

Policy and Engagement
Solihull MBC
Solihull
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Sent via email to psp@solihull.gov.uk

9 December 2020

Dear Sirs

Subject: Solihull MBC Local Plan Publication Stage Representation

This representation is made on behalf of The National Exhibition Centre Ltd ("The NEC Group") in response to the publication of the Regulation 19 version of the Solihull Local Plan (Draft Submission Version) (hereafter referred to as "the Plan").

The NEC Group welcomes the opportunity to submit a representation on the Draft Submission Version and is pleased that further progress is being made toward the adoption of the Local Plan.

The Plan's overall focus on supporting the continued and sustainable growth of the Borough and meeting both housing and economic needs is welcomed. By directing growth principally toward the UK Central Solihull Hub Area the Plan is implementing a coherent strategy to support growth in a highly accessible and sustainable location alongside maximising the economic and social benefits that High Speed 2 will bring.

The NEC Group supports the objective for the Hub Area to become globally renowned as the best-connected business, leisure and entertainment destination in Europe and a major driver of the UK economy, along with the creation of a sense of place that draws upon a modern interpretation of 'garden village' principles. The focus on supporting the aspirations of the economic assets in the Hub, including significant employment based and housing growth, is essential if the Borough is to meet its overall objectives and targets.

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Policy P1 UK Central Solihull Hub Area is an important policy of the Plan supporting the continued success of the most significant economic assets for the Borough and region.

In the context of these overall objectives, it is imperative that the Plan continues to support future development and investment at the NEC site reflecting its status as one of the leading venues in the UK for major exhibitions, events, entertainment, and leisure. This emphasis on continued investment and development at the NEC site will maintain and enhance its role as a key economic asset for the Borough and region.

The NEC site's exceptional public transport connectivity, set to be further enhanced by the arrival of High Speed 2, location next to a wide range of existing amenities and facilities, and status as brownfield land, makes it a highly sustainable location for future residential and commercial development.

The scale of this opportunity was originally recognised and demonstrated by the nec.city masterplan, which included at least 2,500 new homes. As a result, the NEC site is one of the single largest housing development sites in the Borough contributing significantly to the housing land supply over the plan period. The Plan's recognition at both Policy P1 and P5 of the NEC's role in the housing land supply of the Borough is important and welcomed.

Notwithstanding the overall support for the Plan there are opportunities to further strengthen its content and ensure that the scale of the opportunity at the NEC site is fully realised, including for residential development. It is also essential that the Plan incorporates sufficient flexibility to enable the economic role of the NEC site to evolve in response to changing global and national circumstances.

Acknowledging the scale of the opportunity at the NEC site the NEC Group are undertaking to review the existing masterplan, which will continue to demonstrate the central role that the NEC site can play in delivering new development, including for housing and economic growth.

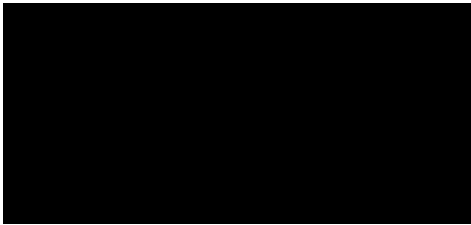
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The NEC Group would therefore welcome continued dialogue with Solihull MBC on the Local Plan. It is suggested that a Statement of Common Ground is produced to establish the areas of agreement and areas where further changes may be required to ensure that the Local Plan fully supports and enables the development potential of the NEC site to be realised and in turn support the delivery of the overall strategy for the Borough.

The NEC Group, and their appointed representatives, would wish to participate, as required, in the examination hearing session(s) relevant to the UKC Solihull Hub Area and the NEC site, including on housing supply and delivery.

Yours faithfully



Alan Maynard
Chief Development Officer

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E: [REDACTED]