Planning for Solihull's Future
Local Plan Review
2026 – 43

Draft Submission Plan (Regulation 19)

October 2026



Making Solihull a great place to live,work, invest and enjoy

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

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Introduction

Importance of a Plan Led System

1. At the heart of planning is the need to plan positively for sustainable development. One of the principal ways this is achieved is by having a local plan to guide the development of an area. Solihull Council's local plan is key to delivering sustainable, infrastructure led development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities. The aim is that local authorities should positively seek opportunities, through their local plan, to meet the development needs of their area. The Council's local plan addresses the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change that is happening to the Borough, both now and in the future. It promotes an infrastructure led strategy to meet the development needs of the Borough, delivering homes and employment opportunities for local communities.

2. Two thirds of the Borough is located in the Green Belt, and this includes the strategically important Meriden Gap that separates Solihull and the Birmingham conurbation from the city of Coventry. This plan seeks to protect this important feature that makes Solihull special whilst accommodating, in a managed way, the growth that is needed.

3. The current local plan, the "Solihull Local Plan" (SLP), was adopted in December 2013 and covers the period 2011 to 2028. Whilst the content of the Plan remains broadly consistent with key aspects of national policy, the evolution of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), especially in recent years and the increase in the nationally derived housing requirement mean the plan is now considered largely 'out of date'.



4. In October 2020 the Council published the "Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan"[1]. It was subsequently submitted for independent examination in May 2021. During the course of the examination significant changes and intended changes to national planning policy were made and this impacted on the examination process such that the Inspectors eventually recommended that the plan be withdrawn, which then took place in October 2024.

5. This plan has therefore been produced as a replacement to the 2013 plan as the 2020 wasn't able to be pursued to adoption.

Glossary of Terms

6. Planning can be quite a technical and complex area and often uses unfamiliar terms. Whilst this document has been written as plainly as possible, it has had to use some technical terms and many abbreviations. To help understand the document a glossary and schedule of abbreviations has been provided towards the end of this document.

How Could it Affect Me?

7. The local plan as a whole sets out the future spatial strategy for the Borough. It is key to delivering sustainable, infrastructure led development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities and includes the allocation of sites to promote development. It also identifies land where development would be inappropriate because of its impact on, for instance, environmental or historic assets; and it also incorporates a strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

What will happen if we don't identify enough land for new development?

8. National planning policy is that the supply of land for housing should be significantly boosted, and without an adequate supply of land for new dwellings, access to the homes that we all need becomes ever more difficult. Equally, land for commercial needs has to be managed to ensure that existing businesses can flourish whilst also providing an opportunity to attract new business into the Borough. Of course, we also need to recognise the special place that Solihull is, and this plan seeks to ensure that the right balance is achieved between providing land for new development and protecting what makes Solihull special.

9. If the Council does not have an appropriate plan in place, it will be unable to demonstrate a '5-year land supply'. This is already a pressing issue in the Borough following changes to the national housing requirement in December 2024 and means policies in the 2013 plan would be considered out-of-date and lead to less influence over the impact, including through inappropriate design, that some developments may have. This increases the Borough's vulnerability to speculative development proposals and would lead to development and growth taking place in an unplanned manner, placing additional pressure on infrastructure without guaranteeing or planning positively for measures that can mitigate the impacts. In addition, the Secretary of State could intervene in the Council's plan making powers thus taking away local choice about where development should be accommodated.

[1] A plan prepared under Regulation 19 of the plan making regulations.

Background

10. This plan has been developed in a way that represents an evolution of the Local Plan Review that was withdrawn from examination in October 2024. This included significant consultation which helped to shape the plan and its contents.

11. The previous Local Plan Review was subject to a series of stages which started with a scope, issues and options consultation in November 2015; and further consultations on draft versions of a plan in November 2016 and January 2019. These earlier stages, and the evidence base prepared to support this plan culminated in the Draft Submission Plan being published for consultation in October 2020. It was subsequently submitted for examination in May 2021. The Plan was subject to a protracted examination period, caused in part by changes to national policy and a small number of key issues regarding housing land supply. The Inspectors overseeing the examination recommended the Plan be withdrawn in September 2024, which was confirmed through a meeting of the Full Council the following month.

12. Despite its withdrawal much was achieved through the examination of the draft Plan, including:

- The inspector confirmed the duty to cooperate had been complied with;
- The Spatial Strategy was deemed acceptable in principle;
- The housing requirement, including its basis as a stepped requirement, was agreed in principle; and
- The proposed residential site allocations were confirmed as acceptable in principle.

13. A key step in withdrawing the previous Plan Review was the approval of a Position Statement to help form the basis for the next Plan's development. This recognised the opportunity for a new Plan to represent an evolution of the previous Plan Review as opposed to a fundamentally different strategy.

14. Further changes to national policy and legislation since July 2024 meant the council undertook work to determine the best way to produce a new plan and whether that would be best served under the new plan-making system[2] or the legacy approach[3]. This work resulted in a letter being received from the Minister for Housing and Planning in December 2025 encouraging the Council to produce a plan under the legacy system.

15. The Council subsequently undertook a consultation[4] in January 2026 on issues and options for the new plan. The feedback to that consultation has helped shape this new draft Local Plan.

[2] The new plan-making system covers plans that will be prepared and amended under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as modified by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023.
[3] The legacy plan-making arrangements cover plans that will be prepared and amended under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which should be submitted for examination by 31st December 2026.
[4] This was under regulation 18 of the (legacy) plan-making regulations.

Relationship to Other Plans

16. This plan replaces both the Solihull Local Plan (2013) and Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (2014) which will no longer form part of the development plan for the Borough once this plan is adopted.

Neighbourhood Plans

17. There are now five neighbourhood development plans that have been "made"[5]. Whilst they were prepared under the provisions of the 2013 Local Plan, they will remain part of the development plan for the Borough where there is no conflict with the strategic policies of this plan. In addition to the five Neighbourhood Plans a further five areas have signalled an intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Others that come forward, or updates to existing, will need to reflect the strategic policies of this plan.

18. The Council places great importance on Neighbourhood Plans and recognises the substantial efforts that communities have made in bringing forward plans. In the context that this plan provides a number of policies that include Borough wide standards or expectations, there may be occasions when existing neighbourhood plans (particularly if they are up to date and reflect current evidence) provide a more appropriate local expression of a standard or expectation that should be taken into account and given due weight.

19. The local authority will continue to work with neighbourhood groups, parish councils and Neighbourhood Forum(s) to support the ongoing delivery of new neighbourhood plans and the update of existing plans as appropriate and in accordance with national guidance.

20. The 'made' neighbourhood plans in the Borough are as follows:

- Hampton in Arden – August 2017
- Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath – April 2019
- Berkswell – September 2019
- Balsall – June 2021
- Meriden – June 2021

[5] 'Made' is the term given to NDPs that have been adopted.

National and Regional Context for the New Plan

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

21. The latest NPPF was published in August 2026. It states that local plans being completed under the legacy system will be tested against the NPPF published in December 2024.

22. However, whilst the plan itself will be tested against the 2024 NPPF, it is important to note that for development management purposes, the 2026 version will be the relevant NPPF for determining planning applications and appeals from the date it is published, i.e. from 17th August 2026 onwards.

23. The practical consequence of this, is that this plan ought to take into account how planning applications will be treated under the 2026 NPPF. For example, if under the new NPPF a particular category of development is no longer constrained by Green Belt policies, then there is justification for it to be taken into account in the assumptions that underpin this plan.

24. A key change in the 2026 NPPF is the introduction of National Development Management Policies (NDMPs), which are outlined further below. In some instances, the new NDMPs can usefully be informed by a local plan policy to aid implementation of the NDMP, and where this is appropriate an opportunity has been taken to complement the NDMP. They are not intended to duplicate, restate or be inconsistent with the NDMP.

25. As a result of the above there are multiple references to both versions of the NPPF, but unless otherwise stated reference will be intended to be to the 2024 version.

West Midlands Spatial Development Strategy

26. Until 2010 strategic planning was undertaken through the production of Regional Spatial Strategies, but these were then replaced with a duty-to-cooperate. This meant that Councils in the Housing Market Area[6] (HMA) would work together so that individual local plans would address the area's needs, including the scale and distribution of growth.



27. The Government is working towards reintroducing formal strategic planning across wider areas than individual local plans and it is expected that, at least in part, this will be achieved through the production of a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the West Midlands. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will be responsible for producing this plan.

[6] The following authorities are located in the HMA: Birmingham, Bromsgrove, Cannock Chase, Dudley, Lichfield, North Warwickshire (also in Coventry & Warwickshire HMA), Redditch, Sandwell, Solihull, South Staffordshire, Stratford-on-Avon (also in Coventry & Warwickshire HMA), Tamworth, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

28. As the WMCA describes:

> *A SDS is a long-term plan that set outs where new homes, jobs, transport and green spaces should go across the whole region. Instead of each council planning in isolation, it joins things up, so growth is balanced and makes sense across towns and cities.*
>
> *It helps protect important natural habitats and green spaces while guiding investment into highly sustainable locations.*

29. In July 2025 the WMCA Board approved the initiation of the project which includes establishing governance and working arrangements, a public and stakeholder engagement plan and the adoption of eight guiding principles to inform the development of the SDS at each stage. The intended timescale for the SDS is as follows[7]:

- Summer 2025 – autumn 2026 – SDS initiation and scoping including: commissioning evidence base; establishing working groups and wider governance; and initial public & stakeholder engagement.
- Winter 2026 - spring 2027 – Issues and Options Consultation (following publication of regulations and guidelines).
- Summer – autumn 2027 – Publication of draft SDS and public consultation.
- Autumn 2027 – winter 2027 – Public examination.
- Spring/summer 2028 onwards – Adoption, monitoring and review.

30. As the regulations and guidelines for producing SDSs have still to be published, this timescale effectively remains provisional and will be subject to change. However, this has not prevented the WMCA from commencing preparation of the evidence base etc needed to support the strategy.

31. The eight principles to guide the development of the SDS are as follows:

a. ***Co-development and Equality of participation*** *- All LAs participate as equal partners with respect for different priorities and relationships.*

b. ***Timing and momentum*** *- To set firm timelines against each milestone in line with the Regulations, whilst allowing sufficient space and time for internal discussions on all aspects of the SDS.*

c. ***Infrastructure First*** *– Growth must be supported by the guarantee of provision of transport, energy, green and blue infrastructure and social infrastructure. The SDS can make this explicit in terms of timing and costs associated with different growth options.*

d. ***Brownfield First*** *– The SDS must maximise the use of previously developed land consistent with national and local priorities. However, alternative sources of land supply will be required to be identified given anticipated levels of need and finite availability of sites within the existing urban area. There will need to be a consistent*

[7] WMCA web site as of September 2026.

approach to any greenfield or Green Belt release activity, and an opportunity to give priority to suitable sites in highly sustainable locations.

e. ***Enhancing the functions of green spaces*** *- The SDS must recognise the strategic importance of green open spaces in the West Midlands and establish a consistent and positive approach to Green Belt land beyond the principal planning purposes of preventing urban sprawl and the merging of towns. The SDS should seek to enhance the wider functions of green open spaces, including giving priority to i) protecting and enhancing natural habitats and promoting biodiversity, ii) enabling access to recreational land, iii) protecting and establishing carbon-sequestering land uses, and iv) recognising that successful growth and the promotion of the region requires these spaces.*

f. ***Additionality to local plans*** *– The SDS must provide additionality to and not replicate the content of Local Plans produced by the local authorities. The SDS must also be sufficiently detailed to enable Local Plans to understand the implications of the SDS policies and proposals for application at the local level, for example in relation to the identification of growth areas and infrastructure.*

g. ***Evidence-led*** *– The SDS must be based on a comprehensive and robust evidence base, with all policies and proposals fully justified and capable of withstanding challenge at examination.*

h. ***Integration*** *– The SDS must be fully integrated with and support the delivery of key national, regional and local priorities and programmes, most significantly in relation to the Local Transport Plan, Regional Energy Strategy, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Local Growth Plan (regional industrial strategy).*



32. Local plans within the area covered by the SDS will be expected to be in general conformity with it. This means that the scale of growth to be included in local plans will be largely determined by the SDS.

33. It is anticipated that an SDS would be adopted by a simple majority vote of the constituent authorities with the West Midlands Mayor having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Duty to Cooperate (DtC)

DtC and Local Plans

34. Plans prepared under the current plan-making arrangements were required to fulfil both a legal and policy test in order to demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled its duty to cooperate obligations. Important updates with regard to the DtC were given by way of letters from the Minister of State for Housing and Planning to the Planning Inspectorate dated 9th October 2025 and 27th November 2025.

