

Our Ref: LS/fm/PF/8808
(Please reply to Banbury office)

11th March 2019

Policy and Spatial Planning
Solihull MBC
Council House
Manor Square
Solihull
B91 3QB

Dear Sirs,

**REVIEWING THE PLAN FOR SOLIHULL'S FUTURE, SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
DRAFT LOCAL PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY CONSULTATION JANUARY 2019**

These representations are submitted on behalf of the Trustees of the National Motorcycle Museum who are currently progressing proposals for the enhancement and extension to the existing site to maintain its competitiveness as a national conference centre and tourist destination and the provision of new facility in the form of the hotel accommodation. This could be alongside the erection of a new Motorcycle Museum so as to form a major visitor attraction in the region.

Please find enclosed:

- A site location plan;
- The completed consultation response form.

We have submitted representations to previous versions of the Draft Local Plan and these representations should be read alongside these previous comments.

Further to the proforma, we provide more detailed responses to some of the questions raised below. First I set out background to the proposals at the site.

The Site

The site comprises the existing National Motorcycle Museum (the Museum) and conference facilities. Access to the site is directly from the A45 junction on the M42 motorway (Junction 6).

The Museum consists of five exhibition halls and conference rooms for hire. There are currently 13 conferencing rooms for hire. In addition there are approximately 400 car parking spaces on site.

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The National Motorcycle Museum opened in October 1984, with a collection of more than 350 motorcycles on display. The conference venues and banqueting suites followed on in 1985.

Within the Museum there are in excess of 800 machines each fully restored to the manufacturer's original specifications. The Museum's aim is to preserve this history for future generations to come.

The Museum is recognised as the finest and largest motorcycle museum in the world. The Museum is however presently outdated in its display of motorcycles and lacks features of a modern museum including interactive display and interpretative techniques. The Museum has potential to provide an enhanced visitor attraction. The Museum is important for the recording of the British motorcycle industry and as such is an important contributor to the heritage of the motorcycle industry especially in the West Midlands.

Site plans are attached.

Background

The Trustees of the National Motorcycle Museum have engaged with a team of consultants to prepare a planning application for a multi-million investment at the Museum including a new museum to the east of the existing buildings and new hotel to provide overnight accommodation for conference delegates.

The proposal is for the provision of a new hotel following a re-format of the existing Museum accommodation.

In order to maintain the market share of the conference business of the Museum, it is proposed to construct a new hotel of circa 250 hotel rooms to support the existing conference business. The Museum will operate the hotel.

There is an increasing requirement from conference hosts that hotel accommodation has to be available at the Museum in order to justify Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and make effective use of the conference venue. The Museum operates two 'off site hotels' which can no longer provide the level of conference accommodation which is sought.

Major new investment in the site will enable substantial updating of the Museum, which houses the largest collection of British motorcycles in the world. Presently the display is static, insufficient space is available for interactive displays. Therefore, it is proposed to erect a new museum building to be built on land to the east of the existing complex, to provide a tourism location displaying the heritage of the British motorcycle industry.

The Trustees have been in pre-application discussions with the Council regarding proposals at the site. Participation has also commenced with the local community and statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency etc.

Consultation will also be undertaken and in some cases has already commenced with, among others UK Central, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, Birmingham Central, HS2, Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham Business Park, Resorts World and Jaguar Landrover. This consultation will ensure the synergies of the proposal with the regeneration initiatives in the area are fully realised.

The Proposals

The proposals are for the erection of a new hotel and the enhancement and extension to the existing Museum at the site including;

1. Erection of a new Museum to the east of the site.
2. The construction of a hotel of circa 250 hotel rooms following a reformatting of the existing Museum.
3. The Museum is supported by the revenue generated by the existing on site conference facilities. The conference facility provides the 'financial engine' that supports the Museum in its acquisition and display of British motorcycles. The Museum, like the overwhelming majority of museums, cannot be self-sustaining in terms of revenue.
4. Evidence is available that the competitiveness of the conference facilities is suffering as a consequence of the absence of overnight facilities. Large corporations are declining to take conference space and the Museum based delegates have to move off site. Many competing venues e.g. the Metropole have the benefit of overnight accommodation. In order to maintain the economic sustainability of the Museum it is proposed to construct a hotel to support the existing conference and business and to ensure the future viability at the museum;
5. The proposal utilises the existing access arrangement from Junction 6 (the provision of overnight accommodation will reduce the amount of trip movement to and from the site in the morning and evening peak).

