

24, Maxstoke Croft,  
Shirley,  
B90 4DH

Dear Mr Palmer

I understand that Solihull Borough is expected to provide sites which can be developed into housing. I do not understand why Shirley is expected to absorb 38% of that allocation, or, when housing shortages are cited as such important issues car dealerships are given land which could be far better served by houses?

Can your department please consider very carefully before allowing any additional developments being approved on sites 11, 12 and 26. As far as I can see there are no apparent positive benefits for Shirley and many serious negatives.

Within the section of the "draft local plan review" that concerns itself with sustainable economic growth, it lists 11 specific areas to be considered within the 'Challenges and Objectives Addressed by the Policy'.

At least 7 of those objectives are not currently being met within the Shirley area. I have listed these below along with my explanation of why each are not being met:

**1. Sustaining the attractiveness of the Borough for people who live, work and invest in Solihull.**

How any additional urbanisation of an area can be considered to sustain the attractiveness of any area which is already losing its battle to cope with the current demands is very hard to believe. Green fields and pleasant areas for children to play, along with no congested or pot-holed roads are what make an area attractive. Solihull council need to achieve these basic things first before building on the remaining green space we do still have and making our area even worse than it is now.

**2. Securing sustainable economic growth.**

The Shirley Parkgate shopping complex was built after consuming existing park land, with precious oak trees being felled in the process. Since its opening in 2014, its units have never been fully occupied, showing that we are already unable to secure sustainable economic growth.

**3. Climate change.**

With the recent Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green expansion, there is now a significant increase in the volume of traffic on Shirley's roads as can be seen by the daily queueing on Tanworth Lane/Stretton Road and relentless stream of traffic on Dickens Heath Road. The carbon emission reports produced by Solihull Council show encouraging reductions in our carbon emissions however, on closer inspection the report excludes any forms of transport which is well known to be one of the major contributors to urban pollution and the subsequent knock-on effects to human health.

**4. Increasing accessibility and encouraging sustainable travel.**

It may be worth mentioning that the bus routes which serve this area have been reduced to hourly which may necessitate even more people having to get in their cars and clogging up the roads and increasing the pollution. Although consideration is given to cycle lanes on recent developments roads are far too busy and narrow for existing roads to safely accommodate cyclists safely. Perhaps investments in upgrading current routes need to be seriously improved before people would feel safe taking to their bikes for a commute to work or school. – By serious I don't mean removing the

line in the middle of the road and painting white cycle lines next to the pavement, which then disappear when the road is not deemed wide enough!

I also would invite anyone from your department to visit Tanworth Lane at the junction by Miller and Carter to experience the queues from Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath and the tailbacks on Tanworth Lane and Stretton Road each weekday morning between 7.30am and 9.00am. The current road system cannot cope with existing volumes of traffic so any additional burden, in terms of even more cars travelling on local roads from the proposed housing, would be unsustainable.

#### **5. Improving health and well-being.**

Shirley has already lost significant green field space. If further land is lost to development it can only be at the expense of our health and well-being. The fields provide a safe and beautiful environment for locals to take advantage of to walk, jog and cycle, if this is removed or further restricted it can only have a negative effect on peoples physical and mental health. Once the land is built on it has gone forever, so future generations will never experience any of its benefits.

#### **6. Protecting and enhancing our natural assets.**

I appreciate houses have to be provided but there are many brown site opportunities to consider before additional green fields should be built on. Once they are gone they cannot be replaced. All brown site land should be utilised before any green belt land be considered. I would suggest that brown sites are considered more costly for investors, in terms of cleaning the sites for residential use, and they are also clearly looking at short term financial profits for their shareholders rather than the long-term environmental costs to the residents.

#### **7. Water quality and flood risk.**

I can provide photos of flooding which occur on the fields adjacent to Baxter's road. Further development would only lead to increased flooding and by removing the natural assets it would in turn reduce our health and well-being.

So, until these issues are addressed any additional developments will only exacerbate existing problems.

If all available avenues to avoid building 38% of the housing in Shirley have been exhausted and the housing must be built, then please at least introduce restrictions. Such as;

- All properties must be small and affordable - this would then give local people the opportunity to get onto the housing ladder.
- Only sell to first time buyers - this would help property remain at realistic prices, preventing landlords charging excessive rents which are then unaffordable to local young people.

Currently MP'S from both sides of the House are continuing to support the project to build HS2. As a result of the ever increasing and uncontrollable public spend on this project, Solihull Council is now expected to provide extra housing which may be required for people to use the proposed HS2 interchange station. Could I also suggest that any houses required to service this development are allocated nearer to the HS2 hub, to avoid further congestion problems with commuters driving across the Borough to reach UK Central Hub area. The way traffic levels are in the Shirley area currently, it will take longer to drive from the proposed housing to the HS2 hub than travel from there to London!

I hope you consider my concerns seriously,

Regards

Helen Blyth