35. This includes the following from the October letter:

> *"We have also been clear about the importance of effective strategic planning across local planning authority boundaries, both to support the effective distribution of housing across appropriate geographies and also provide high-level frameworks for infrastructure investment. I look forward to welcoming the development of Spatial Development Strategies across England following the passage of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.*
>
> *In advance of the new plan-making system and mechanisms for cross-boundary cooperation coming into force, the final set of local plans being delivered within the current system remain essential to facilitating the effective delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure. It is therefore critical that Inspectors approach examinations of current system plans with the appropriate degree of flexibility. The evidencing of expectations to establish whether the legal and soundness tests have been met – including with respect to the Duty to Cooperate – should be proportionate to the context in which plans in the existing system are being prepared."*

36. This includes the following from the November letter:

> *"The new plan-making system provided by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 does not include the Duty. Instead, the new system will rely on revised national policy and the new tier of strategic planning to ensure effective co-operation between plan-making authorities. The Regulations for the new system will also 'save' the current plan-making system for a period to allow emerging plans to progress to examination by 31 December 2026. Given the above, and to help drive local plans to adoption as quickly as possible and progress towards our objective of universal local plan coverage, we have decided not to 'save' the Duty, thereby removing this requirement for plans in the current system.*
>
> *The Duty will therefore cease to apply when the Regulations come into force early next year, including for plans at examination at that point. On the basis of the government's firm intention to abolish the Duty for the current system, examining Inspectors may wish to begin any necessary dialogue with LPAs in advance of the Regulations coming into effect, with reference to this letter. Of course, LPAs should continue to collaborate across their boundaries, including on unmet development needs from neighbouring*

areas and Inspectors should continue to examine plans in line with the policies in the NPPF on 'maintaining effective co-operation'".

37. This approach is particularly noteworthy for plans being brought forward under the legacy system as it signals a degree of pragmatism around the DtC and that, depending on circumstances, the role SDS's will have with regard to ensuring cross boundary collaboration takes place.

38. Subsequently, the regulations[8] that came into force on 25 March 2026 formally removed the legal basis for demonstrating compliance with the duty for plans in the current system. However, the soundness test to DtC remains.

DtC and Strategic Plans

39. An important part of the new plan-making arrangements will be how the DtC will work **between** SDS areas. This is particularly important in the West Midlands as the area to be covered by the SDS is only **part** of the functional Housing Market Area.

The Council's Approach to the DtC

40. Whilst there is some certainty about what the development needs of the Borough are (for example the housing need considered in a later chapter), there is current uncertainty about how this figure will be influenced by the WMSDS. In this respect the SDS may result in a lower need for Solihull; or it may conclude that it is appropriate for Solihull to accommodate just its own needs; or it may seek that Solihull provides for more than its own needs.

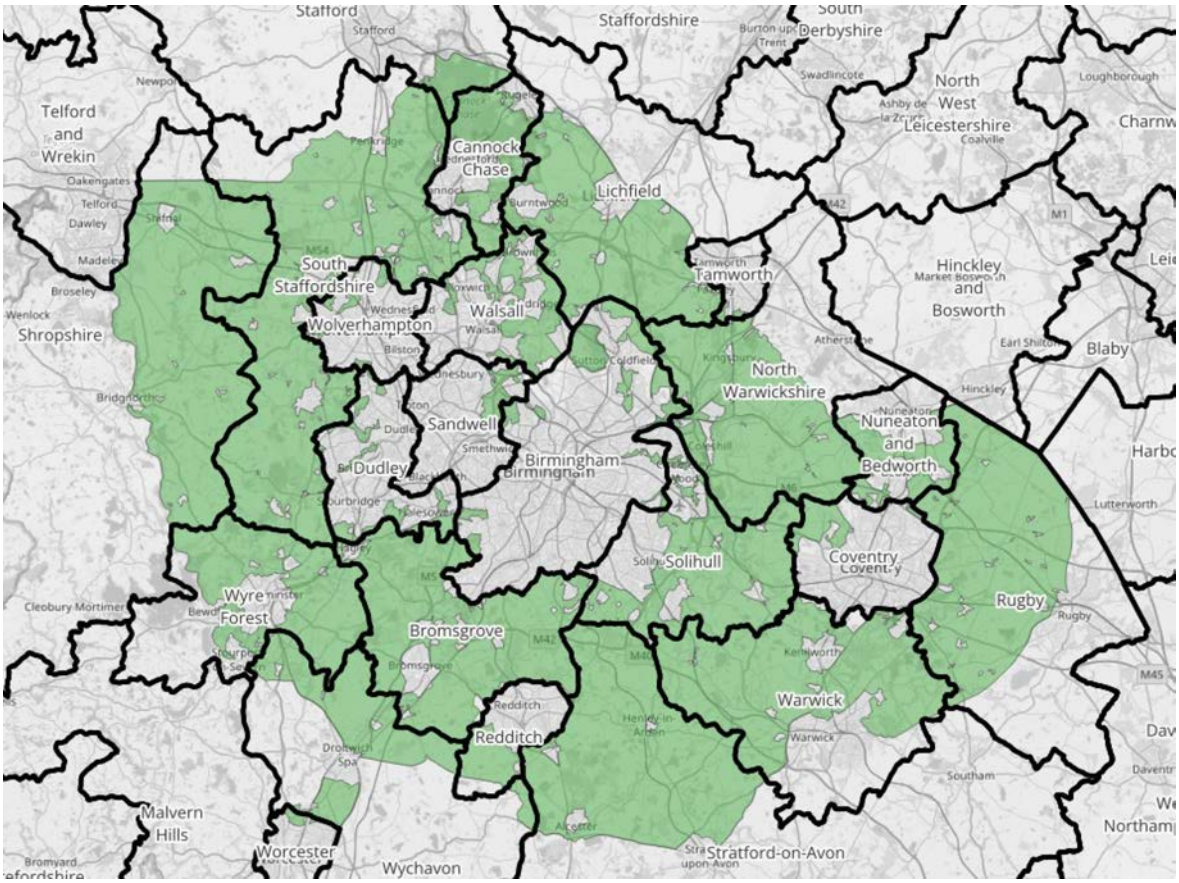
41. Furthermore, plan preparation by other Council's, both in the CA area and wider Housing Market Area may have implications in this respect. For instance, some of the Black Country authorities have indicated that they will be unable to accommodate all of their own growth longer term but have recently brought forward new Local Plans under a legacy style approach, which in some cases have not included the release of Green Belt land. With regards Birmingham City Council's latest plan, this accommodates all of their own needs (following the changes to the Standard Methodology for housing requirements) but does not make any Green Belt land release to accommodate unmet needs arising elsewhere in the HMA. Birmingham and the Black Country authorities will all be preparing a new plan under the new planning system in due course, which will ensure full conformity with the SDS.

42. As noted above, the approach to the duty-to-cooperate has changed for plans being brought forward under the legacy system with the legal test falling away; and the greater flexibility Inspectors are encouraged to take. This is in the context that the new plan-making system will rely on the new tier of strategic planning to ensure effective co-operation between plan-making authorities.

43. It is in this context that the Council's is bringing forward a plan under the legacy plan-making system and will plan positively to establish a strategy that can accommodate its own needs. The Council will continue to positively engage with other authorities, both within the WMCA area and wider Housing Market Area, to bring forward the first SDS for the West Midlands. It is believed that this would be the most appropriate mechanism for addressing any unmet needs

[8] The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 (SI 2026/186).

that can't be met in situ in other areas, in a **consistent, comprehensive and more robust manner.**



44. The Council consider that on the basis that it is planning to accommodate all of its own needs and is not seeking to rely on any other authority or authorities to help it meet its needs, that this represents an appropriate approach to a legacy plan pending the development of the SDS.

45. The Council acknowledges that the approach in this plan may mean that when the WMSDS makes more certain progress, and for example, demonstrates with robust evidence that Solihull ought to accommodate more than just it's owns needs, this may be a trigger for bringing forward a new plan more quickly than would otherwise have been the case[9].

Cross Boundary Impacts from Developments

46. On-going engagement with neighbouring authorities will continue to address and mitigate the impacts of cross-boundary growth.

[9] Under the new plan-making arrangements, the Council would ordinarily need to commence plan-making for a new plan in order for it to be adopted within 5 years of the adoption of this plan. This paragraph acknowledges that, depending on the content of the SDS, work on a new plan may need to be commenced sooner.

Scope of the Plan

Plan Period

47. This plan is to cover the period from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2043. This is on the basis that evidence is available that will be relevant to a start date of 2026 and if the plan is adopted on or before March 2028, then it will have a 15-year period post adoption (i.e. 2028 to 2043). Therefore, the plan will cover 17 years.

Approach to DM Policies

48. The 2026 NPPF includes a set of National Development Management Polices (NDMPs). These have been introduced for the first time. This will have implications for the nature and scope of policies that can be included in local plans since it is indicated that in preparing plans, Council's should not *"duplicate, substantially restate"* NDMPs, or introduce new local policies that *"are inconsistent with the content of national decision-making policies"*[10].

49. For decision making, the new policies in the NPPF must be taken into account from the date of its publication (17th August 2026).

50. The implementation provisions[11] include the following:

> *"Development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in this Framework should be given very limited weight. The only exception to this is where they have been examined and adopted or made against this Framework.[12]"*

51. This implies that any local policies in plans pursued under the 2024 NPPF would effectively be obsolete on adoption if they were inconsistent with the new NDMPs. Therefore, this plan does not seek to set out a raft of DM related policies, but rather to provide local specificity where implementation of NDMPs would benefit from additional detail.

Minerals & Waste

52. This scope of this plan does not include policies relating to the nature and scale of minerals and waste provisions that should be included in a plan. The intension is that a separate minerals and waste plan will be pursued under the new plan-making arrangements. This will be reflective of the ongoing work across the region through the West Midlands Waste Planning Advisory Group and the expected strategic consideration of waste and minerals within the West Midlands Mayoral SDS. In the interim, relevant planning applications relating to minerals will be considered under NDMPs M3 – M6.

53. Notwithstanding this approach, it is considered necessary that a criteria-based policy for new waste management facilities should be provided. This is set out in the Waste Management chapter.

[10] Policy PM6 1c.
[11] Annex A, paragraph 2.
[12] NPPF 2026 Annex A Paragraph 2.

Our Borough

Overview of the Borough

54. Solihull Metropolitan Borough is located on the southern edge of the West Midlands conurbation, between Birmingham and the Black Country to the west and Coventry to the east. It is bound to the north by the rural area of North Warwickshire and to the south, by rural Bromsgrove, Stratford and Warwick. The Borough is renowned for its key economic assets and strategic transport infrastructure both of regional and national significance; its attractive environment and quality of life; aspirational housing and excellent schools. All of which mean that Solihull is a desirable place in which to live, work and invest. Together, these elements combine to establish Solihull's character of 'town in country' living up to the Borough's motto: "Urbs in Rure".

55. Solihull is a constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The Combined Authority has an adopted growth strategy and has recently commenced work on producing a West Midlands Mayoral Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). Development at Birmingham Airport and the arrival of HS2, will help make Solihull and the West Midlands region a world class business location.

56. Solihull is at the heart of the national rail and motorway network with direct rail services to London, Birmingham and the north along the West Coast and Chiltern Mainlines and has excellent access to other regions in the UK through the M42, which links the Borough to the M6 at the northern boundary of the Borough and the M40 to the south. This strategic transport infrastructure, together with Birmingham Airport, has ensured the Borough is the principal national and international gateway to the wider West Midlands area.

Historical Development

57. The development of Solihull was highly influenced by the arrival of the railway stations and the 20th Century expansion of Birmingham south-eastwards. The area now known as Solihull Borough was predominantly rural with small historic towns and villages of medieval origin or earlier at Solihull, Meriden, Berkswell, Barston, Hampton-in-Arden, Knowle and Bickenhill until the end of the 19th Century, when Birmingham began to expand into rural Olton, with houses overlooking Olton Mere. Shirley originally developed from a scattered heathland settlement serving the road from Birmingham to Winchester via Oxford. Development of the Grand Union and Stratford-Upon-Avon canals and the railways also occurred during the Georgian and early Victorian periods, respectively.

