

	<h2>Solihull MBC Local Plan</h2> <h3>Publication Stage Representation Form</h3>	Ref: (For official use only)
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Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:

Solihull Local Plan Draft Submission Plan

Please return to psp@solihull.gov.uk or Policy and Engagement, Solihull MBC, Solihull, B91 3QB BY Monday 14th December 23:59

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This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*		2. Agent's Details (if applicable)
<i>*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation (if applicable) boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.</i>		
Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>	<input type="text"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="William"/>	<input type="text"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Cairns"/>	<input type="text"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text" value="REDACTED"/>	<input type="text"/>
Line 2	<input type="text" value="REDACTED"/>	<input type="text"/>
Line 3	<input type="text" value="REDACTED"/>	<input type="text"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text" value="REDACTED"/>	<input type="text"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text" value="REDACTED"/>	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address	<input type="text" value="REDACTED"/>	<input type="text"/>

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation: William Cairns

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph Policy Policies Map

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

4.(1) Legally compliant Yes No

4.(2) Sound Yes No

4 (3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate Yes No

Please tick as appropriate

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Green Belt and Meriden Gap

SMBC proclaim that the Meriden Gap is of strategic importance in many paragraphs in the plan (para 11 and others). In paragraph 50 it is stated:

"The Borough will continue to be 'Urbs in Rure', realising its ambitions for sustainable economic growth without compromising the quality of its environment, protecting the integrity of the Green Belt and retaining the strategic Meriden Gap between the Birmingham Conurbation and Coventry. The Borough's high quality Mature Suburbs, distinctive rural settlements, villages and wider Rural Area, its historic and natural environment and green infrastructure network will be protected and enhanced. The quality of the housing, public realm and green space will have been maintained and improved across the Borough. New development shall have taken the opportunity to provide additional open space that links into the Borough's green infrastructure to ensure the Borough's 'Urbs in Rure' character is maintained and enhanced".

Barrett's Farm is located at the narrowest point on the Meriden Gap 2km from Coventry boundary (para 515) and should be fully protected. Elsewhere the plan proposes that they are going to build on the Meriden Gap in more than one place and at other green belt locations in the borough because they have no choice and that they do not have any other suitable sites. They also use the excuse that other nearby councils have built in the green belt (para 59), that does not grant permission

to SMBC to do the same. This simply is not a good enough reason .The claim is they have no option but this is far from the truth, there were many sites put forward in the call for sites 4 years ago, these warrant further examination.

The plan is unsound

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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SMBC have failed in their duty to protect the Meriden Gap which on their own admission is strategically significant.

The council do have several choices. There were many pieces of land both in the green belt and within the urban area that owners put up for consideration in the call for sites in the last 4 years that are not in this sensitive part of the strategically important Meriden Gap, these options should be re-examined.

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By pass Relief Road

A road with 7-8 roundabouts over a distance of 4.5km (assuming it fully built through to Meer End) equates to an average distance between junctions of 0.65 to 0.75km this will not ensure free-flowing traffic. In fact, it will likely cause significant congestion at peak times as it runs through Barrett's Farm where additional traffic will be joining. The SMBC Illustrative Concept Masterplan for BC1 (page 16) shows 4 roundabouts over a distance of only 1.5km through Barrett's Farm, a recipe for hold ups and added pollution in a new residential area. In addition, those residents within the noise envelop of HS2 will be expected to cope further disturbance and noise pollution.

As this road is key to the Barrett's Farm development it is worrying that there is no clear source(s) of funds for it through from the junction with Waste Lane and to Meer End. (see para. 527) Without the completion of this section from Waste Lane and onwards south to Meer End it not deliver the expected benefit to the centre of Balsall Common as traffic both travelling north and south will continue to use the central main A452 route. An even worse outcome could be that some traffic travelling north may turn along Windmill Lane from Meer End and then turn east along Waste Lane to skirt around the east of Balsall Common to take the road across Barrett's Farm thus creating a "rat run."

Sources of funding for this road which is fundamental to the whole Barrett's Farm development and providing relief to the centre of the village remain uncertain and nebulous at this late stage. The council have been remiss in not obtaining clear understandings on how to finance this road. What is proposed is merely conjecture (para 527).

