

Richard Westman

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12th March 2018

Policy & Spatial Planning Department
Solihull MBC
Council House
Solihull
B91 3QB

Ref - Draft Local Plan Supplement – Plan Site 245. Site 18 – Sharman’s Cross Road (capacity 100)

Dear Policy & Spatial Planning Department:

I am a long-time resident of Solihull, and I am writing to express my concern about the proposed development of the Old Rugby Club, Sharman's Cross Road, Site 18 in the draft local plan supplement – Plan site 245. This proposal will have significant impact on the surrounding area including local sports facilities at Solihull Arden Sports Club and Old Silhillians Football Club.

I have grown up playing tennis and football at these facilities and continue to use Solihull Arden Sports Club daily. The site in question is one of five sports grounds at risk in the LDP. As there is already a shortage of pitches in Solihull, SMBC has a statutory requirement to ensure lost pitches are replaced with facilities of equivalent quality and accessibility, will this be the case? Sport England has found that Solihull is in the 3rd quartile nationally for over 16 participation in sport three times per week and continues to fall in the national league tables. This will have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of young people in Solihull, something that is already at a critical point nationally. National Health Policies continue to promote physical activity as critical to long term health, yet plans like this one propose to get rid of leisure facilities in favor of housing. Would it not be better for Solihull as a whole to listen to proposals for additional sporting and leisure facilities on this land?

In 2013, I was delighted to see the SMBC minute a policy about the use of the ground in question. This policy stated that the ground should only be used for sporting purposes and that they would not sell the freehold. I would like reaffirmation of this policy which implies that this development is

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inappropriate for inclusion in the LDP. I would like to remind you that one previous application for this site has been refused and withdrawn.

In closing, I demand that the 2013 all party policy on the rugby ground, maintaining the sports ground covenant, and not selling the freehold to be retained. To not do so would be a travesty for the local area, impacting the health, wellbeing and sporting opportunities for the people of Solihull, at a time when the region should be celebrating sport in line with the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

I therefore object and ask that SMBC remove the Rugby Ground from the Draft LDP. That SMBC Honour the policy agreed in 2013 and retain the sports ground for its intended purpose.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Richard Westman