58. The Rural Area once formed part of a huge area of wood pasture and ancient farmlands known as Arden and evidence of previous woodland, commons and heaths are often shown in local place names. There were also a number of manor houses and halls associated with large parks situated within the Rural Area, for example, parkland associated with Berkswell Hall was once part of a medieval deer park. Much of the woodland has now been cleared and the landscape character is predominantly agricultural, characterised by a variety of fieldscapes from older, irregular piecemeal enclosure to larger planned enclosure and very large post-war fields.

59. Large settlement expansion from Birmingham into Solihull occurred between 1900 and 1955, particularly during the inter-war period. This resulted in the development of semi-detached housing estates at Lyndon, Olton, Elmdon and Shirley stretching towards Solihull and, to a lesser degree, at Castle Bromwich. Detached housing development was more predominant

around Solihull. Small settlement expansion also occurred in the Rural Area at Hampton-in-Arden, Marston Green, Hockley Heath, Meriden and on part of Balsall Common. During the inter-war period, large industrial areas relating to the automotive industry developed, such as the Land Rover motor works and the early example of a research and development campus at Shirley, latterly owned by TRW. Birmingham Airport was also developed at this time, opening in 1939 as a municipal airport.

60. After 1945, there was a huge wave of predominantly terraced and multi-storey residential development in the north-west part of the Borough from Castle Bromwich southwards. Residential development at Kingshurst was followed in the 1960s by overspill development from Birmingham into Smiths Wood and Chelmsley Wood. At the same time, Dorridge expanded from a small settlement that was focussed around Dorridge railway station. Development at Shirley, Olton, Lyndon and Elmdon towards Solihull continued and by 1955, thus closing the gap between Solihull and Birmingham.

61. Since the mid-20th Century, most residential development has occurred at Monkspath and Hillfield, Balsall Common, Cheswick Green, Meriden, Knowle and Dorridge, and since the late 1990s, at Dickens Heath. Most large-scale commercial development occurred at the National Exhibition Centre in the 1970s, Birmingham Business Park since the late 1980s, Blythe Valley Park since the late 1990s.

62. The 2000s saw major retail redevelopments in Solihull town centre (the Touchwood Centre) and Shirley (Parkgate) and more localised residential in places such as Blythe Valley Park and The Green (in Shirley).



The Borough Now

63. The Council Plan (2025-30) sets out some key statistics for the Borough:

- Population: 218,793 (2023). The Solihull population grew by 4.6% (9,678) between 2013 and 2023.
- Age distribution: 0-15 years 20%, 16-39 years 27%, 40-64 years 32% & 65+ years 21%.
- The population aged 65+ increased 10% between 2013-2023. It is the fastest growing population cohort.
- The under 16 population grew 9% influenced by a much younger population in North Solihull.
- Communities are becoming increasingly diverse as ethnic minorities now account for 18% of the population (West Solihull: 23%, North Solihull: 13% & East Solihull: 10%)
- Solihull is a relatively affluent Borough but there is disparity; 41% of North Solihull residents are living in the 10% most deprived areas of England.
- Life expectancy in Solihull is the 2nd highest in the West Midlands.
- However, Solihull also has the largest life expectancy gap in the West Midlands between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods (10+ years for women and 12+ years for men).

64. The regional and national impact and role of Solihull's strategic economic assets is significant. Solihull's economy produces goods and services valued at £10.72 (bn) (GVA) and supports around 145,000 jobs.

65. The strength and dynamism of the Solihull economy is illustrated by a range of measures, including:

- At £49,007 Solihull GVA per head was 34% higher than the England average and 75% higher than that of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in 2023. Proportionally, Solihull has the 5th largest economy in the UK outside of London and the Southeast.
- Solihull is one of the more productive economic areas in the UK outside London and the Southeast. For instance, GVA per filled job in Solihull was ranked 34th out of 182 UK economic areas, the highest in the West Midlands region.
- In 2024 Solihull had the 7th largest labour market in Britain outside of London and the South-East, with a job density 39% higher than the England average and 52% higher than that of the WMCA.
- Employment specialities in Solihull are often linked to local economic assets, including motor vehicle manufacture (Jaguar Land Rover), air transport and warehousing & support activities for transportation (Birmingham Airport).
- In March 2025 there were 8,295 active businesses in Solihull, 89% employing fewer than 10 people and 66% with an annual turnover of less than £250,000.

- Except for 2023, the business start-up rate in Solihull has been consistently lower than national or regional comparators. However, Solihull business start-ups are more likely to survive over the medium-term, 40% of Solihull businesses that started in 2019 were still operation five years later compared to 38% for England and 31% for the West Midlands.
- In 2025 the average full-time wage for a Solihull based job was 8% higher than the England average. Solihull wages are the highest in the West Midlands and the 8th highest in Britain outside London and the Southeast.

66. Around two thirds of Solihull's 17,800 hectares is countryside and designated Green Belt, which separates the West Midlands conurbation from surrounding settlements. The vital strategic gap between Birmingham/Solihull and Coventry is known as the Meriden Gap. This area is predominantly rural, characterised by a series of settlements, historic villages, hamlets, scattered farmsteads and dwellings set within attractive countryside.

67. These factors combine to make Solihull a highly sought after living environment and, as a result, house prices and land values across most of the Borough are substantially above the regional average.

68. The Borough has a number of distinct areas, and these are described in the settlement chapters.



69. The illustration below is a spatial portrait of the Borough.



Challenges

70. To help shape the policies in the local plan it is helpful to identify the challenges the Borough faces. This helps to ensure that the plans policies are justified and that they will play a part in addressing these challenges.

71. A similar range of challenges was first included in the 2013 SP, and through consultation associated with the 2020 Local Plan Review they were updated and have more latterly been tested through the Reg18 consultation for this plan undertaken in January 2026. The challenges are not set out in any priority order

Challenge A	Mitigating and adapting to Climate Change.
Challenge B	Meeting the Borough's own housing needs.
Challenge C	Sustaining the attractiveness of the Borough for people who live, work, visit and invest in Solihull.
Challenge D	Securing sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
Challenge E	Protecting key gaps between urban areas and settlements, and between settlements.
Challenge F	Reducing inequalities in the Borough.
Challenge G	Maintaining a supply of Gypsy and Traveller sites and pitches.
Challenge H	Increasing accessibility and encouraging sustainable travel.
Challenge I	Providing sufficient waste management facilities and providing for sand and gravel aggregates.
Challenge J	Improving health and wellbeing for everyone.
Challenge K	Protecting and enhancing our natural assets.
Challenge L	Improving water quality and flood risk.
Challenge M	Maximising the economic and social benefits of the High Speed 2 rail link and the UKC Hub Area.
Challenge N	Mitigating the impacts of High Speed 2 and the growth associated with the UKC Hub area.
Challenge O	Providing infrastructure and securing developer contributions.

Vision

72. Once the challenges that a plan is expected to address have been identified, it is helpful to set an overall vision for the plan. This is also a useful opportunity to link to the Council Plan 2025-30 which was approved in July 2025. This states:

> *Our Council Plan sets out our vision for Solihull, the direction that we want to go in as a Council, how we aim to travel along that journey and what we want to see at the end of it.*
>
> *This Plan for 2025-30 is based on a new vision 'Solihull: a great place to live, work, invest and enjoy', which seeks to capture what is best and most unique about Solihull. It builds on strong foundations and makes the most of what Solihull has to offer our residents, our partners, and our businesses.*

73. The "Plan on a Page" is a visual summary of the Council Plan, demonstrating the Council's priorities and the end outcomes it is seeking to achieve:



74. Whilst the Council plan includes ambitions and key activities that are not solely related to the function of a local plan (which is mainly a land use plan), it does have some content that is directly related and these components can be drawn out into a planning related vision for the Borough, as follows:

> *By 2043, Solihull will have built on its distinct reputation as an attractive and aspirational place to live, work, invest and enjoy.*
>
> *It will have taken advantage of the unique opportunity to maximise the economic and social benefits of HS2 Interchange; reflecting the Borough's location at the heart of the national rail and motorway network, and the role of UK Central as the international gateway to the West Midlands. In particular the opportunity will have been taken to*

ensure that HS2 Interchange is well integrated and key economic assets, including Birmingham Airport, the NEC and JLR, are supported by privately and publicly funded transport infrastructure to unlock the full potential for economic growth.

The Borough will meet its local housing needs so that its residents have access to a range and choice of quality accommodation.

The Borough will retain its sense of identity, both in its urban and rural area (including protection of the Green Belt which contains the strategically important Meriden Gap); and the quality of the environment that make it a special place.

This vision will be underpinned by ensuring all relevant activities are underpinned and fully integrated with measures to tackle the Climate Change emergency; recognising that this has a cross-cutting dimension that extends across economic, social and environmental objectives.

Achieving this vision will contribute towards the ability for everyone to have an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous, through growth that creates opportunities for all.



Spatial Strategy

75. The 2020 plan was based on a spatial strategy that sought to accommodate development needs close to where they arise. As around 75% of the Borough's population live within the urban area, it was appropriate to (at least initially) follow options that made more efficient use of land in this area.

76. However, it was acknowledged that there was extremely limited land available that could fulfil this approach, and therefore it was necessary to look elsewhere, and this included looking at Green Belt options as follows:

- The UK Central Hub Area & HS2
- Limited Expansion of Rural Villages/Settlements
- New Settlements, Large Scale Urban Extensions or Significant Expansion of Rural Villages/Settlements

77. With the exception of a new settlement, a combination of the above options was included as the basis for the spatial strategy. It was noted that this approach would strike a balance between concentrating development in a relatively small number of locations and dispersing development over a greater number of locations – a **'balanced dispersal**' approach. The publication of the new NPPF and NDMPs (in August 2026 following a period of consultation that commenced in December 2025) has some effect on this overall approach, most notably in relation to the introduction of national policy promoting growth around railway stations. The location of the majority of stations within the Borough (and in very close proximity to its boundaries with neighbouring authorities) however means that directing growth to such areas will still remain with broad alignment to the spatial strategy. It is considered that this approach therefore remains an appropriate basis for seeking to accommodate the development needs in this plan.



78. The strategy also seeks to focus significant developments in locations that are, or can be made, accessible and sustainable. These locations will typically be on the edge of the urban area or within the rural settlements that have a greater range of services. This will be achieved by focussing development on the following locations:

- Located adjacent to the urban edge/a highly accessible settlement or;
- Located adjacent to a settlement that although it may be less accessible, it has a wide range of local services (e.g. towns) or;
- Development that would be a proportionate addition adjacent to an existing settlement that although is less accessible still has a limited range of services available within it (e.g. larger villages).
- Unless captured within the three points above, development that would be located within close proximity to a suitable railway station that is or can be made accessible to necessary services.

79. This approach will have the following advantages:

- Concentration could support the UK Central masterplan and HS2 growth strategy, and the investment priorities in 'Solihull Connected';
- Focussing on urban areas and sustainable urban extensions provides the best opportunity for achieving accessibility and delivering public transport improvements;
- Larger scale developments offer the opportunity for significant infrastructure improvements;
- Provision for some smaller sites will assist the early delivery of housing during the Plan period and support existing services;
- A totally dispersed pattern of growth would be unlikely to deliver the scale of growth required and be more likely to result in adverse impacts associated with piecemeal development which would affect a greater area.

80. This approach would thus discourage development that is:

- Isolated from any settlement;
- A disproportionate addition to a settlement that only has a limited range of facilities;
- Occurs in relatively less accessible locations;

81. Focussing development in existing sustainable locations and/or those that can be made sustainable through the delivery of additional infrastructure allows an 'infrastructure first' approach to be followed.

82. To help determine which settlements ought to be the focus for larger scale developments (i.e. towns), the Council has considered a settlement hierarchy as set out in the following paragraphs. This is to help inform the spatial strategy as set out above.

Settlement Hierarchy

83. Following publication of the 2024 NPPF, the associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was updated in February 2025. One of the aspects of the new PPG is that for Green Belt purposes

A[13], B[14] and D[15]; it makes it explicit that these purposes relate to **large built-up areas** (purpose A) and **towns** (purposes B & D) **not villages**.

84. As this represented the first-time policy/guidance was so explicit, the Council undertook a review of the Borough's rural settlements to determine which ought to be considered as towns and which are villages[16]. This was in the context of neither the NPPF or PPG setting out a definition of either a town or a village.