A published report by Mott MacDonald carried out on behalf of SMBC in July 2018 looking at by pass routes suggested that routes to the west of Balsall Common should also be considered and not solely to the east. Routes to the west would significantly reduce the number of roundabouts and take the traffic away from residential areas, this does not appear to have been considered.

This part of the plan is unsound.

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A full assessment of the atmospheric and noise pollution created by the relief road running through Barrett's Farm and onwards along Hall Meadow Road needs to be undertaken to assess impact on residents. This does not appear to have been considered.

It must be a condition of the plan being approved by the inspector that the section of road from the junction at Waste Lane south to Meer End is completed when the section from Station Road the Waste Lane is built, otherwise it will become a rat run to avoid traffic on the A452 and the village centre will not benefit from the reduction in traffic.

Sources of funding needs to be explained and firmer evidence required to justify its availability and hence the viability of the road.

The council should examine a by-pass route to the west of Balsall Common, as it would have significantly less impact on residential areas and be freer flowing than that proposed to the east

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Village centre

Three major estates have been constructed in Balsall Common over the last 40 years totalling about 870 houses plus several smaller developments and infilling. What is now proposed is almost the same number on Barrett's Farm and a similar number around the fringes making around 1600-1700 dwellings over the next 15 years. This is a huge growth to impose and will have a major impact on the village centre, its services and facilities.

This plan has been in preparation for in excess of 4 years and rightly recognises that there is a need to improve the centre particularly with the planned increase in population (up from 7550 to 11500). It is disappointing that the plan contains no proposals for the centre. It refers to the intention to collaborate with parish councils in the future to prepare plans, but the Council has known of the projected population growth and time frame for several years. There is no excuse for not having prepared a concept plan to submit with this plan. This looks like an afterthought with no idea of costings or funding options. Residents can rightly expect some concept ideas in this plan as it goes for approval/inspection.

The village centre is extremely compact and demands detailed evaluation now as options are limited and should not be deferred. The hopes are expressed in paragraph 528 "furthermore the environmental improvements along the Kenilworth

Road made possible by the provision of a bypass will also provide a catalyst for improvements to the centre.” If the full length of the bypass is not delivered then there is little hope for the promised village centre improvements. There is a complete absence of coherent thinking on the impact of the major expansion of Balsall Common on the village centre for its existing and new residents.

Incomplete information that should be in the plan makes it unsound

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The council should as a matter of urgency produce outline proposals for village centre improvements that dovetail into the plan along with guidelines as in which phase of the plan they will be undertaken.

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New Primary School

The proposal for a new 2 - form primary school on the Barrett's Farm development is not expected to be built until phase II which is when the build on BC1 is planned to commence. However, around 330 houses will already have been built elsewhere in Balsall Common in phase I and the need for the school will be pressing due to existing nearby schools being full. Furthermore, the plan indicates that building on Barrett's Farm will not commence until the completion of HS2 as stated in Policy BC1 2vi. Paragraph 525 states that HS2 will be completed by 2025, with trains running in 2026. This estimate has been significantly revised by HM Government and is now stated in para. 280 as 2029-33 thereby pushing the completion of the school and commencement of construction on BC1 further back possibly in to late phase II. Thus, the likelihood of building the school in time to cater for children from new phase II developments from elsewhere in Balsall Common is also questionable. In any event it should be built before any meaningful construction takes place on Barrett's Farm otherwise there will be no school places for the incoming residents on Barrett's Farm.

The plan is unsound the school is very unlikely to be built in time to meet the demand from new build elsewhere in Balsall Common.

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The housing build across Balsall Common will need to be phased later until such time as sufficient school places become available in the local area when the Barrett's Farm school is completed and accessible.

Bussing primary children to distant schools should not be considered an option.

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Impact of HS2 on the build on Barrett's Farm

The completion of HS2 has extended from 2025-6 (para. 525) to the more realistic 2029-33 (para. 280). This means that access to the Barrett's Farm site is likely to be severely delayed until well in to the back end of second phase of the plan, especially as the haul route will be in use and other works associated with the railway will be ongoing. There is also confusion in the plan as to whether the relief road and the HS2 haul route are one of the same (para. 527). Residents need assurance that no significant development on Barrett's Farm will begin until all HS2 construction traffic throughout the immediate area is at an end. (para.543).

