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Dear Gary

**Solihull Local Plan Review – Draft Supplementary Consultation
Land at Smiths Lane, Browns Lane and Widney Manor Road – Bentley Heath**

On behalf of the St Phillips, we have prepared the following submission in response to the Solihull Local Plan Review – Draft Supplementary consultation document (DSLSP).

St Phillips have previously submitted representations to the Scope, Issues and Options consultation (January 2016) and Draft consultation (February 2017) in order to promote their land interests at Smiths Lane, Browns Lane and Widney Manor Road.

In addition to this letter, we have also updated the “Land at Smiths Lane, Browns Lane and Widney Manor Road Promotion Document” that was originally submitted with St Phillips’ representations to the Issues and Options Local Plan Review consultation in January 2016. The updated promotion document includes updated technical work in respect of landscape and ground conditions matters.

This letter has responded to the following questions in the DSLSP:

- Question 1
- Question 2
- General comments on Section 9
- Question 24
- Question 38
- Question 39
- Question 40
- Question 41
- Question 42

Local Plan Review Draft Supplementary Version Comments

1. Do you believe that there are exceptional circumstances that would justify the Council using an alternative approach, if so what are the exceptional circumstances and what should the alternative approach be?

We do not consider there are exceptional circumstances to deviate from the standard methodology as that is a requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (‘NPPF’) (February 2019) however we have general comments on the ‘Housing Requirement & Current Land Supply’ section of the DSLSP.

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The DSLP states that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment ('SHMA') established that the Objectively Assessed Need ('OAN') for the Borough was 13,091 new dwellings over the period 2014 to 2033 which equates to 689 dwellings per year. However, to provide a contribution to the Greater Birmingham housing shortfall, the SHMA set the housing requirement at 15,029 new dwellings (791 dwellings per annum); providing a contribution of 1938 new dwellings to GBHMA.

The Council should be using the standard methodology to determine the minimum number of homes needed and the 2014 based household projections should be used for standard methodology calculations in order to establish the Local Housing Need ('LHN') figure.

Using 2018 as the base year, the annual requirement for LHN for Solihull is 621 dwellings per year. In addition, the latest affordability ratios were published in April 2018 with the next ratios are expected to be published in March/April 2019. Using the formula in the standard methodology Solihull's percentage increase is 23.6%. When this percentage increase is applied, this results in a LHN figure of 767 dwellings per annum. As this is Solihull's Local Housing Need figure, this results in a contribution of 24 dwellings to the GBHMA. We consider that this contribution will not be sufficient. SMBC makes reference to the application of a cap to its housing requirement however, further consideration is required on how this relates to a local authorities housing need when they are picking up the housing shortfall to an adjacent authority i.e. Greater Birmingham.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ('MHCLG') published the Housing Delivery Test on 19th February 2019, alongside the updated NPPF. The housing delivery test calculates the 'housing need' for local authorities by calculating the number of homes required over the three year period and adjusted net additions over the same period.

We consider that the figures are used to incentivise local authorities to drive up housing delivery with a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". The government deems 95% delivery of assessed need as the pass rate. Councils that deliver between 85% and 95% of assessed need must develop an action plan, while those that deliver between 25% and 85% must identify 20% more land for development than originally required in the five-year supply included in Local Plans. Solihull's published housing delivery score is 109% as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Solihull Housing Delivery Test

Number of Homes Required			
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Total number of homes required
616	623	610	1,849
Number of homes delivered			
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Total number of homes required
711	547	751	2,009
Housing Delivery Test: 2018 measurement			109%
Housing Delivery Test: 2018 consequence			None

The figure of 109% deems that no action is required. However, the MHCLG is committed to boosting the supply of housing and although the housing delivery test score requires no action we consider that assessed need housing numbers should be seen as minima.

Furthermore, as set out in para 3.7, the Council, under the Duty to Cooperate, must assist neighbouring authorities to meet needs of the Greater Birmingham HMA. The current draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (para 29) makes it clear that a further consultation on the GBHMA housing numbers will be undertaken at the submission stage which is expected to take place in summer 2019. We consider that our client's site could assist the Council in meeting the needs of the local authority as well as the GBHMA.

Question 2 - Do you agree with the methodology of the site selection process, if not why not and what alternative/amendment would you suggest?

We object to the assessment of our client's site in the Site Assessment document (January 2019). The site has been categorised as a Priority 6 site "greenfield in accessible moderately performing GB location". This is incorrect as the site is within a lower performing parcel (RP41) and should therefore be categorised as a Priority 5 site in Site Hierarchy Criteria. Paragraph 70 states that "sites that fall within priorities 5 to 7 are considered to have potential to be included". As a priority 5 site, our client's land should fall within the 'potential inclusions' (yellow sites) category.

The yellow sites are then assessed against the 'refining criteria' (Step 2) and identified as being either green (allocation within the plan), amber (not included in the plan but the Council are seeking comments on them) or red (not to be included in the plan). We also do not support the Step 2 'refining criteria' which are listed in the table on page 19 of the DSLP and the lack of clarity on how sites have been assessed against the factors listed in the table. Our client's site has been assessed in Solihull's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2016 (site reference 207) as performing well against suitability, availability and achievability criteria and the Sustainability Appraisal has identified 6 positive (3 significant), 7 neutral and 4 negative (1 significant) which is higher performing than sites that have proposed allocations in the DSLP (including the Arden Triangle (Site 9) which we discuss in more detail under our response to Question 24) and the proposed amber sites, which we also discuss further under our response to Question 38.

We request that the Council provides more clarity on the process for the Step 2 assessment of sites and that our client's site is correctly reassessed as a Priority 5 site.

