

Position Statement on the cumulative mitigation package for the Blythe Area – September 2025

This note is intended to outline Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC's) position regarding a proposed package of transport mitigation measures to be implemented across the Blythe Area, which are intended to mitigate cumulative transport impacts of strategic development in the area.

This note covers the clusters of BL1, BL2 and BL3 as per the (now withdrawn) Emerging Local Plan Draft (2020).

Although the Local Plan was withdrawn, this was only after significant parts of the independent examination in public had been undertaken. This enabled the Inspectors to confirm that: *"...we consider that the overall spatial strategy of the submitted Local Plan and the other housing site allocations are in principle appropriate."*

Policy Background

Paragraph 115(d) of the NPPF identifies that: *"it should be ensured that... any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach"*.

Policy P8(a)(i) of the adopted Solihull Local Plan (2013) identifies that: *"Development will not be permitted which results in a significant increase in delay to vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists or a reduction in safety for any users of the highway or other transport network."*

The Emerging Local Plan Draft (2020) set out site-specific Policies BL1, BL2 and BL3 which referenced the need for mitigation measures across the 3 clusters, as follows:

Policy BL1 (3)(vi) states *"Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Dickens Heath, Whitlocks End Station and the Stratford upon Avon Canal towpath in accordance with the Council's LCWIP"*.

Policy BL2 (3)(v) states *"Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including bus services improvements and pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Dickens Heath, the Stratford Road and Shirley Town Centre, in accordance with the Council's LCWIP"*

Policy BL3 (3)(vi) states *"Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including improvement of bus services and pedestrian and cycle*

connectivity towards Shirley railway station, the Stratford Road and Shirley Town Centre in accordance with the Council's LCWIP."

In this policy context, in order to make the proposed development in the Blythe area acceptable in planning terms, it is necessary for transport interventions to be delivered.

Mitigation Approach

Mitigation will be delivered through a number of different approaches, depending on the impact and location of the issue it is addressing, but will fall into the following categories:

Direct Delivery

Applicants will deliver packages of mitigation directly, through proposed schemes (such as site access junctions, and walking and cycling infrastructure within their development). These will be secured through planning conditions, and delivered through Section 278 (s278) works.

Contributions towards Packages

Where mitigation is required due to the cumulative effects of multiple developments, contributions towards the mitigation scheme will be sought through Section 106. A Section 106 (s106) contribution is a form of planning obligation introduced as part of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, between the Local Planning Authority (in this case, SMBC) and the developer.

Travel Demand Management

Travel Plans will be secured for the developments through conditions, and through s106 contributions, as set out in the SMBC Travel Planning SPD. The Travel Plans are long-term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable travel into the developments. They are based on evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development and set measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel.

In order to ensure that any contributions sought towards highways schemes are fair and reasonable in accordance with Paragraph 58 of the NPPF and Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations, an evidence-based approach has been taken.

Evidence Base

To support with the assessment of cumulative transport impacts, SLR Consulting Ltd developed a VISSIM model covering the Blythe area, which included the following developments and dwelling assumptions.

- BL1 West of Dickens Heath – 566 residential dwellings,

- BL2 West, Land South of Dog Kennel Lane – 719 residential dwellings, a 2-form entry primary school, a 66 bed care home and a small local centre,
- BL2 East, Land South of Dog Kennel Lane – 550 residential dwellings, and
- BL3 Land South of Shirley – 427 residential dwellings.

It is noted that the proposed housing in the BL1 cluster comprises of two separate applications: the Land North of Tythe Barn Lane (16% of total BL1 dwellings) and the Land South of Tythe Barn Lane (84% of total BL1 dwellings).

To understand the impacts of development, seven scenarios were developed. A single Base scenario (2023), two reference case scenarios(2026 and 2036), two Do-Minimum scenarios, and three Do-Something scenarios. The Do-Minimum scenarios contain the cumulative development trips and network changes (site access arrangements) on top of the Reference Case scenarios. The Do-Something scenarios reflect the future year conditions where a suite of strategic sustainable transport strategies have been introduced, on top of the development proposals.

