



Place Directorate

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CV1 2PY

Please contact:

Direct line [REDACTED]

Date: 17/02/2017

Dear Maurice,

Please accept this letter as a technical officer response on behalf of Coventry City Council in response to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Councils Local Plan: Preferred Options Consultation 2016/2017.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this paper and our comments are therefore as follows:

HS2

Coventry City Council has previously expressed its support, in principle, for the development of HS2 and will continue to work with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, the Infrastructure Commission and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to ensure that the benefits of HS2 are realised for the city and the Region. Indeed, this forms a key part of the devolution deal and the aims of the WMCA. As part of the HS2 interchange at UK Central, we accept that the gap between the Western Edge of Coventry and the Eastern edge of Solihull's existing urban area at the NEC will be reduced by just under 1 mile as a result. However, we consider that whilst this is a loss, it is acceptable in the context of economic benefits for Solihull, the City and the Region as a whole. Notwithstanding, we also note that the gaps between Coventry and Solihull's main urban area remain largely unaffected by the development proposals and we welcome the on-going opportunity to ensure the long term protection of the strategic gap between the two principle urban areas.

Housing Market Area

We support the provision of new housing across the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council area and appreciate the current challenges regarding the levels of unmet development needs originating primarily from Birmingham City that should be accommodated in the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA). Given that the GBHMA overlaps with our own Coventry and Warwickshire Housing Market Area (CWHMA), most notably at Stratford District Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council, and having regard to our own unmet need originating from Coventry, we would welcome the opportunity to retain a watching brief on how the unmet need within the GBHMA continues to be met and planned for. Given the pressures found by all authorities regarding housing numbers across both HMAs, we consider that Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and the GBHMA should continue to do its utmost to ensure that the needs of the GBHMA are met within its own area. In this context we would encourage

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Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to ensure they have taken every reasonable step to explore and positively plan for unmet need arising from Birmingham (and other GBHMA authorities as appropriate) at a level that is sustainable and justified by appropriate evidence.

Infrastructure

In addition to the proposed developments at the HS2 interchange, we note that the plan proposes around 1150 new homes over 3 allocations in Balsall Common. Whilst we support the overall provision of new homes in order to accommodate the Objectively Assessed Needs in the GBHMA, we are keen to ensure that sufficient infrastructure, in particular highway infrastructure, is in place to support the additional growth. In doing so, we would highlight the importance of considering transport infrastructure, in particular, cumulatively, having regard to planned developments, which are well advanced in both Coventry and Warwick District.

Yours sincerely



Mark Andrews
Planning and Housing Policy Manager