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Gary Palmer  
Group Manager – Policy &  
Engagement  
Growth & Development  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough  
Council

Our Ref:

PINS/Q4625/429/4

Date:

11 January 2024

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Dear Mr Palmer,

## Examination of the Solihull Local Plan

1. The examination of the Solihull Local Plan was paused in March 2023. There had previously been an exchange of correspondence between the Council and ourselves, following the additional hearing session held on 8 July 2022. Our letters of 5 September and 13 December 2022 set out clearly our concerns over the delivery of housing at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) site and the implications for overall housing supply. We made it clear that the issue of providing an adequate housing land supply needs to be addressed in this Local Plan through the identification of additional sites and that the alternative of relying on a review is not an appropriate option. You will recall that we asked the Council to confirm how it wished to proceed.
2. The Council's letter of 8 February 2023 raised issues in relation to anticipated reforms to the planning system and in particular sought the opportunity to consider the implications of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The consultation on changes to the NPPF had commenced in December 2022. In our letter of 6 March 2023, whilst we maintained our position in terms of housing supply and the need for that to be addressed, we agreed to pause the examination pending the publication of the finalised updated version of the NPPF.
3. The updated version of the NPPF was published on 19 December 2023. The transitional arrangements are set out in Annex 1 to the NPPF which deals with implementation. You will note from Paragraph 230 that plans which reach pre-submission consultation on or before 19 March 2024 will be examined under the relevant previous version of the NPPF. Clearly this is the case with the Solihull Local Plan. On this basis, the updated version of the NPPF published in December 2023 does not apply to this examination.
4. With this in mind, it follows that the updated NPPF (December 2023) has no implications for the Solihull Local Plan or the examination and the rationale for the pause no longer exists. This brings us back to the position set out in our previous correspondence, which we do not repeat here.
5. We would therefore be grateful if the Council could now provide a clear and unambiguous response to our request to confirm how it wishes to proceed. Again, we must stress that we

are not seeking submissions from the Council or other parties on the substantive issues of soundness and our conclusions on them. This letter should be added to the examination website as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely,

*Kevin Ward and Kelly Ford*

INSPECTORS