85. Following publication of a draft settlement hierarchy, the Council confirmed its position though a "Solihull Rural Settlement - Hierarchy Assessment" adopted in October 2025. This assessment concluded it was appropriate to use a combination of population size and availability of services to determine whether a settlement ought to be considered as a town. The assessment considered in detail the settlements inset[17] (or partially inset) from the Green Belt, which are as follows:

- Balsall Common
- Blythe Valley Park
- Catherine-de-Barnes
- Cheswick Green
- Dickens Heath
- Hampton-in-Arden
- Hockley Heath
- Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH)
- Meriden
- Tidbury Green

86. Following an assessment of each of these settlements, it was concluded that two were of such a size (in terms of their population and availability of services) that they ought to be considered as towns. These are as follows:

- Balsall Common
- Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH)

87. It was recognised that this was a 'snapshot in time', and that circumstances could change in the future, as settlements evolve and change such that a settlement that may now be

[13] to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
[14] to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
[15] to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
[16] Previous to this, the Borough's rural settlements were often referred to as villages, but this was in the absence of an objective assessment of them, and was left as such as it tended not to have any significant implications in policy terms.
[17] The assessment noted that it was clear that the rural settlements washed over by the Green Belt each had a small population and limited range of services such that they would clearly not reach a threshold for being considered as a town.

considered to be a village, could expand to the extent that it could in the future be considered as a town.

88. Although this work was principally undertaken to establish an evidential basis for considering whether any of the Borough's rural settlements ought to be considered as towns, it is also useful to help distinguish between what may be larger villages and smaller villages/other settlements. Whilst this will not be relevant in the application of Green Belt policy, it is useful in the context of a finer grain to the settlement hierarchy.

89. Using the presence of a primary school, a GP surgery and at least some convenience retail facilities, the following settlements can be considered as larger villages[18]:

- Cheswick Green
- Dickens Heath
- Hampton in Arden
- Hockley Heath
- Meriden

90. In overall terms, this results in a settlement hierarchy as set out in the policy below.

Policy SMBC/SS1: Solihull Settlement Hierarchy

1 The settlement hierarchy for the Borough is as follows:

A Urban Area: which includes Solihull, Shirley, UK Central Hub area and North Solihull.

B Towns: Balsall Common and Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath

C Larger Villages: Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath, Hampton in Arden, Hockley Heath and Meriden

D Smaller Villages & other settlements: All other rural settlements not listed above.

Vulnerable Gaps

91. The Borough's smaller rural settlements have a sense of identity and character that sets them apart from their neighbours which are often located in a different parish, yet the physical gaps between the settlements can be quite narrow and vulnerable to development that could see them merge into one amorphous conglomeration that would result in the loss of identity and character.

92. This is particularly the case in the Blythe area (west of the M42 and north of the M40) that accommodates four settlements (Blythe Valley, Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green) in close proximity to each other that are separated by short distances.

[18] In population terms, these are also the five villages in the Borough with the higher populations.

93. It is considered that the gaps between these settlements are particularly small such that even modest development between them could cause the settlements to merge either physically or visually, if only a token strip or area remains open.

94. It is not considered necessary for this approach to be applied Borough wide and therefore it will only apply in specified locations set out in the policy.

Policy SMBC/SS2: Protection of Vulnerable Gaps

1 In order to prevent coalescence (either physically or visually) of rural settlements and to maintain the separate identity of settlements, the generally open and undeveloped nature of the following vulnerable gaps will be protected.

A Between the urban edge and Dickens Heath.

B Between the urban edge and Cheswick Green.

C Between Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green.

D Between Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green.

E Between Cheswick Green and Blythe Valley Park.

2 Development will only be permitted where:

A It would not diminish the physical and/or visual separation; and

B It would not compromise the integrity of the gap either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development.

95. NDMP S2(1)(c) of the 2026 NPPF states:

> *"Designations and associated policies to safeguard gaps between settlements should be used only where they are necessary to maintain the separate identities of the settlements and their physical separation, should be no larger than needed to achieve this aim, and should not apply to land in the Green Belt".*

96. Whilst the above gaps are acknowledged as being within the defined Green Belt, they are also clearly important in terms of maintaining physical separation or defined settlements. As the majority of these settlements are also deemed villages then national Green Belt policy affords them lesser weight when having regard to grey belt considerations. Notwithstanding, NDMPs GB4 and GB7 also recognise that boundaries should not be changed or development considered appropriate where it would *"fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan"*. Chapter 14 of the new NPPF also places great weight on high-quality design, placemaking and recognising the importance of local characteristics. This is encapsulated by NDMP DE1 which states "Ensuring the vision for the plan reflects the desired design and placemaking outcomes. This should be informed by an evaluation of the area's existing characteristics and potential".

97. When read as a whole therefore, the NPPF clearly recognises and supports the importance of maintaining settlements individual characteristics and integrity of what makes a settlement 'unique' or 'special'. The NPPF does not advocate the merging or coalescence of settlements and indeed actively includes a purpose of Green Belt that actively discourages such an action.

98. This matter has also been considered within the Green Belt Assessment in terms of how development within certain areas of the Borough could have a fundamental impact on the Green Belt when considered as a whole. See the Green Belt Chapter.

99. As a result, the approach put forward by Policy SMBC/SS2 (above) is considered in accordance with the overall principles of both the 2024 and 2026 NPPF when taken as a whole.

100. It is important to note that respective relationships between settlements within Solihull and neighbouring areas also remain important considerations. The two primary examples include:

- Hockley Heath and Knowle Dorridge and Bentley Heath – whilst both settlements are within Solihull Borough, much of the land between the two sits within South Warwickshire. This relationship will be managed through an ongoing Duty to Cooperate as respective plans evolve, and planning applications are considered.
- Tidbury Green and Wythall – the gap between settlements is already relatively small and is pressurised by the presence of accessible railway stations. This relationship will continue to be managed through an ongoing Duty to Cooperate as respective plans evolve, and planning applications are considered, whilst it will also be strongly influenced by the River Cole and land immediately surrounding it.



Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Policy SMBC/HO1: Provision of Land for Housing

1. The Council will identify sufficient land for at least 13,096 net additional homes, to ensure sufficient housing land supply to deliver 21,913 additional homes in the period 2026-2043.

2. The sites to be identified will include the following:

   A 8,219 dwellings to be accommodated in the broad locations identified in the table below.

   B 4,877 dwellings to be accommodated on the sites allocated for development in the table below.

3. The average annual housing land provision target is 1,289 net additional homes per year (2026-2043). This will be provided via a stepped trajectory as follows:

   A 2026-28: 400 dwellings per annum.

   B 2028-33: 967 dwellings per annum

   C 2033-43: 1,628 dwellings per annum

Policy SMBC/HO2: Broad Locations

1 The areas identified on the Policies Map as a Broad Location for Development are expected to contribute towards meeting the Borough's development needs during the plan period.

2 Development proposals within the broad location will be supported in principle where they:

   A Are consistent with the spatial strategy of the Plan;

   B Demonstrate a comprehensive and coordinated approach to development;

   C Provide or contribute towards necessary infrastructure; and

   D Avoid, mitigate or compensate for adverse environmental impacts.

3 The broad locations do not constitute site allocations, and the precise scale, form and disposition of development will be determined through either (i) subsequent planning applications having regard to all NDMPs and relevant development plan policies or (b) through further work in accordance with part 4 of this policy.

4 The future amendment of Green Belt boundaries in these locations will be confirmed through one of the following 3 mechanisms:

   A The next review/update of the Councils local plan;

   B A new or an update to the respective Neighbourhood Plan; or

   C A new Supplementary Plan brought forward under the new planning system.

101. It is recognised that delivery of this policy will be through a mix of (a) reacting to planning applications and (b) being more proactive with bringing forward a plan of a type included in part 4 of the above policy. This is partly a reflection of the likelihood for planning applications to be submitted in for developments that may be consistent with NDMPs S5 (1)(h) and GB7 (1)(h).

102. The Council's preference is for joint working with promotors, developers and other stakeholders (including parish councils and neighbourhood forum(s) to achieve a comprehensive development that addresses infrastructure needs in a coordinated manner.

103. The adoption of this plan does not automatically remove Green Belt status from land within the broad locations included in the plan[19]. As noted in the above policy, amendments to the boundaries of the Green Belt will only occur through a further local plan, a Neighbourhood plan or a Supplementary Plan.

Housing Requirement

Local Housing Need (LHN)

104. Paragraph 62 of the NPPF sets out that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies of the plan should be informed by a Local Housing Need assessment, conducted using the standard method in the national Planning Practice Guidance. The standard method uses a formula that incorporates a baseline of local housing stock which is then adjusted upwards to reflect local affordability pressures to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for.



[19] The only exceptions to that are where the broad location areas overlap with: specific sites that are proposed for allocation; specific sites that already have planning consent; or where land is situated within the existing built form of Tidbury Green due to the village being inset from the Green Belt.

105. The table below sets out the key data inputs used and the resultant calculation of the LHN for the plan period.

Data Description	Value
Total dwelling stock (no. of existing dwellings)	96,333
0.8% annual increase in housing stock	771
Current median house price[20]	£330,000
Current median workplace earnings[21]	£42,587
Average affordability ratio (2022-26)[22]	8.54
Percentage increase[23]	67.2%
LHN (dwellings per annum)	1,289
Number of years in the plan period (2026-2043)	17
Total LHN for plan period	**21,913**

106. In the 2020 plan the local housing requirement was established at 816 dwellings per annum (dpa). The new standard methodology for calculating Local Housing Need was subsequently introduced in December 2024 and had a significant impact on the level of housing required across the Borough. **Under the new standard method the LHN for the Borough has now increased to 1,289 dpa.** This represents an increase of 473 dpa or 58%. Over the course of the plan period (17 years) this would increase the number of dwellings to be accommodated by around 8,000 dwellings.

Housing Completions 2015-25

107. It is useful to provide context to the LHN by drawing a comparison to completions that have taken place in the Borough over the last ten years[24]. Although annual numbers have fluctuated between 287 and 828 dwellings per annum, the ten-year average has been 647 dpa. From this it can be seen that the LHN for the Borough is double the number of completions that has taken place in recent years.

Stepped Trajectory

108. In the Housing Supply and Delivery chapter of the PPG, it states[25] that:

[20] ONS as published March 2026
[21] ONS as published March 2026
[22] The affordability ratios for 2022 (9.15), 2023 (7.74), 2024 (9.44), 2025 (8.62) and 2026 (7.75).
[23] Using the standard method as follows: ((8.54-5) / 5) x 0.95
[24] This covers the period the Housing Delivery Test results have covered.
[25] Paragraph 012 (Reference ID: 68-021-20190722)

"A stepped housing requirement may be appropriate where there is to be a significant change in the level of housing requirement between emerging and previous policies and/or where strategic sites will have a phased delivery or are likely to be delivered later in the plan period."

109. It goes on to say that strategic policy makers must identify the stepped requirement in strategic housing policy, support it with evidence, and must not unnecessarily delay meeting development needs.

110. The housing requirement in this plan is significantly higher than (a) was to have been included in the 2020 plan, and (b) previous delivery. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the land supply is expected to come forward on strategic sites and/or from broad locations, the majority of which are situated within the Green Belt. In these circumstances it is considered a stepped trajectory is justified as indicated in Policy SMBC/HO1. This will be provided over three time periods. This reflects the small number of completions expected in the two-year period before the plan is adopted. The second period then seeks to provide 75% of LHN over the first five-year period post adoption of the plan. The shortfall would then be made up over the remaining 10 years of the plan.

Housing Supply.

111. The table below sets out the land supply 2026-43 (as of 31st March 2026).

Source	Capacity
1 – Site with planning permission (started)	493
2 – Sites with planning permission (not started)	2,249
3 – Sites identified in land availability assessments	665
4 – Sites identified in the brownfield land register	21
5 – Town centre sites	2,169
6 – SLP 2013 allocations without planning permission	65
7 – Less a 10% discount to rows 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6	-517
8 – Broad locations (inc. development around railway stations	8,219
9 – UK Central Hub Area (to 2043)	1,600
10 – Short-term Grey Belt windfalls	1,000
11 – Other windfall supply (2028-43)	2,250
12 – Allocated Sites	4,877
Total Capacity	**23,091**

112. Commentary on these land supply components is as follows.

Row 1: Site with planning permission (started)

113. This includes all planning permissions where development has commenced on site, but the development has not been completed. This excludes dwellings on sites under construction which were completed before 1st April 2026, but will include the dwellings on such sites that have been/will be completed after this date.

Row 2: Sites with planning permission (not started)

114. This relates to planning permissions (including outline, full and/or reserved matters approvals) where permission has been granted, but the development has not commenced on site.

115. Following the work undertaken on the 2020 plan, which included allocating sites in the Green Belt, a number of planning applications for these developments have now been submitted, and some have now got planning permission. These are included in this part of the land supply.