The following seven scenarios were developed in order to inform the assessment:

- 2023 Base,
- 2026 Reference Case – as with the 2023 Base, with 2026 committed development trips added,
- 2026 Do-Minimum Case – as with the 2026 Do-Minimum Case, with development trips and Site Access junctions added,
- 2026 Do-Something 2 Case – as with 2026 Do – Minimum Case, with vehicle demand adjustments following implementation of a proposed sustainable transport strategy and the resulting levels of forecast modal shift,
- 2036 Reference Case – as with the 2023 Base, with 2036 committed development trips added,
- 2036 Do-Minimum Case – as 2036 Reference Case, with development trips and Site Access junctions added, and
- 2036 Do-Something 2 Case – as 2036 Do-Minimum Case, with vehicle demand adjustments following implementation of a proposed strategic sustainable transport strategy and the resulting levels of forecast modal shift

Strategic sustainable transport strategy

The suite of sustainable transport measures proposed for the area include four strategic modal shift strategies which promote the use of active and sustainable travel, to form part of the mitigation strategy to alleviate the cumulative traffic impact of the development sites. The four strategies are as follows:

- The provision of additional cycling lanes. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council promotes active transport modes via the **Solihull Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** and has proposed a number of cycle lanes to be built in and around Solihull, 4 of which are located within the catchment area of the VISSIM model extent.
- The introduction of **Sprint Phase 2**, which is an extension of the Bus Rapid Transport service that links Solihull to Walsall via central Birmingham.
- **The enhancement and diversion of existing bus services.** The site promoters have approached Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) to discuss the potential for the diversion of existing bus services to ensure the development sites are afforded the option of accessible public transport, and this is therefore accounted for within the modelled demand matrices.
- The **proposed improvements to the accessibility of two train stations** within the model extent; Shirley and Whitlocks End. This includes various highways and active travel improvements to the routes to the train stations to ensure safe and suitable access for all as well as promoting opportunities for sustainable travel.

It is noted that there are two types of effects from the delivery of these strategic sustainable transport measures: direct effects to the mode shift of trips generated by the developments, and indirect mode shift to existing trips already on the network.

The strategic sustainable transport strategy represents part of the vision-led approach to mitigating impacts in the area to an acceptable degree, ensuring that the residual effects following mitigation would not be severe.

Determining Proportionate Contributions

The VISSIM modelling work includes mode shift assumptions, which have determined the numbers of trips from the development areas that are likely to shift away from car trips and on to sustainable transport. This is based on the origins and destinations of trips related to the development, and how they relate spatially to the strategic improvements (e.g. BL2 is unlikely to experience mode shift from walking improvements to Shirley Station, but will from bus diversions into BL2). The resultant mode shift assumptions are outlined below.

Table 1 - Trip Reduction Summary

Development Parcel	Original Demand	Trip Adjustment				Adjusted Demand
		LCWIP	Sprint	Bus Diversion	Railway Station	
BL1	822	-50	0	0	-17	755
BL2 East	698	-40	-39	-54	0	565
BL2 West	914	-57	-56	-72	0	729
BL3	655	-52	0	-8	-14	581

From the table above, there are some modal shift strategies which do not impact demands at specific developments. In order to ensure a fair and reasonable contribution towards the package of sustainable mitigation measures, SMBC will only be seeking s106 contributions from developments that claim benefits from specific modal shift strategies.

The table below presents the percentage trip reduction each development claims per mitigation measure as per Table 1 above. BL1 is split further based on the overall dwelling split (84% to the south; 16% to the north).

Table 2 - Proportionate trip reduction

Development Parcel	LCWIP	Sprint	Bus Diversion	Railway Station
Total reduction	-199	-95	-134	-31
BL1 – North	4%	0%	0%	Not proportioned by percentage (see below for reasoning)
BL1 – South	21%	0%	0%	
BL2 East	20%	41%	40%	
BL2 West	29%	59%	54%	
BL3	26%	0%	6%	

The above table represents the proposed approach by SMBC to calculate developer s106 contributions for the Blythe Area, with the exception of the proposed improvements to the accessibility at the two railway stations.

