**Solihull MBC Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan**

**Comments from Warwickshire County Council Transport Planning Group and Minerals and Waste Planning Policy Team.**

**11th December 2020**

**Transport Issues**

**1. Impact of the Local Plan on the Major Road Network**

The County Council notes the proposal for a Balsall Common Relief Road which is designed to provide traffic relief on the section of the A452 corridor which bisects the village and is currently designated within Warwickshire as part of the DfT Major Road Network (MRN). A preferred route has been identified around the eastern side of the village which would seek to mitigate the cumulative traffic impacts of proposals for significant Local Plan housing growth in this area, and those arising from proposed housing and employment growth within Kenilworth and South Coventry. It would also facilitate access to the HS2 Interchange site (and wider Hub area) and help to mitigate the localised traffic impacts of HS2 construction activity.

It is envisaged that the proposed relief route would become part of the wider A452 corridor linking the M40 to the south of Warwick and Leamington with the A45 at Stonebridge near UK Central and the proposed HS2 Interchange. This localised improvement would enable the relieved section of the current A452 in the village centre to be re-classified due to lower traffic volumes. We support the principle of this proposal and the objectives it is seeking to deliver locally within the Balsall Common area.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with Solihull MBC to understand the implications of the relief route proposal for traffic in the A452 (and A4177) corridors generally, but specifically within Kenilworth town centre, on the section of the A452 corridor between Kenilworth and the County boundary and at the A452/A4177 junction. This may identify additional safety/capacity improvements which will be needed as a result of either induced traffic or increases generated by proposed Local Plan growth.

The County Council is in the process of developing a set of multi-modal transport improvements on the section of the A452 corridor between St John’s Gyratory in Kenilworth and Leamington Spa as an early priority for delivery during MRN period 2 (2025-2030). We will be looking to work with Solihull MBC to understand the wider implications of the relief route proposals and Local Plan growth when developing our Strategic Outline Business Case in support of this scheme during 2021/22.

The County Council is also working with North Warwickshire Borough Council, Birmingham City Council, the West Midlands Combined Authority and Highways England to consider the future transport needs of the M42 Junction 9 Area, including the A446 and A4097 MRN corridors, which is likely to have implications for parts of North Solihull as well as access to the wider UK Central area. We will continue to engage with your officers regarding this work prior to the preparation of a Strategic Outline Business Case for submission to potential funding organisations such as DfT and the Combined Authority.

**2. A46 Strategic Link Road**

The County Council, in conjunction with Coventry City Council and Warwick District Council, is currently consulting on proposals for a new link road between the A46 Stoneleigh junction and the University of Warwick/Westwood Heath. Initial feedback from stakeholders has highlighted some concerns around the impact that this scheme could have on parts of Solihull Borough, particularly Berkswell, Balsall Common and routes such as B4101. The County Council is keen to work with Solihull MBC to better understand and assess these impacts, including implications for the A452 corridor and proposed Balsall Common Relief Road.

**3. Sustainable Transport**

The County Council is keen to continue to work with Solihull MBC to further strengthen sustainable transport provision. In relation to rail, the County Council would like to work jointly in order to develop a number of key projects including:

* Stratford-upon-Avon – Birmingham rail corridor to include the provision of additional services and general improvements that could be realised to maximise the potential of this route in supporting housing growth.
* Maximise the potential of a potential new Birmingham – Oxford service to ensure it serves Solihull/South Warwickshire adequately. The County Council would favourably support a stop at Dorridge station in addition to Solihull and Warwick.
* Coleshill Parkway – The County Council is currently looking at how Coleshill Parkway can be developed to fulfil a more strategic role as a major transport hub within the West Midlands. Due to its proximity to Solihull, it has the potential to assist people accessing parts of UK Central.

Given the significant housing development at Balsall Common, the County Council wishes to better understand the impact this may have on demand for rail travel. In addition to a likely increase in demand at Berkswell station (resulting in a need for parking expansion) there may be further demand placed on Warwick Parkway station given its proximity, accessibility and frequent rail service to London.

Measures to provide better sustainable access to Dorridge station to serve housing growth in the Knowle/Dorridge area are supported.

**4. UK Central Plus Connectivity Strategy/UKC Surface Access Strategy**

The County Council commissioned a piece of work in 2018 to develop a UK Central Plus Connectivity Strategy, in order to identify the key transport infrastructure and service improvements within Warwickshire which will be needed to ensure the sub-region is well connected to the employment and other opportunities that will arise from the HS2 Interchange Station and wider growth across the UK Central area.

The County Council is keen to work with Solihull MBC to develop a joint UKC Surface Access Strategy and associated programme of investment priorities so that the benefits of these proposals are maximised across our respective areas for residents, businesses and their supply chains.

**5. Statement of Common Ground**

The County Council would be happy to develop a joint Statement of Common Ground on the transport issues raised above ahead of the proposed Local Plan EiP hearings in 2021.

**Minerals and Waste Policies**

In regard to Policies P12 (Resources) and P13 (Minerals) Warwickshire County Council is supportive of the policies which appear to be in conformity with national minerals and waste policy guidance.

On the issue of Minerals Supply and other mineral matters, we would refer to our previously submitted Statement of Common Ground for Minerals with the Metropolitan Authorities which was signed off by the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) prior to the Warwickshire Minerals Plan Examination Hearings in October 2020. This followed a detailed series of discussions with ABCA and Solihull MBC.

The Statement of Common Ground supports the continued supply of sand and gravel from Warwickshire to the West Midlands and vice versa, as is advocated through the Managed Aggregate Supply System and set out in national minerals planning policy guidance.