

22 Binton Road
Shirley
Solihull
B90 2QH

5th March 2019

Dear Mr. Palmer,

re: Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation

We are responding to the Draft Local Plan on behalf of the South Solihull Community Group (SSCG). Our comments are directed at issues that affect the Blythe Villages whilst re-affirming the over development of housing in South Shirley. This area is being expected to deliver over 38% of the new development on approximately 24% of the total greenbelt. Much of this housing quota in the DLP is based on 2014 sub national population data. Later data from 2016 shows a lower number of houses needed in Solihull. Similarly, it appears that retirement apartments are not included in the count of new homes. It can be argued that each apartment "frees" a family dwelling.

We are pleased that Site 13 has been removed from the Draft Plan but there are concerns that this may be affected by washover from the newly added Site 26. Therefore, it is recommended strongly that Site 13 is made a nature reserve protecting it in perpetuity for generations as recommended in the National Planning Policy Framework (offsetting to mitigate loss of high grade greenbelt). It is worth noting that this area includes many sites of ancient historical interest including the bridleway (formerly Peacock Lane), the Saltway, earthwork mounds being inhabited by Celtic Britons and Romans. There is documented research to support this including that provided by High Speed Rail. A copy of their report being made available to Solihull MBC.

The Group concerns for Blythe Villages are expressed in the following bullet points. However, we are happy to expand upon these if you view this necessary.

Transport issues:

already extensive road congestion in Shirley especially peak times

2050 new homes creates 4,000 additional cars

pollution levels resulting from above

limited parking at rail stations

road improvements restricted by ancient hedgerows

Other infrastructure considerations:

additional pressure on already under resourced GP Practices

adequacy of school places

loss of sporting amenities for youth

large areas of Blythe prone to flooding

loss of irreplaceable green belt

Some suggestions for mitigation of above:

Site 13 being upgraded from public open space to nature reserve

expansion of off-road cycle routes

sustainable public transport

more park and ride spaces

Earlswood rail station has land capacity for park and ride

Additional concerns regarding Shirley - 38% of the build

The developments will have a significant adverse impact on the ecology of the area. Potential loss of habitats that support legally protected species including great crested newts, badger setts and bat roosts.

We do agree with Para. 141 regarding Green Belt Enhancements, particularly the allocation of a country park on the land at South Shirley, previously Site 13.

"Objectives" (page 20) from the Solihull Local Plan Review 2016 November states that proposed development should, "Ensure quality design and development which integrates with its surroundings and creates safer, inclusive, adaptable and sustainable places which make a positive contribution to the Borough's sense of place, attractiveness and to people's quality of life."

Prime Minister's statement January 2018 on the government's 25 year Environmental Policy she states, "We hold our natural environment in trust for the next generation. By implementing the measures in this ambitious plan, ours can become the first generation to leave that environment in a better state than we found it and pass on to the next generation a natural environment protected and enhanced for the future."


In the Council's Woodland Strategy the aim is stated:

"landscape quality and local distinctiveness - to maintain and where appropriate improve aesthetic value and local identity."

The residents wish "previously site 13" to be assured for the future, as an open public space (Nature Reserve / Village Green / Country Park). The area has evidence of important history events dating back to 880 AD. The open green belt aesthetic value and local identity is enjoyed by the residents of South Shirley.

The SSCGroup exists to support the people of Shirley, campaigning to protect their neighbourhood from over development, offering solutions to improve green spaces, organising litter picking teams etc. It hopes to work in partnership with Solihull MBC to achieve these aims.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

On behalf of South Solihull Community Group

Sylvia Gardiner BEM – Chair
Sally Woodhall – Treasurer
Jo Hill - Secretary
Jennifer Archer – Community Liaison
Mark Davies – IT Support
Margaret Lukeman
Mark Taft
Rachel Bennett Diane Dufrane

cc Dame Caroline A Spelman DBE & Julian C Knight