For access improvements to Railway Stations, the effects associated with these schemes can be localised to specific clusters rather than proportioning the overall cost of both schemes. Improvements along Bills Lane towards Shirley Station will be delivered by the BL3 cluster only. The improvements along Tythe Barn Lane and Tilehouse Lane to Whitlocks End Station will be delivered by BL1, and are split based on the 84%/16% dwelling numbers split.

The effect of this method ensures that the contributions are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, to satisfy requirements set out in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations.

Contribution amounts

To determine the value of the resultant contribution, the most up-to-date assumptions available on scheme costs have been used.

LCWIP

A cost estimation exercise conducted by SMBC in March 2024 estimated the cost of the Dickens Heath to Solihull Cycle scheme to be £10,988,225. Using established Business Case best practice assumptions, SMBC would seek a 10% developer contribution towards this figure. In the absence of the costs for the Shirley to Solihull LCWIP route, the contribution amount is assumed to be the same having regard to the broad similarities between the nature of the routes proposed. This yields a total S106 contribution amount of £2,197,645 to be split across the five developments as per the table above.

Railway Stations

Regarding the improvements to accessibility towards Railway stations, the splits in the table will not be applied to an overall combined cost for improvements to Whitlocks End and Shirley Stations. Instead, improvements along Bills Lane towards Shirley Station will be delivered by the BL3 cluster only, through direct delivery under s278. The improvements along Tythe Barn Lane and Tilehouse Lane to Whitlocks End Station will be delivered by BL1, and are split based on the 84%/16% dwelling numbers split.

A preliminary cost estimation for the Whitlocks End Railway Station improvements along Tilehouse Lane (a new enlarged four-arm roundabout, shuttle-working signals over the railway bridge, two signal controlled crossings over Tilehouse Lane and various active travel linkages) have been determined at this stage. This cost was provided by SMBC's Economy and Infrastructure team in July 2025, totalling £2,149,132. It should be noted that this construction cost estimate includes an estimate for STATs utilities works. However, no allowance is included for risk, professional fees, or design, which although need to be considered when producing supporting business case submissions, are not considered to be directly related to the development for the purpose of calculating a s106 requirement.

Bus enhancements

Transport for West Midlands were engaged to discuss the cost of diverting existing services in the Blythe area. As part of ongoing discussions potential deliverability concerns relating to the specific measures proposed by the applicant have been identified. In order to overcome issues with deliverability, and provide an element of flexibility over bus service improvements, it is therefore proposed to seek a contribution towards 'bus enhancements', to either divert existing services, or provide a new service to serve the clusters. The cost of this would be £4,000,000 over a 5 year period, which would provide a high frequency bus service (every 15 minutes), in accordance with Policy P7(a)(i) of the Solihull Local Plan. The amount ensures that the effect in terms of modal shift will be realised, but gives flexibility as to how the contribution is used, noting that there are unknowns relating to which developments will be built out in which order.

S106 Contribution

Using the above methodology, SMBC are seeking the below Section 106 contributions for the developments across the Blythe area.

Table 3 - Section 106 amounts

	BL1 – North	BL1 – South	BL2 – East	BL2 – West	BL3
LCWIP	£88,595	£463,577	£441,738	£629,577	£574,259
Bus Contributions	£0	£0	£1,640,000	£2,240,000	£120,000
Whitlocks End improvements	£343,861	£1,805,271	£0	£0	£0
Total	£432,456	£2,268,848	£2,081,738	£2,877,317	£694,259

The amounts set out above do not include any costs associated with mitigation delivered through other methods (such as direct delivery through s278) or contributions relating to Travel Planning.

Summary

The effect of taking into account the s106 contribution, together with the other highway-related contributions made by the applicants (such as Travel Plan contribution and direct delivery s278 works package) is that the developments will have ensured “*any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety will be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach*”