With the delay in completion of the railway the build on Barrett's Farm likely to fall even later in the plan timetable. It could result in build time for Barrett's Farm being only 6-7 years. Is this sufficient time for its completion and would the local market for the properties be sufficiently buoyant to take such a massive increase in new property over such a short space of time. Given that say 600 new houses (excluding any windfall sites) will have already been delivered by the plan, is the prospect for Barrett's Farm being completed by the end of phase III be realistic. There could be an oversupply of properties in the latter stages depressing sales prospects and could be exacerbated by the substantial house building planned in neighbouring local authorities close to the boundary with Balsall Common.

Unsound, there is no appreciation or concerns as to the impact the delays to the HS2 project will have on the timely completion of Barrett's Farm.

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No housing development or school build until HS2 construction and installation of the railway is completed.

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Paragraph	<input type="text"/>	Policy	P20 10 P20 8 P20 2	Policies Map	BC1
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Public Open Space (POS)

The 2014 Solihull green space strategy review stated that there was an average of 5ha per 1000 head of population in the borough. In the settlement of Balsall Common with around 7500 population at present there is only 18.5ha of POS but to match the Solihull average it should be about 37ha. The plans reveal that about 13ha will be added of which 7.2ha are on Barrett's Farm, making a total of 31.5ha woefully short of an average for the borough that would yield closer to 55ha in Balsall Common given an increase in population for the settlement from around to 11000 - 11500.

The plan is remiss in failing to address this increasing shortfall in POS in Balsall Common. This is a once in a life time opportunity to correct this anomaly and provide equity across the borough.

The provision of some POS on BC1 is encouraging and should be located such that it joins existing and the new development so that all can enjoy the benefits it brings. However, the concept plan falls short of providing additional open space particularly towards the south of the site in the vicinity of Meeting House Lane and Kelsey Lane where construction will be directly located by existing properties.

The incorporation of POS between existing and new developments has been successfully executed in Balsall Common with the development on Ridding Hill (Berkswell Gate) of some 270 dwellings 20 -25 years ago. It is located between Hall Meadow Road and Kenilworth Road (to the north of BC1) and features a nature reserve, areas a woodland, a skate park, recreation space for informal and formal sports and an extensive children's play area. It is well used by all residents across Balsall Common. It is known as Lavender Hall Park. This approach has been partially incorporated into the concept masterplan for BC1 but not for the full extent across the development. It should be extended along the western edge of BC1 down to properties to the rear of Meeting House Lane to Kelsey Lane. A width of 30 -50 metres of open space would provide all residents to green space on the doorstep (or within easy walking distance) and also provide wildlife corridors along the hedges. Wider areas should continue to be provided as per the plan for major recreational activities. This would enable the whole length of the development to be walked/cycled from Station Road in the north to Waste Lane in the south free from traffic, while being linked by existing paths for pedestrian and cycle use to local roads/lanes and countryside safely.

Solihull council on the 13 August 2020 approved in principle funding for the provision of 5 hubs for sport across the borough including one in Balsall Common. This is not referred to in this plan. It is clearly an omission as there has not been sufficient open space allowed to accommodate a sports hub within the present concept plan for Barrett's Farm, nor is there any reference to it being located elsewhere in the area of Balsall Common. A recent FOI request confirms that the plan does not include a specific allocation for a sports hub in Balsall Common – it is totally at odds with Policy P18/iv.

Unsound as it fails to recognise or address the lack of POS in Balsall Common and its own policy of a sports hub

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Need to increase the public open space on BC1 to compensate for the shortfall compared to the average for Solihull borough of 5ha/1000 population.

The Council should enact its Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy as per cabinet meeting of 13 Aug 2020 items 3.5 & 3.6 resolution 5i, ii, iii.

Develop an achievable plan to establish a meaningful park with dedicated sports and informal play zones that would benefit both the new and the existing residents extending throughout all of the development. *(green space on or close to the doorstep should be the aim)* The space is there to do it.