Row 3: Sites identified in land availability assessments

116. This includes sites identified in land availability assessments that are expected to come forward in the plan period. These are on sites that are not dependent on a change in planning policy (e.g. to take a site out of the Green Belt).

Row 4: Sites identified in the brownfield land register (BLR)

117. Where not included in other parts of the land supply, this component includes the remaining sites identified in the BLR.

Row 5: Town centre sites

118. This component includes developments expected to come forward in Solihull and Chelmsley Wood town centres as follows:

- Chelmsley Wood – 100
- Solihull – 2,069[26]

119. A major development at Mell Square (which is to be known as Holbeche Place), which includes provision for up to 1,600 residential units[27], was granted planning permission on 1st April 2026. The contribution to land supply from this development is therefore not yet included in row 2 of the above table (planning permissions (not started)) but has been included in this component.

120. Other potential developments in the town centre that were envisaged by the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan (2020) includes 469 dwellings in the Heart of Solihull quarter (Eastgate).

121. Following masterplanning work at Chelmsley Wood town centre, the centre is considered capable of accommodation c100 dwellings.

[26] Comprised of 1,600 units at Mell Square and 469 at Eastgate.
[27] Of these 1,600 units, 574 have now got detailed consent, either because they were approved in full as part of the hybrid application, or they have subsequently been granted reserved matters approval.

Row 6: SLP 2013 allocations without planning permission

122. The only remaining site to come forward from this plan is that relating to development at Riddings Hill in Balsall Common (now referenced as site allocations BC7 in the Balsall Common chapter).

Row 7: Less a 10% discount to rows 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

123. To reflect potential non-implementation a 10% discount has been applied to these sources of land supply.

Row 8: Broad locations (inc. development around railway stations)

124. The 2026 NPPF promotes development around well-connected railway stations through Policy S5 (1)(h) and policy GB7 (1)(h). These policies specifically indicate development proposals (within reasonable walking distances) can be considered as not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Effectively this would create another form of windfall supply that could be expected to come forward in the plan-period without needing any further policy changes in a development plan.

125. The 2026 NPPF defines a reasonable walking distance as 800m, and only those parts of a site that fall within this distance should be considered as appropriate development under the relevant NDMPs. However, in the context of the land identified within Solihull, this could (a) create illogical or arbitrary site boundaries and/or (b) fail to maximise the benefit of locating development in the vicinity of railway stations, which are likely to be the more sustainable locations in the Borough.

126. Therefore, an assessment on a station-by-station basis has been undertaken to identify the likely capacity that could come forward from sites within 1,000m of railway stations and this has been included in the above table. This exercise has considered the potential capacity around relevant stations by excluding (a) land that is already built up and (b) other land that is unlikely to be suitable for development as it would be contrary to a NDMP (such as parks, ancient woodland or flood zones).

127. This approach, which is based on the new national policy position will help deliver an enhanced supply that can be provided in a more comprehensive manner. The Council will work with landowners, site promotors and local communities (including the relevant Parish Council and/or Neighbourhood Forum) to help steer delivery of development in these broad locations. This could be pursued through bringing forward supplementary plans (in accordance with NDMP PM4 and/or neighbourhood plans (in accordance with NDMP PM5 which will identify detailed sites and strategic infrastructure. This approach will also help make provision for treatment of development in a comprehensive manner.

128. Whilst development of land within 800m walking distance of a railway station may be considered as appropriate development, development of land between 800m and 1,000m (or even beyond) would need to be based on very special circumstances, having regard to relevant site circumstances, infrastructure delivery and the context of this plan (and its spatial strategy). As such, sites that fall within the 800m - 1,000m buffer zone are unlikely to be isolated sites but instead more comprehensive sites that maintain connections and accessibility to land within the 800m buffer area.

129. Other broad locations are as set out in the settlement chapters.

130. Summary table of broad locations to which Policy SMBC/HO2 applies is as follows:

Broad Location	Capacity
BC9 – Land at Phase 3 of the Balsall Common Relief Road	1,100
BC10 - Berkswell	1,350
BC11 - Tile Hill	1,190
BL4 - Shirley, Whitlocks End, Wythall and Earlswood Stations	1,577
HA3 - Hampton in Arden	1,350
KN3 - Dorridge	814
NS2 - Marston Green	36
SO3 - Widney Manor	802
Total	**8,219**

Row 9: UK Central Hub Area (to 2043)

131. Development at Arden Cross and around the HS2 Interchange is expected to take place over an extended period, which is partly in response to the timings for the return of the non-operational elements of the HS2 land to landowners. The 2021 masterplan for the site indicated the creation of a new residential community delivering up to 3,000 new homes incorporating a mix of tenure, type and density.

132. Whilst the delivery of homes at Arden Cross is not dependent on the delivery of HS2 (which has recently undergone a 'reset' and programme review) the revised programme for HS2 is likely to have implications on the timescales for land becoming available for development at Arden Cross, albeit the first land returns are expected by 2030. Therefore, at this stage it is considered prudent to continue to acknowledge that the residential component of the development will not be completed within the plan period, and for land supply purposes a total of 1,600 is considered a reasonable expectation within the plan period, and this would be in the later years.

133. As noted elsewhere in this plan, development at the NEC is expected to shift the focus from residential development to employment and leisure uses in the more underutilised northern car parks. Whilst later phases of a refreshed masterplan may make provision for some residential development, this is likely to be in the long-term and probably beyond this plan period. Therefore, this component of the land supply does not include any residential capacity at the NEC.

Windfall Developments

134. Given the changes to the NPPF in 2024 which introduced the concept of Grey Belt, it is considered appropriate to look at the windfall supply in two parts:

- Row 10: A short-term contribution to windfall supply from Grey Belt developments, and
- Row 11: A supply throughout the plan period from typical/traditional windfall developments.

Row 10: Grey Belt Windfalls

135. This will effectively be a short-term interim windfall supply likely to come forward in the period until the plan is adopted.

136. The 2024 NPPF introduced the concept of Grey Belt and under paragraph 155 some developments under this paragraph should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt (if there evidenced unmet need for a development). This prompted a number of planning applications to be submitted, and more may follow. One of the conditions to be met is that there must be a demonstrable unmet need for the development, and this can be established through the lack of a 5-year land supply or where the Housing Delivery Test falls below 75%. These tests are likely to be met until (at least) when this plan is adopted around the end of 2027/beginning of 2028.

137. The practical consequence of this is that there will be a land supply from this source for around two years. Indeed, there is evidence (through planning applications being granted either by the Council or via the appeal route[28]) that this source is already yielding a land supply. At the time this plan was published, around 20 planning applications for major residential development were awaiting determination[29]. In total, these applications contained proposals for over 4,000 dwellings. These applications are likely to be determined before the plan is adopted and, for those that are approved, will contribute to the land supply for the plan period. This land supply would not otherwise be captured. Using a cautious approach, it has been assumed 1,000 dwellings may reasonably be expected to come forward as part of the land supply under this category, thus they have been included in the above table. This will be a 'one off' contribution to the land supply, rather than an annual rate over the plan period

138. Where such sites also sit within reasonable distance of a railway station care has been taken to avoid double counting within the respective supply components, as such sites would be included in the railway stations windfall.

Row 11: Other windfall supply

139. Other windfall housing sites are sites that will become available for residential development during the Plan period that cannot be identified now, even as either broad locations or types of development as described above. Typically, these will be smaller sites than the other windfalls noted above and are likely to come forward on an annual basis.

140. There is compelling evidence that such windfall sites consistently become available in Solihull. The windfall assumption in the adopted Solihull Local Plan was 150 dpa. The average windfall supply since 1992 increased up to 231 dpa (measured over a 10-year period). The 2020 plan included a windfall rate of 200 dpa which the Inspectors did not indicate would need to be amended.

[28] For example, Land at Rumbush Lane, Tidbury Green and Land at Gentleshaw Lane, Solihull have been approved on the basis of Grey Belt policy, whilst land at Stratford Road in Hockley Heath has been approved on appeal.
[29] This relates to Green Belt sites but not including those that were included as allocations in the 2020 plan.

141. However, given the additional windfall categories noted above, it has been considered prudent to reduce this 'other windfall' from 200 dpa to 150 dpa.

142. To prevent double counting with existing permissions, the windfall completions are counted from the third year of supply, therefore from 2028 onwards. This will result in this category of windfall development yielding supply over a 15-year period[30] at 150 dpa, i.e. 2,250 dwellings in the plan period.

Row 12: Allocated Sites

143. This relates to allocations proposed in this plan and includes those carried forward from the 2020 plan that (a) remain as appropriate allocations and (b) have not already received the benefit of a planning permission (as at 31st March 2026).

144. Summary table of residential allocations[31].

Site	Capacity
BC1 – Barratt's Farm, Balsall Common*	1,160
BC3 – Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common	132
BC5 – Trevallion Stud, Balsall Common	310
BC6 – Lavender Hall Farm, Balsall Common	92
BL1- West of Dickens Heath*	536
BL2 – South of Dog Kennel Lane (west), Blythe*	700
BL3 – Whitlock's End Farm, Blythe	450
HA1 – Meriden Road, Hampton in Arden	100
HH1 – School Road, Hockley Heath*	100
KN1(A&B) – Hampton Road, Knowle	193
KN2 – South of Knowle*	225
ME1 – West of Meriden	10
SO1 – East of Solihull*	770
SO2 – Moat Lane Depot, Solihull	99
Total	**4,877**

[30] 2028 to 2043.
[31] This table includes allocations which have not received planning permission by 31st March 2026. A number of sites noted here have since received the benefit of planning permission and these are described in the settlement chapters.

145. Within the above table, those sites that have either received planning permission or have been the subject of a resolution to grant planning permission (at least in part), since 1st April 2026 are marked with an *, when land supply is updated to a base date of 31st March 2027 these will then be included in Row 2 of the land supply table.

146. To avoid confusion, the site references used in the 2020 plan have been carried forward (rather than renumbering sites) and so it may appear that the above table is incomplete. For instance, the entries jump from BC1 to BC3. For completeness the list below fills the gaps and notes why they are not now included:

- BC2 – Frog Lane, Balsall Common: site now has planning permission.
- BC4 – Pheasant Oak Farm, Balsall Common: site now has planning permission.
- HA2 – Oak Farm, Catherine-de-Barnes: site now has planning permission.
- NS1 – Kingshurst Village Centre: site now has planning permission and is under construction (some residential completions have now take place).

Balance of Housing Need to Housing Supply

147. Measured against a need of 21,913 dwellings over the plan period, there is a supply of 23,091 dwellings, a surplus of 1,178 dwellings (or 5.4 % when measured against the need)[32].

Affordable Housing Policy

Policy SMBC/HO3: Affordable Housing

1 The Council will require developers of allocated and windfall sites to contribute to affordable housing on residential sites of major development, where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more to meet the housing needs of the Borough. Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented, intermediate tenure and Starter Homes, which is available at below market price or rent, and which is affordable to households whose needs are not met by the market as defined by Annex 2 of NPPF.

2 In accordance with NPPF, the affordable tenures need in Solihull have been informed by a housing needs assessment. The Borough definition of 'affordable' will be informed by work with the WMCA and build upon the definitions in national guidance.

3 Contributions will be expected to be made in the form of:

A 50% affordable housing on sites that are located in the Green Belt or released from the Green Belt; or

B 40% affordable dwelling units on all other development sites that meet the threshold.

4 In applying these standards the Council may take into account the following factors:

A Site size;

[32] This also allows for a discounted rate of 517 dwellings for non-delivery of existing consents.

B Accessibility to local services and facilities and access to public transport;

C The economics of provision, including particular costs that may threaten the viability of the site;

D Whether the provision of affordable housing would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives that need to be given priority in the development of the site;

E The need to secure a range of house types and sizes in the locality in helping to achieve socially balanced and mixed communities; and

F Vacant Building Credit.

5 Where on-site provision is not feasible or viable there will be a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing that would not otherwise be provided, elsewhere within the Borough. The Council will instruct a qualified valuer to examine the off-site affordable housing financial contribution. The cost of the Council's qualified valuer will be met by the applicant.

6 The extent of affordable housing that should be provided in relation to developments that either re-use existing buildings or include the demolition of existing buildings will be assessed according to the 'vacant building credit'. The approach to calculating the vacant building credit is set out in the 'Meeting Housing Needs' Supplementary Planning Document.

7 On-site provision and off- site contributions should be calculated based on a tenure split of 65% social rent, with 35% provided as shared ownership.