General Comments on Section 9 – Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath

Paragraph 215 of the DSLP states that Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath is one of two rural settlements which provides a full ranges of shops, services and facilities therefore it is "well placed to accommodate growth in excess of just its own local needs". The settlement is also well served by public transport, including Dorridge Train Station with direct links to Birmingham and London. However, due to the limited opportunities to develop on brownfield land, paragraphs 215 and 234 of the DSLP state that in order to accommodate new development, Green Belt release around the settlement will be required.

Paragraph 234 of the Plan states that within the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath area, "sites that are close to the existing settlement or are / can be well-served by public transport will be preferable, subject to their performance against the purposes of including land in Green Belt as supported in the Green Belt assessment and any other evidence base and constraints". St Phillips' site is adjacent to the settlement boundary, there are limited suitability constraints (as demonstrated in the Solihull SHLAA 2016), the site is bound by roads which are a physical feature that could act as a new Green Belt boundary and the redevelopment of the site would not compromise the five purposes of the green Belt (as demonstrated in the Landscape section of this document). Therefore we consider that it is a suitable and appropriate site for release from the Green Belt and a residential allocation within the Local Plan review.

Paragraph 234 states subject to their performance against the purposes of the Green Belt, that land that is close to the existing settlement and are / can be well served by public transport will be preferable for release. As set out in the Landscape Section of this document, the development of land at Smiths Lane, Browns Lane and Widney Manor Road for residential use would not compromise the five purposes of the Green Belt.

Paragraph 235 sets out requirements in relation to sites under various land ownerships being brought forward in a comprehensive manner. Land at Smiths Lane, Browns Lane and Widney Manor Road entirely under the control of St Phillips so there will be no issues with land assembly.

In light of the above, we consider that this site represents a location which supports the Council's strategic direction of growth.

Question 24 - Do you believe that Site 9 land south of Knowle should be included as allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

As mentioned under our response to Question 2, it is unclear how Site 9 has been assessed as a 'green' proposed allocated site and our client's site has not. We seek clarification from the Council on this matter.

Similarly to our client's site, Site 9 is located within a lower performing GB parcel, the landscape character sensitivity is medium, the visual sensitivity is low and the landscape capacity to accommodate change is low. In the Sustainability Appraisal, our client's site also performed similarly to Site 9 with 6 positives 7 neutral and 4 negative effects compared to Site 9 which scores 7 positive, 5 neutral and 5 negative effects. However, unlike our client's site, Site 9 comprises multiple landowners / interests whereas our client's site is solely under their control. This manner accords with paragraph 235 of the DSLP which requires sites to be brought forward in a comprehensive matter. Land in more than one person's interests may not achieve this which brings uncertainty to whether they are deliverable.

Question 38 - Do you have any comments on these amber sites, i.e. is it right they should be omitted, or do you believe they should be included, if so why?

The Council is seeking comments on proposed amber sites and whether they should be omitted. Like our response to Questions 2 and 24, we seek clarity on how sites are assessed in Step 2 Refinement Criteria.

We consider that our client's land performs better than the proposed amber site of Land at Golden Triangle, Knowle (ref A4). Both sites are adjacent to the existing settlement boundary and there are physical features bordering both sites that could create a new defensible GB boundary. They are also both also SHELAA Category 1 sites and have similar landscape sensitivity ratings. However, Site A4 is in a higher performing GB parcel whereas our client's land is in a moderately performing parcel and our client's site scored 6 positive, 7 neutral and 4 negative effects in the Sustainability Appraisal whereas Site A4 scored 6 positive, 6 neutral and 5 negative effects. We therefore do not understand how this site has been included as an amber site but our client's site has not. We seek justification for the exclusion of our client's site.

Question 39 - Are there any red sites omitted which you believe should be included; if so which one(s) and why?

As already stated in our general response to Section 9 of the DSLP, within the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath area, the DSLP states that "sites that are close to the existing settlement or are / can be well-served by public transport will be preferable, subject to their performance against the purposes of including land in Green Belt as supported in the Green Belt assessment and any other evidence base and constraints". St Phillips' site is adjacent to the settlement boundary, there are limited suitability constraints (as demonstrated in the Solihull SHLAA 2016), the site is bound by roads which are a physical feature that could act as a new Green Belt boundary and the redevelopment of the site would not compromise the five purposes of the green Belt (as demonstrated in the Landscape section of this document). Therefore we consider that it is a suitable and appropriate site for release from the Green Belt and a residential allocation within the Local Plan review.

As stated in our response to Question 2, we also seek the reassessment of our client's site to correctly be categorised as a Priority 5 site.

Question 40: Would the above approach of requiring affordable housing contributions of 40% of total square meterage or habitable rooms/floorspace incentivise developers to build more smaller market housing?

We do not consider that the proposed approach is suitable and the Council has not provided any justification / evidence as to why they are proposing this alternative approach to affordable housing. We consider that the Council's existing approach to affordable housing is more appropriate.



Question 41: If so, what is the most effective approach? Is it to calculate affordable housing as: (a) 40% of bedroom numbers, (b) 40% of habitable rooms, or (c) 40% of habitable square meterage?

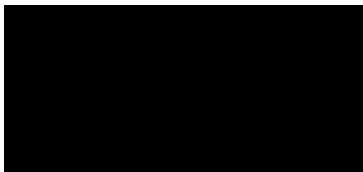
Please see response to question 40.

Question 42: What is the best way of measuring developable space for this purpose: bedroom numbers, habitable rooms or habitable floorspace?

Please see response to question 40.

We trust you find the above helpful, please contact me in the first instance should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



Jessica Graham
Senior Planner