

Response to Solihull Draft Local Plan

I am concentrating on the plans for Balsall Common where I live. I was dismayed to see that SMBC proposes to allocate 25% of the Borough's new housing to our village. But relieved to see that SMBC intends to revamp and enhance the village centre and infrastructure, which is sorely in need of attention. Recently, a Village Centre Working Group included SMBC in the consultations regarding improving the village centre with shared spaces and upgrading the Library car park, mending the broken pavements etc.. But nothing has been done.

The proposed housing sites do not affect me personally except that daily traffic will be increased especially along the A452. More reasons for the bypass – the construction traffic could use this as well as HS2 traffic. We need the bypass to alleviate the through traffic – this cannot come soon enough. The traffic along the A452 is horrendous and will only get worse. I also like the idea that with a bypass SMBC could enhance the entrances to the village along the A452. I hope that there would be a 30 mile an hour limit and many changes to the road so that it would be unappealing to HGVs.

I would hope that the Village Centre and the bypass would be the priorities before the housing commences. The SDLP includes ‘specialist housing to meet the need of older people’ - I very much hope that these plans will include a retirement village style complex nearer the centre of the village.

Here in rural Balsall Common, we are very much the poor cousin of the borough. Yet because our schools are outstanding against all odds with the overcrowding – families want to live here. A new primary school is badly needed – I am glad to see this in your master plan for our village. There is a wonderful community spirit. People do care about where they live. We also need the green spaces. SMBC proposes to amend the Green Belt boundary of Balsall Common – on paper the boundary seems to make sense but this relies on the bypass being built.

The station has been improved but not the parking which now causes daily dangers with overspill cars parked in adjacent roads. Public transport is almost non existent.

I am relieved to see that the above problems have been highlighted in the SDLP and hope they will all be tackled in the SLP.

I look forward to reading the results of this consultation and hope that the results will confirm the need for the improvements to Balsall Common and that SMBC will implement these as soon as possible, hopefully before any house building commences.

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