8 The Council acknowledges that the delivery of affordable homes in accordance with this policy requires a registered provider. In the absence of a registered provider, the Council will work with the developer to explore variations in affordable tenure and/or payment of a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision. Such options may include the delivery of low-cost homes for sale (as defined in the NPPF) (e.g. starter homes) or the gifting of a reduced number of affordable dwellings to the Council or a registered affordable housing provider approved by the Council; or payment of the Affordable Housing Contribution by the Owner in lieu of providing the Affordable Housing Units.

9. Where a Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted and a relevant policy included, the revised mix of affordable housing (including type, mix and/or tenure) will take precedent over the relevant details set out in this policy. This will be influenced by an up-to-date housing needs assessment that has been conducted in accordance with National Planning Policy and tested through examination of the Neighbourhood Plan.

10 The social rented should be provided as follows, but will take into account site circumstances:

A 27.5% one bedroom maisonettes/apartments (2 person home)

B 32.5% two bedroom houses (4 person home)

C 27.5% three bedroom houses (5 person home)

D 12.5% four bedroom houses (6 person home)

11 The shared ownership should be provided as follows, but will take into account site circumstances:

A 12.5% one bedroom maisonettes/apartments

B 47.5% two bedroom houses/apartments

C 32.5% three bedroom houses

D 7.5% four bedroom houses

12 Specific sites circumstances are defined as town centre development, which may result in a different mix of type and size being delivered.

13 The availability of a rented home at time of need and that meets a household's size mean that social rent is most needed to meet homeless and housing needs in a timely way. Affordable rent will only be supported if the rent is provided at target rent.

14 Where the economics of provision of affordable housing, including particular costs that may threaten the viability of the site, the applicant is required to submit a viability assessment at the time of planning application submission. The Council will instruct a qualified valuer to examine the submitted viability assessment. The cost of the Council's qualified valuer will be met by the applicant.

15 Further detail and guidance to support the delivery of Policy SMBC/HO3 will be set out in the Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document

Justification

148. This policy is consistent with the Government's policy that where local authorities have identified that affordable housing is required they should set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

149. The Council is justified in requiring the on-site provision of affordable housing wherever feasible in order to maximise the provision of affordable homes on sites of all values. It is recognised that the provision of affordable housing in some parts of the Borough can present challenges to developers because of existing use values. These are often in parts of the Borough where affordable homes are in particularly short supply so insistence on on-site provision is justified to ensure that homes are provided in these locations.

150. The requirement for the provision of affordable housing is justified on the basis that Solihull has a high level of unmet housing need, as evidenced in the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA). This is supported by official data produced by MHCLG and local Borough wide data on housing need.

151. The HEDNA identified a need for 714 affordable homes per annum. The scale of need means that the Council is justified in seeking to secure as much affordable housing as viability allows.

152. The consequences of unmet housing need are significant. These can include homelessness, households in temporary or unsuitable accommodation for longer periods of time and overcrowding. Insufficient affordable housing will also act as an impediment to economic growth where companies experience problems in workforce recruitment and retention.

153. The level of need for affordable housing is therefore high in relation to the level of new provision. Provision of affordable homes is however limited by the proportion of development that takes place, and will continue to take place, on sites below the national affordable housing threshold. The threshold is set in line with NPPF. Setting the threshold of major development, where 10 or more homes will be provided and is justified on the basis that housing developments at and above this level should contribute to meeting the need for affordable housing.



154. Since the adoption of a 40% affordable housing target (Policy H4 in the Solihull UDP, February 2006 and Policy P4 in the Solihull Local Plan, December 2013), a wide range of privately led residential developments have made provision at this level. The implementation of the policy has had due regard to the suitability of each site and its capacity to provide affordable homes. The Authority Monitoring Report highlights the delivery and contribution this policy makes towards meeting the Borough's affordable housing need. It is therefore considered appropriate to the Borough's local circumstances.

155. Policy SMBC/HO3 is set on a Borough wide basis. This reflects the fact that needs cannot always be met where they arise, so use has to be made of the development opportunities that become available. Therefore, any development may need to provide for needs arising in another part of the Borough. The only exception to this may be on rural 'exceptions' sites where housing may be reserved for those with a local connection.

156. The policy applies to all development in the 'C3' use class. The policy will also apply to 'C2' development that provides individual self-contained units that can be counted as part of the Borough's overall housing supply.

157. The Council recognises that provision of affordable housing will result in a cost to developers and so the implementation of this policy requires a reasonable and flexible approach,

reflecting individual site characteristics. Where there are factors that could threaten the viability of developments as a result of site-specific constraints or circumstances these will be considered in negotiations. However, the overall target is that 50%/40% of all new housing built in the Borough will be affordable housing.

158. The Council is justified in adopting its definition of affordability because it provides clear guidance to developers on what is required. The definition will be based on a housing needs survey based on Borough data on incomes and house prices (Solihull Housing Economic Development Needs Assessment 2026), however it is subject to monitoring and review. The Council is justified in defining the tenure of 'affordable' homes on the basis that a spread of tenure options is required to satisfy needs and aspirations of households.

159. Most households in housing need are only able to afford to rent below market level, so the provision of homes at social rent is the most important aspect of affordable housing provision. In view of the greater cost to land value of rented provision, the ability to require a proportion of any affordable provision to be for rent is essential. The objective will be to maximise housing provision for those in most need whilst producing balanced communities and to secure a level and mix of provision which is viable and practicable to the developer.

160. The Council also wishes to promote affordable routes to home ownership. This will mainly be for shared ownership but will include discounted market products as may be required by legislation and planning guidance at the time of determination. The policy therefore provides a range of affordable housing provision.

161. National Planning Policy Framework defines Entry Level Exception sites as sites that are suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home). The Council will support these in accordance with the latest National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy Guidance at the time of decision making.

162. National Planning Policy Framework defines Build to Rent as purpose-built housing that is typically 100% rented out. Schemes typically offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control. The Council will support these in accordance with the latest National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy Guidance at the time of decision making.

163. The policy in this plan does not cover matters relating to how affordable dwellings will be allocated for occupation. Eligibility and priority is governed by the Councils Housing Allocation Scheme. This is a statutory policy required under the Housing Act 1996. However, where Neighbourhood Plans include a policy relating to the occupation of affordable housing (through for instance a priority being given to those with a strong local connection), then due consideration should be given to the neighbourhood plan.

164. The Council will seek to ensure that proposals are not artificially structured to avoid a threshold that would trigger the need for affordable housing to be provided.

Self and custom housebuilding Policy

Policy SMBC/HO4: Self and Custom House Building

1 The Council will encourage developers to make a contribution to Self and Custom Build Housing on residential sites of 300 units or more.

2 The Council expects these plots to be offered for sale with outline planning permission, fully serviced to the boundary, and unconstrained access to the highway for a period of 12 months to those Registered on Solihull's Self and Custom Build Housing Register. The value of the plots will be subject to an independent valuation by a Registered Surveyor. After 12 months the plot will revert to the developer and will be built out for market housing.

165. The Council is justified in encouraging provision for self and custom build housing in order to comply with the Self and Custom Housebuilding Act, the Housing and Planning Act, National Planning Policy Guidance and the needs on the self-build register.

166. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 took forward the requirements of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 further by introducing a 'Right to Build'. This requires local planning authorities to support custom and self-builders registered in their area in identifying enough suitable plots of land to build or commission their own home to meet local demand through their Local Plan.

167. In accordance with the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016 the Government released Ministerial Regulations on 31 October 2016. These Regulations enable the Council to split the Register into two parts. Part 1 of the Register is for those who potentially meet Local Connection Criteria and Assessment of Financial Resource. Applicants who meet these qualifying criteria will have the 'Right to Build' and Policy SMBC/HO4 will create suitable plots of land to build or commission their own home. Part 2 of the Register is for all other applicants. The Council does not have a legal obligation to identify enough suitable plots of land for those on this part 2 of the Register, however it does illustrate a level of demand, which has been considered through the development self-build and custom housebuilding policy.

168. The Council has approved Local Connection Criteria and Assessment of Financial Resources and fees for the Solihull Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

Meeting the housing needs of older and disabled persons Policy

Policy SMBC/HO5: Housing for Older and Disabled People

1 New housing developments will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling size and type to meet the identified needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs, in accordance with current assessments of housing need (HEDNA) and in accordance with the Council's most up-to-date statement of need on older person's accommodation the Council Market Position Statement.

2 All new build housing on major development sites must be built to Category M4(2) (Accessible and Adaptable dwellings) of approved Building Regulations Document M; Volume 1, unless it is built into M4(3) for both market and affordable;

3 At least 5% of housing on major developments must be wheelchair user dwellings to M4(3) of the Building Regulations, for both market and affordable.

4 All developments of 300 dwellings or more must provide specialist housing or care bedspaces in accordance with the Council's most up to date statement of need on older person's accommodation. This policy will be applied flexibly taking into account:

A Site specific factors which may make step-free access unviable;

B The economics of provision, including particular costs that may threaten the viability of the site;

C Whether the provision of housing at these standards would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives that need to be given priority in the development of the site;

D The need to achieve a successful housing development.

5 Applications for specialist housing for older people and younger adults with disabilities will be supported where:

A The site is accessible to shops, amenities and public transport;

B It can be demonstrated that satisfactory primary health care services will be accessible to serve the residents of the development;

C The development makes a positive contribution towards meeting identified needs set out in the Council's most up -to -date statement of accommodation need;

6 Applications for care homes (Use Class C2) for older people and younger adults with disabilities will be supported where:

A The site is in close proximity to shops, amenities and public transport;

B It is appropriate to the needs of the intended occupiers, staff and visitors;

C There are satisfactory primary health care services to serve the residents of the development within reasonable proximity;

D The design meets or exceeds the most up to date standards set by the Care Quality Commission (or successor bodies) regarding the safety and suitability of premises;

E The proposal will facilitate an improvement in the quality of care provided, in particular, including the provision of nursing care

F The development makes a positive contribution towards meeting identified needs set out in the Council's most up -to -date statement of accommodation need;

7 On proposed developments of 300 units or more, the Council will require developers to make a contribution to the Council's most up-to-date statement of accommodation need.

8 Where references to the Building Regulations in the policy change, the requirement shall be taken to refer to the most up-to-date standard.

169. National planning policy requires local planning authorities to plan for the needs of different groups in the community, including older people and younger adults with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions, mental health and physical disabilities and sensory impairments.



170. Planning policy must therefore understand the housing needs of particular groups and this is an important part of the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty.

171. It is important that all older people have good and affordable housing choices. Not all older people need specialist accommodation; many will prefer to remain in their own homes. There is therefore a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings as well as providing specialist housing.

172. An important part of meeting need for older people will be through general purpose new homes built to accessible standards and which are suitable and attractive for 'downsizing'. This will include 'age-restricted general market housing' designed for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly which may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.

173. This guidance supports the Council's adult social care approach. Suitable general needs housing and specialist schemes both contribute to older and disabled people having good housing options. Extra Care, or Housing with Care can be very important in supporting a higher level of independence for longer and providing a more gradual transition as care needs increase. The support of a community and the informal provision of care by residents are also important. This brings long term benefits for both adult social care and the National Health Service. The policy also supports one of the priorities of the Birmingham and Solihull Sustainability and Transformation Partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of the population by working with local partners, particularly focussing on employment, education, housing and work.

174. Extra Care or Housing with Care (use class C2) will provide fully self-contained homes to people who may need care at the time that they take up occupation or may develop a need for care over a period. People will have tenancies or leases which give them security of tenure and the right to control who enters their home. Schemes will have communal spaces and facilities, access to personal care and support 24 hours a day through an agency appropriately registered, community alarms and other assistive technologies and an office for use by staff serving the scheme.

175. Care Homes will provide individual rooms ('care bedspaces') on a licence within a residential building. They will provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. Personal care and accommodation will be provided together as a package with no clear separation between the two. This type of provision includes residential, nursing and dementia care. Care homes will be appropriately regulated for the purpose of 'accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care'.

176. The population growth among adults aged 18-64 with disabilities is less pronounced than among older people, but the Council must develop affordable housing as an alternative to residential care. It is expected that this need will mainly be met by the Council directly commissioning the required provision.

177. Applicants for planning permission should seek pre-application advice to establish whether their proposal will be classified as use class C2 or C3.