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Complex Site Ownership BC1

On page 14 of the Solihull Local Plan Concept Masterplans October 2020 extensive reference made to a meeting at which council officers and the 13 landowners and site promoters were given the opportunity to meet. Pegasus Planning put itself forward to develop a collaborative approach on behalf of the land owners and whilst there was some support for such an approach no firm commitment was made during the meeting. Council Officers have had meetings between Pegasus and Greenlight about their proposed masterplan (page 14 Concept Masterplans) but the officers had significant concerns relating to ecology, heritage assets and hedgerow network. The discussions on highway strategy and the relief road remained inconclusive as well as tertiary routes onto Barrett's Lane Meeting House Lane and Waste Lane. These are absolutely key factors in the development of BC1. These must not be fudged.

The uncertainties created by the owners/promoters is worrying at this late stage (note this plan has been 4 years in the making). Barrett's Farm if developed must be undertaken in a coordinated way. Remember this development is scheduled to take 10 years for 845 homes (Phases II & III) with a further 300 likely at a later date beyond the plan. Fractious relationships now do not bode well for a development of 845 homes. Cooperation is paramount in order to deliver the main elements of the concept masterplan as described on page 16 (SMBC Illustrative Concept Masterplan).

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It is inappropriate that Barrett's Farm BC1 to be put forward when there is clearly great uncertainty that the owners/promoters are able to agree on a way forward at this late stage.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

X

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

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9. Signature:

Date:

10/12/20

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation: William Cairns

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph Policy Policies Map

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

4.(1) Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text" value="X"/>	No	<input type="text"/>
4.(2) Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text" value="X"/>
4 (3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>

Please tick as appropriate

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Access to Barrett's Farm development BC1

The developers in their proposal (Concept masterplans page14) appear to require tertiary routes onto adjacent residential roads around BC1. Some of these are narrow. For instance, Meeting House Lane which is directly adjacent to the western edge to the proposed development has no pavements on either side for a distance of 620 metres. The Developer's Proposal indicates 2 access points directly on to this section of the lane where there are no safe pedestrian pathways. This is totally inappropriate in the context of both construction traffic or as a permanent access to housing.

Meeting House Lane has significant traffic calming features due to the tendency for many years to be a "rat run". These include speed humps along its complete length and two restrictive single width passing pinch points. Access to the Barrett's Farm site from any other adjacent lanes/roads would be impractical and detrimental to the existing established residential area both during construction and as a permanent feature.

The recommendation found in Policy BC1 2vii in the plan specifically rules out such situations and rightly proposes that all vehicular access to Barrett's Farm should be from the relief road. This is further emphasised in the SMBC Development Principles on page 17 of the concept *masterplans* "**Local access points are to be considered onto**

Waste Lane. Access points into the site from the by-pass should be limited so that the new road performs its function in accommodating vehicles that would otherwise have travelled thorough the centre of the settlement."

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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The developers are requesting inappropriate access to the site. It would be detrimental to the immediate neighbourhood bringing excess traffic on to an already restricted lane with no pavements in the areas marked on the developers plan. It would also result additional vehicles travelling through to the centre of the village.

All vehicular access to development BC1 when under construction and when completed should be via the relief road. Existing public rights of way and footpaths within Barrett's Farm should be retained and improved for walking and cycling.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation: William Cairns

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Concept Plans

Concept masterplans are extremely helpful to the lay person as it gives a view as to what the plan itself is attempting to deliver. While they are not “cast in stone” they nonetheless need to be significantly meaningful to be representative as to what will transpire.

This is very relevant to Barrett’s Farm as one of the largest developments in the Solihull plan. As it will take 10 years to build (phase II & III) and then a further 300 homes to follow afterwards, residents should reasonably expect (and for the benefit of those who will eventually live in the location) for concept plans to be followed. Piecemeal uncoordinated development on any site for whatever reason must be avoided. Appropriately phased projects with the outcomes directed to meet the original criteria for the development are essential. This will be particularly true of Barrett’s Farm because of its size, long gestation period and multiple owners/promoters. The legacy of acquiescence to inappropriate development remains with a neighbourhood long after construction has been completed hence the need to set robust criteria now.

Unsound. The commitment to enforcing Concept Masterplans needs strengthening

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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Concept plans in the plan need to have considerable strength and be robust to ensure that not only the main intentions are respected but also the detail observed.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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