

Solihull Local Plan Review (draft supplementary consultation)

Response of Cannock Chase District Council: 5th March 2019

It is noted that the current consultation is selective in its scope. Namely, it does not seek to revise the contribution that the Council is making towards the wider housing market area shortfall (paragraph 5 of the consultation document). The document states that this will be considered through the draft submission version of the plan.

Cannock Chase District Council would refer to its previous response, provided in February 2017 to the Solihull Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation. Support was expressed for the additional 2,000 homes contribution to addressing the wider GBBCHMA housing shortfall. However our response also expressed concerns and objected to the Local Plan as there was no clear justification for the figure and it was implied that this figure was a maximum, with no consideration of other options or for a review.

The current Draft Local Plan document (paragraph 24-27) outlines that such concerns were expressed by a number of parties in response to the previous consultation. The document acknowledges the Strategy Growth Study (GL Hearn/Wood) which has been published since the previous consultation. Reference is then made to the potential for the current 2,000 dwellings contribution to be revisited as part of the Submission Draft Plan (and the Council will provide its response to the Strategic Growth Study at this stage too (paragraph 49)).

Cannock Chase Council welcomes reference to the housing shortfall contribution figure being the subject of review and will continue to engage with Solihull MBC as part of the GBBCHMA housing market area working groups, under the Duty to Cooperate. However, it is of major concern that this fundamental issue will only be revisited in the later and formal stages of the Local Plan process. This potentially means there is limited scope for this figure to be genuinely reconsidered, and for the findings of the Strategic Growth Study to be fully tested (e.g. recommended areas of search for strategic development). It should be recognised that other local authorities (for instance South Staffordshire) are actively considering options for addressing the housing shortfall, drawing upon the findings of the Strategic Growth Study. Cannock Chase Council will shortly be consulting on its Local Plan Review Issues and Options document (received Cabinet approval for consultation on 7th February 2019). This sets out a range of options for addressing the shortfall, again drawing upon the Strategic Growth Study findings.

Our previous response also raised issues in relation to potential implications for the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) arising from the approach of the Draft Local Plan. These comments remain relevant.