Housing Mix

Policy SMBC/HO6: Housing Mix - Market Housing

1 In assessing the housing mix on allocated sites, those situated within identified broad locations and major windfall development sites, the Council will, in negotiations with applicants, seek to secure market dwellings in accordance with the following mix:

A 1 or 2 bedrooms – 45%

B 3 bedrooms – 40%

C 4 or more bedrooms – 15%

2 When considering housing mix in accordance with part 1 of this policy, the Council will have regard to:

A Site size;

B Current indicative Borough-wide needs assessments;

C The existing mix of market housing and local housing demand in the area;

D Accessibility to local services and facilities, and access to public transport in accordance with policies in this Local Plan and the NPPF;

E The economics of provision, including particular costs that may threaten the viability of the site;

F The need to secure a range of house types and sizes in the locality in helping to achieve socially balanced and mixed communities.

3 Further detail and guidance for delivery of this policy will be set out in the Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document.

Justification

178. The NPPF recognises the importance of creating mixed and balanced communities with new housing delivered to meet local needs. The recommended mix of market housing highlighted in the above policy is informed by the outputs of the 2026 HEDNA.

179. The mix of market housing takes account of a range of factors, including modelled outputs and an understanding of the stock profile and the levels of under-occupancy and overcrowding across the Borough. It reflects the latest evidence on need for household types and sizes, so that market provision reflects local Borough demand and promotes and sustains mixed and balanced communities.

180. The assessment of housing mix in the HEDNA is considered at a Borough wide level and is reflective of a similar mix of housing being expected in all areas. This will however be applied flexibly according to specific local characteristics, and the Council will work with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Groups who produce more localised assessments of housing needs that draw recommendations around housing mix. The Council will also have regard to the size and nature of the site and character of the area and the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level.

181. Specific sites, such as town centre development, may result in a different mix of housing being delivered. This will have regard to market demands, economic viability and the nature of the site under consideration.

182. The HEDNA indicates that continued demand for family housing can be expected from newly forming households whilst also showing that the focus of new market housing will be on 1- 2- and 3-bed properties. A mix focused on smaller family homes will also assist affordability, the delivery of market driven starter homes and increase opportunities for older households to downsize and allow turnover of existing larger family homes.

183. The HEDNA also indicates a need for bungalows and indicates that these are likely to meet a particular need and demand in the market sector, with a particularly focus on 2-bedroom homes. Opportunities for bungalows should be designed into schemes were appropriate.

184. The Council will monitor what is being built to ensure that a reasonable mix of market housing is provided across the Borough. In applying this policy, any room designated as a bedroom should comply with the criteria set out in the national space standards, in accordance with national policy.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Policy SMBC/HO7: Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

1 The development of purpose-built HMOs or the change of use of existing homes or non-residential properties to large HMOs will only be approved where:

A The proposal would not materially harm the character or appearance of immediate vicinity of the site;

B A significant HMO presence would not be created within the immediate vicinity of the site.

C The proposal does not result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by way of noise and disturbance; Refuse and recycling storage; Overlooking, loss of privacy or overdevelopment of the site; and any other environmental impacts arising from the occupation of the property as an HMO.

D The proposal provides sufficient communal living, dining and kitchen facilities and amenity space as well as adequate access to natural light and ventilation.

E Appropriate refuse and recycling storage facilities are provided.

F Safe and convenient access is available to public transport and local services. and

G The proposal does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on highway safety, congestion, or parking stress within the immediate vicinity of the site.

2 All applications for HMOs should be supported by a management plan to demonstrate how the property will be maintained and operated.

3 Subject to the introduction of an Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights for the change of use from Class C3 dwellinghouses to small HMOs (Class C4), all relevant changes of use will require planning permission and will be assessed against Part 1 and 2 of this Policy.

Justification

185. The Private Rental Sector (PRS) makes an important contribution to the Boroughs housing market, particularly for those people who cannot afford to buy, including those in affordable housing need. It therefore forms an important part of the Boroughs housing pathways and includes a variety of types of provision including HMOs.

186. The Councils HEDNA (2026) considered the importance of the private rented sector in meeting the Boroughs housing needs and how it provides a well-established role in helping to ensure sufficient housing is accessible to all aspects of the population. In that respect, the HEDNA highlights that the HMO market forms another part of the lower-cost housing offer.

187. The provision of HMOs is classified within one of two categories, falling within separate use classes:

- Small HMOs (Use Class C4) – includes the conversion or development of homes to occupy up to 6 unrelated individuals.
- Large HMOs (Sui Generis) – includes the conversion or development of homes to occupy **more than** 6 unrelated individuals.

188. HMOs for 5 or more occupants are legally required to hold a licence under the respective legislation. This is managed separately to the planning process.

189. The HEDNA indicates that within Solihull, 2025 data estimates that there are around 180 HMOs, with 102 licensed properties accommodating up to 618 occupants. It goes on to indicate that HMOs are distributed across all wards, although higher concentrations are evident in areas such as Elmdon, Bickenhill, Lyndon, Smith's Wood and Chelmsley Wood. It is also acknowledged that it is difficult to robustly evidence the number of small HMOs due to the nature of permitted development rights and licencing requirements.

190. Through a further detailed review of HMO activity in the Borough the Council are also aware that the number of planning applications, Building Control activity and licence applications have suggested an increase in the number of HMOs in recent years. This has triggered the Council to pass a motion in April and June 2026 that required investigation into the option of

an Article 4 Direction covering 'small HMOs'. This work remains ongoing, with the introduction of an Article 4 Direction being subject to legislative requirements and due process.

191. Although private rented homes in general have very similar characteristics to those in home ownership, the introduction of HMOs often draws concerns from local communities for a variety of reasons. This is further recognised within the HEDNA that notes "while HMOs provide an important source of affordable accommodation for workers and smaller households excessive concentrations can affect local character and community balance".

192. The principal concerns raised through consultation on planning applications, engagement regarding the Local Plan and other community involvement processes include:

- the loss of traditional family housing to shared accommodation or HMOs;
- the often-transient nature of residents hence impacting on community cohesion;
- the impact on the provision of local services;
- parking pressures;
- noise and disturbance; and
- the appearance and maintenance of properties.

193. The NPPF remains broadly quiet in relation to the consideration of HMOs. There is a specific expectation within NDMP HO1 that Local Plans should consider the needs of different groups, which includes "People who rent their homes". NDMP HO5 then considers how specific needs can be met and requires Local Plans "to address the housing needs of different groups". Again, this does not explicitly reference HMOs, however it is clear that this represents a specific area of housing need and consideration within the Borough. Policy HO9 makes reference to "Large-scale shared living accommodation", however Annex B explicitly excludes HMOs from this definition. The council understands that HMOs are also not considered to fall within the NPPF definition of "Specialist community-based accommodation" (again as referenced in NDMP HO9) as such provisions appear to focus more towards accommodation with a degree of care or support. Policy SMBC/HO7 is therefore considered to compliment the NPPF and justified in supporting the local consideration of HMO applications across Solihull.

194. It is important to note that the definitions of small and large HMOs relate to the number of persons and not bedrooms. As such any respective application considered under Policy SMBC/HO7 should, as part of a Planning Statement, clearly specify the number of known or expected occupants as well as the number of bedrooms. The Council would expect occupancy to be controlled by way of appropriately worded condition should any proposal be approved.

195. In terms of the immediate vicinity of the site (as referenced in Policy SMBC/HO7), the Council considers this to relate to:

- the street within which the property sits;
- any properties that immediately adjoin the site;
- the streets that immediately adjoin the application street;
- the streets that accommodate properties that immediately adjoin the application site.

- Any respective Conservation Area within which the application site is located.

196. Where the street in which the application property sits is particularly lengthy, consideration will be given to any notable change or variation in property design and street character etc when considering what constitutes a reasonable interpretation of the immediate vicinity.

Homes for Children we Care for

Policy SMBC/HO8: Residential Accommodation for Looked after Children

1 Proposals for children's homes, supported accommodation and other residential accommodation for children we care for and care leavers (including new build accommodation or changes of use) will only be approved where:

A The proposal will retain the appearance and function of the property as a residential home.

B The proposal would not materially harm the character or appearance of the immediate vicinity of the site.

C A materially adverse concentration of properties providing care provision would not be created within the immediate vicinity of the site.

D The proposal does not result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by way of noise and disturbance; Refuse and recycling storage;

E Overlooking, loss of privacy or overdevelopment of the site; and any other environmental impacts arising from the occupation of the property as a home to provide care for looked after children.

F The proposal provides sufficient communal living, dining and kitchen facilities and amenity space; adequate support space for care providers; and adequate access to natural light and ventilation.

G Appropriate refuse and recycling storage facilities are provided.

H Occupiers will have reasonable access to schools, healthcare, recreation facilities, community facilities, public transport and other services appropriate to their needs; and

I The proposal does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on highway safety, congestion, or parking stress within the immediate vicinity of the site.

2 All applications considered under this policy must be supported by an appropriate management plan to demonstrate how the property will be maintained and operated.

3 Particular support will be given to proposals that help address identified shortages within Solihull Borough for specialist, complex needs. This should have regard to the Councils Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy and be secured through the management plan required by part 2 of this policy.

Justification

197. The Council has a statutory duty under Sections 22A-22G of the Children Act 1989 to improve outcomes for the children and young people we care for. A key part of that is securing sufficient accommodation for children and young people and includes ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable and wherever consistent with a child's welfare, that accommodation is available within the local authority area. This is known as the sufficiency duty and forms the basis for the respective reference within the new NPPF (2026). This also helps enable children to remain connected to their families, education, social networks and support services.

198. National planning policy recognises the importance of accommodating children who require social care support. NDMP HO1 is clear that planning authorities should assess the accommodation needs of looked-after children and support proposals which respond positively to identified local needs. In that respect the HEDNA draws on information provided by the Councils 2025-2029 Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy, the Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy Delivery Plan report presented to the Cabinet Member for Children and Education (January 2026), the Delivery Plan appendix, and the Q4 2024/25 update to the Children Looked After Strategy.

199. The HEDNA indicates that at 31st March 2025, only 22 per cent of the beds in independent children's homes located within Solihull were occupied by Children cared for by Solihull, meaning that approximately four-fifths of the Borough's residential capacity is meeting the sufficiency duties of other local authorities. Conversely, of the 39 Solihull children in external residential care, the majority were placed outside the Borough, and 11 children stepped up from a fostering placement to a children's home during 2024/25 — a reflection of complexity of need and the shortage of specialist local provision. During the first half of 2026 however, there have been no moves from fostering to children's homes, a reflection of the work across the Borough to recruit specialist foster carers and to stabilise fostering arrangements. Notwithstanding, whilst the evidence continues to indicate a need it also points to a significant mismatch between the location of homes in Solihull and the children they accommodate.

200. The Councils in-house portfolio will accommodate only a minority of the 39 children currently placed outside the Borough. This therefore suggests an existing need between 2025 and 2029 of c30 additional bedspaces to meet local need. Given the timeframe of this specific aspect of local housing need however and given the wider growth pressures within the Borough this figure may fluctuate during the plan period. Future iterations of the Councils Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategies will clearly indicate rolling levels of need across the Borough having regard to the most up to date information (in accordance with NDMPs HO1 and HO7). The updates to the Sufficiency Strategy will also continue to monitor the significant work already underway to develop relationships with providers already registered in Solihull as well as new providers registering with Ofsted. It will also reflect the ongoing drive to reduce the number of children we care for and to reduce even further the numbers of children living in children's homes.

201. Where need for children's homes remains however, the HEDNA points towards further increasing complexity of need amongst those requiring residential care. The evidence demonstrates particular needs for:

- specialist children's homes for children and young people with more complex needs, including ASD, LD and with mental health presentations;

- small-scale children's homes that enable children to live closer to their communities and support networks;
- homes that assist transitions from residential care to greater independence;
- homes that reduce reliance on out-of-Borough care arrangements.

202. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that additional provision is aligned with locally identified sufficiency needs and contributes positively to the delivery of appropriate accommodation for Solihull children and young people. This will be achieved through collaborative working between the Council's Planning and Children's Services, having regard to ongoing reviews of the Councils Sufficiency Strategy and monitoring of existing supply relative to identified need.

203. In that respect, the Borough has seen a significant uplift in planning consents granted for small scale children's accommodation. This now, more than meets the local need requirement. At this time though many of these permissions are yet to be brought into use and are without Ofsted registration. It is this supply pipeline that the Council will keep under regular review relative to local needs.

204. In accordance with Policy HO9, proposals for new children's homes should be provided in locations that offer a safe and supportive environment, access to services and opportunities, and which maintain the domestic and community-focused character expected of a family home. The Councils policy is intended to complement (not duplicate) NDMP HO9 having regard to local need and circumstances.