Representations

Question 44 Are there any other consultation comments you wish to make on the Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation?

Although this supplementary consultation is focussing on housing numbers and updating proposed allocations, it is important to re-iterate our views that the subject site should be included in the UK Central Area and for the reasons set out below it is considered that the growth area should be extended south to include the NMM site.

Paragraph 323 describes the UK Central Hub areas as follows:

"The area known as the UK Central Hub is focussed on the main economic assets located around junction 6 of the M42. The principal elements are as follows (and includes land currently located in the Green Belt):

- Arden Cross Land including the HS2 interchange
- Birmingham Airport
- The NEC
- Jaguar Land Rover

- *Birmingham Business Park*

Paragraphs 327 states:

“Alongside the economic benefits the development of the hub is an opportunity as part of the wider UK Central proposals to improve links with the surrounding area in particular North Solihull with the prospect for improved access to employment.”

Paragraph 329 states:

“In order to realise the development potential of The Hub a significant amount of land has been made available to deliver the growth envisaged. To support development investment programmes are in place that will assist to enhance connectivity including the HS2 station, improvements to the M42 and A45, investment in airport capacity and rebuilding of Birmingham International Station. Other factors supporting growth at the Hub include the announcement that the West Midlands is to become the UK’s first ever multi city test bed for 5G mobile technology. Events planned at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games will take place at the NEC showcasing opportunities presented at the Hub.”

Paragraphs 331, 332 and 333 states:

“It is anticipated that the UK Central Hub site will make a significant contribution towards the delivery of homes and economic development in the Borough during the plan period and beyond. The extension of High Speed rail to the West Midlands will be significant, reducing journey times to London to 38 minutes and enhancing existing connectivity provided via Birmingham airport and via the region’s extensive road and motorway network. As the site of the first railway interchange station outside London The Hub is uniquely placed to capture these benefits.

The Hub is therefore a unique site with the potential to deliver major growth on a nationally significant scale both to meet the economic growth aims of the Borough as well as the wider growth aspirations of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and the West Midlands Combined Authority...

It is clear that co-ordinating the development ambitions of all stakeholders and delivering a range of growth opportunities will provide multiple benefits for the Borough and wider area including:

- *The delivery of a significant amount of jobs*
- *A greater range and choice of new homes for The Hub, Solihull and the wider Housing Market Area*
- *New and unique forms of high quality development*
- *The creation of healthy neighbourhoods*
- *Joined up green infrastructure*
- *The delivery of strategic infrastructure”*

It is considered that a key economic asset such as the National Motorcycle Museum site should be included within the UK Central Hub and its extent should be expanded to include the National Motorcycle Museum site.

In January 2018, the Urban Growth Company published an updated UK Central Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan and an updated Framework Plan.

The National Motorcycle Museum (NMM) site sits immediately to the south of Central Hub of the Framework Plan, which aims to build upon the existing strategically important economic assets in the area and utilise them to drive forwards growth in the region. The Hub is seen as the epicentre of the masterplan areas, the specific vision is for an international business Hub, combining tourism, leisure, including business tourism, high technologies and advanced manufacturing.

