Barn Lane to alternative locations within the surrounding area. Until such time as these facilities are appropriately relocated or robust plans have been confirmed to secure a timely relocation that would prevent the closure of any associated clubs (either for a short period of time or permanently), development of the site will not be supported.

6. The Concept Masterplan document should be read alongside this policy. Whilst the concept masterplans may be subject to change in light of further work that may need to be carried out at the planning application stage, any significant departure from the principles outlined for Site 4 will need to be justified and demonstrate that the overall objectives for the site and its wider context are not compromised.

IDP Changes

3.1.6 RAIL SERVICES	
Lead Agency	Department for Transport Network Rail West Midlands Rail Executive Train operating companies
Evidence Base	West Midlands Rail Executive Rail Investment Strategy Control Period 6 Delivery Plan (2019-2024)

<p>Strategic Issues</p>	<p>The management of the UK rail industry has changed significantly during 2020 largely as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. All services are now believed to be covered by Emergency Measures Agreements.</p> <p>Network Rail own and manage the country's rail infrastructure, e.g. the tracks, signalling systems, tunnels.⁴⁹</p> <p>Network Rail has a Delivery Plan, which was updated in 2019. This focuses on a variety of factors, including safety, increasing rail capability, e.g. during extreme weather events and running more trains, more punctually for passengers and freight.</p>
<p>Existing provision</p>	<p>The rail network in the Borough is provided by five rail franchises operating from eleven rail stations. A number of long distance rail services serve the borough particularly from Birmingham International.</p> <p>The network tapers off during the evening and is more restricted on Sundays. The map below sets out the rail network in the Borough.</p> <p>Three railway lines run through the Borough:</p> <p>1) The West Coast Mainline which stops at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marston Green • Birmingham International • Hampton-in-Arden • Berkswell <p>The West Coast Mainline is the busiest line in the country, already with high speed capacity for 125mph trains.</p> <p>2) The Chiltern Railway line which stops at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olton • Solihull • Widney Manor • Dorridge <p>3) Stratford-upon-Avon line which stops at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shirley • Whitlocks End • Earlswood (on Borough boundary)
<p>Gaps in provision</p>	<p>Prior to Covid-19 the rail network across the West Midlands was suffering from scarcity of track capacity, network bottlenecks, overcrowded trains, poor access to the rail network, gaps in network of existing services, low frequencies, long journey times, inferior station facilities, stations with poor accessibility for passengers with reduced personal mobility, inadequate parking for cars and cycles and inadequate integration with bus links.</p>
<p>Planned provision</p>	<p>The Avanti West Coast contract includes commitments to new</p>

	<p>trains, replacing first class accommodation with standard and providing additional 200 car parking spaces at Birmingham International. The West Midlands Trains contract includes a proposal to significantly improve Sunday services from May 2021 along with improvements to station facilities, which has yet to be implemented.</p> <p>The Chiltern Railways contract comes to an end during 2021. It is not known how the Department for Transport intends to respond to this, but this could be an opportunity to lobby for infrastructure and service proposals.</p> <p>The Urban Growth Company is leading on an upgrade to Birmingham International railway station and Solihull Council is leading on an upgrade to Solihull railway station. Behind both of these schemes is a desire to deliver much improved, modern passenger facilities capable of accommodating passenger growth over the next 30 years, whilst providing improved integration with other modes of travel.</p>
<p>Impact of development proposals</p>	<p>The development proposals should generate additional pressures on the railway network as passenger numbers rise – for example pressure on capacity and car parking and general pressure on the road network around railway stations.</p>
<p>Delivery potential</p>	<p>Potential expansion of Whitlocks End Park and Ride, close to Site BL1 <u>and measures to improve pedestrian access to and around Whitlocks End Station.</u></p> <p>Increased parking capacity at Berkswell Station as part of Site BC1 Barretts Farm.</p> <p>Birmingham International and Solihull railway station schemes.</p> <p>Improvements to encourage active travel from proposed Local Plan sites to Whitlocks End, Berkswell and Dorridge stations.</p>
<p>Role of Local Plan</p>	<p>The Submission Draft Local Plan encourages a more sustainable pattern of transport use. There may be a need to support growth to railway stations within the context of respecting wider environmental considerations.</p>
<p><u>Opportunities for Ongoing Cooperation as part of delivery</u></p>	<p><u>As part of delivering the draft Local Plan SMBC are committed to continue working constructively and actively with neighbouring authorities and infrastructure providers to support local and cross boundary infrastructure improvements, as appropriate to the growth aspirations of the Borough and its neighbours. In this case SMBC will work with neighbouring authorities, TFWM, Network Rail and rail providers to support the upgrade and delivery of rail services.</u></p>

	<p><u>By way of example this will include the requirements outlined above but also further network improvements such as joint working with BDC and WCC in particular to secure long term improvements to the Stratford-upon-Avon line.</u></p>
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