

13 December 2020

Economy & Infrastructure Directorate  
Policy and Delivery  
Solihull MBC  
Council House  
Manor Square  
Solihull  
West Midlands  
B91 3QB

Dear Sirs

**Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan**  
**Proposed Allocation Site: BC4 – Pheasant Oak Farm**

In response to your letter dated 30 October 2020 my partner and I wish to formally object strongly to this site BC4 and ask that it is removed from Solihull Draft Submission Plan and Final Local Plan. We also require a response from yourselves to some questions we find ourselves asking on finding out this shocking news.

Firstly, we speak from a personal point of view. We wonder if any consideration has been given to the fact that the proposed properties that are to be built on this new development will be in very close proximity to our property having a very shallow garden. Both ourselves and the residents of the planned development will be overlooking each other with no indication of personal privacy whatsoever. Also, the fact that the new developments will cause local disruption for some time and added to the extensive works now experienced with HS2 will have a very negative and significant effect on our mental health and wellbeing. My partner and I both work from home and will seemingly have to put up with the constant noise of machinery, building work and heavy traffic. This is not an ideal scenario especially when on the phone to clients.

What thought has been given to the existing residents like us who purchased the properties years ago with no plans in sight other than the relief road? Who has been out and looked at this site rather than just viewing it on a map from a distance? Cllr Dicicco kindly came out at our request and saw in person just how close any new property will be us. I have also had communication from the Mayor of West Midlands, Andy Street who tells me you are working hard to avoid building on green land.

There have been extensive and well documented problems with flooding in the past and building on these fields can only make it worse. May I ask what action will be taken to mitigate this?

The impact of the increased traffic around this area will only increase the likelihood of accidents happening as it did when Hob Lane was closed recently. A lot of traffic will use Windmill Lane as a cut through from the new estate to Kenilworth to avoid queuing at traffic lights. Windmill Lane is a narrow road that cannot cope with increased traffic flow. Cars that do come through Windmill Lane come round the corner from Waste Lane at high speed – myself and my children had close misses more than once trying to cross the road.

Creating a housing estate at this end of the village is not in keeping with the existing rural character of Hob Lane, Windmill Lane and Waste Lane and yet this is mentioned.

I would prefer none of these plans went ahead in Balsall Common obviously. We don't have the infrastructure in place. The pressure on traffic, schools and GP services will be unsustainable. The village is not big enough to cope with any more residents in large numbers. But if we do have to take some housing surely there are better sites. The site BC3 is a more suitable site given that development has already started here, and the residents can access straight onto the main road. Assuming the entrance would be from the main road and the trees left in place facing the Windmill this will preserve the rural nature of Windmill Lane. The same can be said for the new proposed site by Harper Fields. Whilst I do not feel the village can cope with this huge increase in housing at all more thought should be given to the location of the sites ie near a main road, nearer facilities so people can walk to them, in already more built up areas etc. This part of the village currently has very few and in parts no streetlights. Building up this area will most likely result in street lighting being put in place and in turn create more light pollution which is not very sustainable.

Another point we wish to make, and question is that planning authorities talk extensively about not building on land that brings conurbations closer together. The plans to which my partner and I refer indicate that Balsall Common that has been extensively developed over the years and maybe more in the future will be moving closer to joining up with developments in Coventry. Other proposed sites in the village are not actually closing the gap between Solihull and Coventry just filling in gaps within the already built-up area. Building on this site will be closing the gap.

I thought that a brown field approach was supposed to be taken but this seems not to be the case in relation to Solihull Council. The Prime Minister and indeed the Mayor for the West Midlands talk passionately about the need to building on brownfield sites, preserving the Green Belt whilst expressing their concerns about climate change and the need to plan more trees. Why cut down existing trees just to plant new ones as is the case on the Greenway and Kenilworth Road? Why build on exiting green fields and public footpaths only to replace them with new areas of public open space? These fields are home to many forms of wildlife that

have lived in the area since time immemorial, some now close to extinction. Enough damage to their habitats has been done with the destruction of the Greenway and surrounding fields. Not to mention the huge loss of greenbelt on Barrett's Farm.

A far better idea would be to use other sites to infill the current village and put good use to this land by building a lovely woodland with trails through as in Lavender Hall Park or Little Poor's Wood in Burton green but on a larger scale. Not only would this help the wildlife in the long run and be more in line with Boris Johnsons plans to of planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year it would create a lovely place for locals and people further afield to walk and run. This would make up for the loss of footpaths on Barrett's Farm, the little woods off Lavender Hall Lane and of course the Greenway. It could link up to the Greenway when this is eventually restored. Now this would be amazing and really give something back to a community that is losing so much through HS2 and all the other building works. A Country park as such in a rural setting not in the middle of some housing estate and in close proximity to the Windmill. This would ensure the creation of a significant corridor of public open space between the current village and the relief road and serve more of the community than just an allotment and playground!!!

If these plans for this site do go ahead what are you prepared to put in place for existing houses? Are the developers prepared to put a green buffer in place? Are they prepared to purchase the existing properties to use that land in the development? We had no plans to move from this property for a very long time but the thought of what is happening not only to the fields at the back of our house but the village in general has made us have seconds thoughts. We feel in a catch 22 situation now though as how can we move from here when the fact a building site is going up behind us is surely going to greatly reduce the value of our property.

Looking at the bigger picture of the potential increased size of the village. Will there be improvements to the bus service? As a parent to three girls the bus service is awful. One bus an hour to college. Young people cannot go out into Solihull at night as the bus stops running so have to have lifts as their only other options are Birmingham or Coventry by train – not ideal. Increasing the population without big improvements to the public transport will only mean more people needing to use cars to get back out to Solihull. Cycling is not an option as the country lanes are not safe. I find it confusing then when we are supposed to be working towards improving the climate that Balsall Common is being picked to be heavily built upon, yet it is was of the most inaccessible areas in Solihull without the use of a car. There are very few employment opportunities in Solihull and therefore a need to travel. There is also a lack of facilities in the village itself for young people hence why they hang around the village and park with nothing to do. Will there by an affordable gym, swimming pool and other sports facilities put in place as part of these plans?

I look forward with anticipation to your response.

Yours faithfully