The proposed major investment at the Museum has substantial synergy with the proposals for UK Central Hub Area and the High Speed 2 Interchange Area, in particular:

- The proposals will support and contribute to the local economy. The proposals will facilitate leverage into business tourism and the visitor economy.
- The Museum Trustees envisage that the development will provide an additional 150-200 jobs and safeguard the existing 238 jobs on the site (for which the majority are residents of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council). Construction jobs will also be created through the development phase. As a result the proposals will provide employment for a wide range of skill levels, for example, the Museum would be keen to offer apprenticeships. The Trustees of the Museum are keen to ensure that local residents benefit from the jobs created.
- There are multiple socio economic opportunities from major investment in the museum including links with schools, technical colleges and manufacturers. The interactive display could for example include workshops which could have links to education bodies and manufacturers.
- The proposal will optimise an existing cultural asset. The heritage of the British motorcycle industry will be promoted through the development to emphasise a national and international branding for the development. The investment will provide opportunities for the Museum to have a far greater appeal to the younger generation in the provision of interactive exhibits and themed displays.
- The museum and hotel will support the conference facilities by providing ancillary and complementary facilities to enhance the visitor experience and support business needs.

The proposals are for enhancement and extension to the existing site to maintain its competitiveness as a national conference centre and tourist destination and the provision of major new facility in the form of the hotel accommodation. As stated above, the site is not currently identified in the Growth Area, but is sited immediately adjacent. As proposals for investment at the Museum are now available, it is considered appropriate to include the site into the Growth Area.

Paragraph 346 of the consultation document states:

“The Green Belt boundary will need to be amended to accommodate the land at Arden Cross (140 hectares) in order to deliver the HS2 interchange station and wider development at The Hub. This will facilitate the delivery of the site alongside development at the NEC which is already outside the Green Belt. These proposals are site specific as they are dependant on

the delivery of HS2 and the interchange station and will assist in delivering the needs of key economic assets supporting the local and regional economy. The land is bounded by main roads that provide strong defensible Green belt boundaries. The exceptional circumstances for releasing the Arden Cross Land from the Green Belt are therefore justified.”

The NPPF states at paragraph 137:

“137 Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:

- a) **makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;***
- b) optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
- c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.”*

In relation to making as much use as possible of brownfield sites it is useful to refer to the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment that was published in 2016. It followed a call-for-sites exercise that generated nearly 250 submissions. When they were analysed it demonstrated that 96.5% of the dwellings that could be provided on these sites that promoters were making available would be on Green Belt land – i.e. only 3.5% were non-Green Belt sites. Since then further call-for-sites submissions have been made, but these largely replicate those submitted in the first wave – i.e. the vast majority promote the use of Green Belt sites and that there are very few opportunities for non-Green Belt land are available. [emphasis added]

There is a clear paucity of land available for development within the urban area of the Borough, or within the built up areas of the rural settlements.

The site is a brownfield site suitable for development (as acknowledged in the Council’s brownfield register) in the Green Belt and effective use of it should be made.

The site has been reviewed as part of the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (July 2016) and is within refined parcel R18 known as ‘Land to the north west of Hampton in Arden’. There is not detailed assessment of the brownfield NMM site but it appears to be assessed as part of the overall assessment of the site, which acknowledges the parcel contains a substantial amount of built development. The site scores relatively poorly against the purposes of the Green Belt and is summarised on page 14 as follows:

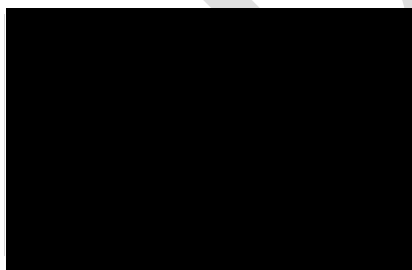
Refined Parcel	Description	Purpose Scores				Total	Highest Score
		1	2	3	4		
RP18	Land to the north west of Hampton in Arden	1	1	1	1	4	1 (All)
RP13	Land to north of 145 between M42 and A452 Chester Road	1	1	2	0	4	2 (purpose 3)

Of note the site scores similarly to the area to be released from the Green Belt for the UK Central hub area i.e RP13.

The site which is a previously developed sit in the Green Belt should be removed from the Green Belt and, or 2. The NMM site should be acknowledged as an established business in the Green Belt which could be expanded, and included in the UK Central Hub area.

If you have any queries, please contact me.

Yours faithfully



Louise Steele

Encl: A site location plan
The completed consultation response form