205. Whilst not strictly a material planning matter (in accordance with NDMP DM7) the Council also recognises the importance of Ofsted registration advice and in particular the specific requirement to engage early with Childrens Services to identify specific needs and requirements. The Council considers this particularly important and relevant given the evidence pointing towards specific areas of specialist need. The Council would also strongly encourage early engagement with local communities to help manage the integration of services, the preparation of a more effective management plan and maintenance of community cohesion.

206. In determining planning applications, the Council will consult Children's Services regarding identified sufficiency needs, existing local provision and the strategic priorities contained within the Council's Children's Care Sufficiency Strategy. The Council will maintain an up-to-date evidence base to inform decisions and will support proposals that contribute towards meeting identified needs for local children and young people while avoiding undue concentrations of provision within particular neighbourhoods.

207. The provision of a management plan to support proposals considered under this policy is reflective of the requirements under NDMP HO9. In order to ensure ongoing compliance, the Council would expect to include a condition regarding the management plan to any planning consent. This will be particularly important where the proposal includes specialist, complex needs, including ASD, LD and with mental health presentations. Where possible the Council would also encourage disclosure of the intended provider who would be registering with Ofsted to help build early working relationships. The Council would expect occupancy numbers for children in care and the type of provision (where appropriate) to be controlled by way of condition should any proposal be approved.

208. In terms of the immediate vicinity of the site (as referenced in Policy SMBC/HO8), the Council considers this to relate to:

- the street within which the property sits;
- any properties that immediately adjoin the site;
- the streets that immediately adjoin the application street;
- the streets that accommodate properties that immediately adjoin the application site.
- Any respective Conservation Area within which the application site is located.

209. Where the street in which the application property sits is particularly lengthy, consideration will be given to any notable change or variation in property design and street character etc when considering what constitutes a reasonable interpretation of the immediate vicinity.

210. When considering the cumulative impact and concentrations of children's care provisions the council will have regard to whether the cumulative presence of such provisions within the immediate vicinity has resulted in materially different activity patterns, staff movements and service visits, such that the area no longer functions as a typical family residential environment. This will be considered on material planning grounds and may therefore differ to considerations made in relation to Ofsted registrations.

Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation

Policy SMBC/HO9: Provision of Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers

1 The Council will meet the identified need for 50 additional permanent residential pitches to 2043 as set out in the 2026 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). This also includes an allowance for 'undetermined' households where it was not possible to complete an interview during the completion of the GTAA.

2 This total need of 50 pitches is divided into 5-year periods as follows:

A Years 0-5 (2026-30): 23 pitches

B Years 6-10 (2031-35): 9 pitches

C Years 11-15 (2036-40): 11 pitches

D Years 16-18 (2041-43): 7 pitches

3 The need will be met through a combination of:

A Unimplemented planning consents and vacant pitches-

B The intensification or appropriate reasonable extension of existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites; and -

C An updated Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Plan

4 The following criteria will be used in the allocation of future sites and subject to compliance with other policies in the plan and the NPPF, applications which perform

well against the criteria, and which contribute to meeting any identified unmet need, will be considered favourably:

A The size and scale of the site and the number of caravans stationed is appropriate to the size and density of the local settled community, having regard to factors such as the scale and form of existing pitches and sites in the locality, and the availability of infrastructure, services and facilities;

B Any unacceptable adverse visual impact can be adequately minimised;

C The site is not in an area prone to flooding;

D Any unacceptable adverse impact on landscape or local nature conservation designations, ecology, biodiversity, water quality, or the historic environment can be mitigated;

E There is no unacceptable adverse impact on privacy and residential amenity for both site residents and neighbouring land uses, and the site will provide safe and healthy living conditions for site occupants;

F The site has safe and convenient access to the highway network;

G The site is of a sufficient size to support the provision of amenities and facilities for the number of caravans proposed, and will have adequate circulation space within the site for the parking and safe manoeuvring of vehicles and trailers;

H Local services and facilities such as schools, health facilities, fresh food and employment are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, or it can be demonstrated that the site is sustainable in other ways.

5 Applications to intensify or extend existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller Sites that will contribute to meeting the need identified in the 2026 GTAA will also be supported where they meet the above criteria.

Policy SMBC/HO10 - Safeguarding Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

1 The Gypsy and Traveller sites identified and safeguarded in the 2014 Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Plan will continue to be safeguarded for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation purposes for the duration of this Plan.

2 These sites make an important contribution towards meeting accommodation needs and maintaining an appropriate supply of authorised pitches within the Borough.

3 Development proposals that would result in the loss of safeguarded pitches, whether through redevelopment, change of use, or any other means, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer required to meet identified needs and that suitable alternative provision has been secured.

4 The safeguarded sites as shown on the Policies Map will be protected to ensure their continued availability for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

Justification

211. Gypsies and Travellers in England have some of the worst outcomes of any group across a range of social indicators. It is well recognised that they are amongst the most socially excluded groups in society and research has consistently confirmed the link between the lack of good quality sites for Gypsies and Travellers and poor health and education. Accommodation issues contribute to many of the inequalities that Gypsy and Traveller communities experience and are frequently a source of tensions between travelling and settled communities. The Government and the Council acknowledge that these inequalities and tensions must be addressed, but it is crucial to ensure that the planning system is not abused and that development is located in the most appropriate locations.

212. Given the historic lack of suitable and available land outside the Green Belt for new Gypsy and Traveller sites, applications to intensify or reasonably extend existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller Sites that contribute to meeting need identified in the 2026 GTAA will be supported where they meet the criteria set out in the Policy. This will ensure the effective use of land and optimise the use of existing sites. It will also have social benefits as many Gypsy and Travellers wish to live in extended family groups.

213. A number of Gypsy and Traveller sites were allocated through the 2014 Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Plan to help meet identified accommodation needs within the Borough. As part of that process, a number of sites that were located within the Green Belt were removed from the Green Belt through alterations to the Green Belt boundary and allocated specifically for Gypsy and Traveller use. Whilst some of these sites have subsequently been developed, some have not and it is important that they all remain available for use by Gypsies and Travellers as an option to help meet identified need.

214. The Council considers it appropriate to retain these sites as safeguarded Gypsy and Traveller sites within this Local Plan. Their continued protection will help ensure that the existing supply of authorised pitches is maintained and that the Borough is able to support the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community over the plan period. The boundaries of all safeguarded sites are identified on the Policies Map.

Building a Strong Effective Economy

215. Solihull has a strong and productive economy which is important to not only the Borough but also the wider West Midlands. It is home to a number of key economic assets including; Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham Airport, and the National Exhibition Centre.

216. The presence of these key economic assets combined with Solihull's central location on the national motorway and rail networks and the quality of its environment, have been key to its success in attracting investment, particularly in high value-added sectors that include automotive manufacturing, ICT, business and professional services, creative industries and construction.

217. The completion of the HS2 high speed rail link and Interchange Station will significantly boost the attractiveness of the Borough to businesses and investors and present a major opportunity for growth.

218. The Solihull Economic Strategy (2022 to 2032) recognises the Borough's unique position and sets out a vision for Solihull to be the 'UK's best-connected economy – for business, for people, forever'. The local plan provides a framework to help support and deliver this vision.

UK Central Solihull

219. The UK Central Solihull proposals present a unique opportunity on a nationally significant scale to bring forward major growth benefitting from the arrival of HS2 and the HS2 Interchange Station. The UK Central Hub area includes existing key economic assets and the development of the triangle of land bounded by the A45, A452 and the M42, known as Arden Cross including the HS2 interchange station. The proposals will contribute to wider strategic ambitions and in doing so make a substantial contribution to the economic growth aims of not just the Council, but also those of the West Midlands Combined Authority. It will also meet national objectives for achieving economic growth.



220. The UKC Masterplan (June 2013) was one of the first instances that highlighted the opportunity as follows:

> *"At the heart of the proposition is the notion that, by capitalising on one of the strongest economic bases in the country today, the area has the potential to underpin a national economic resurgence. By targeting investment in local infrastructure and committing to deliver an expanded Airport and proposed HS2 station, the benefits for the area and the UK are not only startlingly significant but also very exciting at a time when the country is moving out of one of the worst economic cycles in modern history."*

221. Now that the area's potential has been recognised, it is important that every opportunity is taken to ensure that the vision is realised. To help achieve this an appropriate planning framework is needed that can encourage, guide and facilitate development to take place in a managed and coordinated manner. The approach of this Local Plan recognises that delivery of the area's full potential will take place over many years, and it must remain flexible to ensure that no future opportunities are lost.

222. In 2016 the Council established the UK Central Urban Growth Company (UGC) to lead the delivery of the project. The UGC brought together the key stakeholders from the Hub area to develop a Framework Plan (2018) that illustrates the key components and growth aspirations of the partners, together with an indication of the infrastructure needed to support delivery of the project. The Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan (2019) sets out the vision for the UK Central Solihull Hub Area:

> *'The opportunity at the Hub is unlike any other in the UK; it benefits from a combination of factors that no other national proposal, either in place or planned, can compete with. It is unrivalled in terms of the scale of the development proposals, the infrastructure investment, the proximity to major conurbations'.*

223. The UGC led the early work on the realisation of the Hub's potential which continues to be driven forward by the Council together with key stakeholders and at a regional level by the WMCA.

224. The UK Central Hub is identified within the Solihull Economic Strategy as a key project to deliver the priorities for regeneration and economic growth and the creation of thriving places across the Borough.

225. The WMCA have set out regional objectives for growth and delivery of these which identify the UK Central area and its components as key drivers of economic growth.

226. The West Midlands Futures Green Paper (2024) is an overarching plan which sets out areas of change in the West Midlands and highlights several regionally significant sites. These include the new HS2 stations, growth zone sites, and opportunities along priority corridors, including between the two HS2 stations through East Birmingham and North Solihull.

227. The West Midlands Strategic Growth Plan (July 2025) highlights a series of corridors and zones key for economic growth including the UK Central Gateway which connects East Birmingham to the UK Central Hub in Solihull.

228. The West Midlands SDS is being prepared which will provide a spatial representation of the Growth Plan and include broad locations for housing and employment growth. It is anticipated that the UK Central Solihull proposals will be a significant driver of economic growth as part of

this strategy. The Council has been working with local authorities across the region and the WMCA to bring this forward.

229. The Council Plan 2025 to 2030 sets out an ambition for *delivering a vibrant economy with increased access to opportunities* through economic opportunities relating to the UK Central area.

230. It is clear that the Hub area embraces a unique concentration of economic assets and potential which holds out the prospect of making a significant contribution to the Government's aims for job creation and growth. It supports national policy objectives of building a strong competitive economy (Para 85 NPPF). This plan sets out a policy approach to ensure these growth opportunities are maximised whilst providing a framework to ensure that the resulting developments provide a well-integrated sense of place, with easy access through the area, and is supported by appropriate infrastructure (including GI). The focus of the policy is to ensure these existing, new and expanded assets work together as part of a whole.

Policy SMBC/E1: UK Central Solihull Hub Area

1. The UK Central Hub Area offers the greatest potential for growth in the Borough and includes a major, strategic mixed-use site at Arden Cross which will deliver significant employment and residential development, both during and beyond the Plan period; and will make a significant contribution to the wider West Midlands economy.

2. The Hub Area, indicated on the Policies Map, includes Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham Business Park and Jaguar Land Rover, each of which are key economic assets in their own right. This Plan seeks to support the future aspirations of the key economic assets in a holistic, well-connected way, and to bring forward development of the area surrounding the HS2 Interchange Station at Arden Cross.

3. Development proposals within the Hub will be expected to demonstrate how they achieve the following key objectives:

   A Contribute towards sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the continued success of the key economic assets, and Solihull's attractiveness to investment in high value-added activities, including low carbon technologies and services;

   B Maximise connectivity within and beyond the site through integrated movement and transport networks (including sustainable and active modes of travel), capitalising on the infrastructure advantages of the location with its major new transport hub; and contribute to and co-ordinate transport, energy, power and digital infrastructure provision;

   C Do not impede the provision of infrastructure necessary to support development elsewhere in the Hub Area, or otherwise prevent or hinder development occurring in other parts of the Hub Area;

   D Encourages the use of modes of travel other than the private car

   E Deliver a high quality, strategic green and blue infrastructure network across the Hub area to enhance natural assets;

F Create distinct and unique places with a strong sense of identity, incorporating high-quality design and innovation for development and the public realm, whilst maximising the efficient use of land;

G Support economic growth by supporting employment and supply chain opportunities that benefit businesses and residents across the Borough, and by supporting vibrant and sustainable communities, with an emphasis on health and wellbeing, including those working, living in and visiting the Hub Area and;

H Encompasses sustainability principles, minimising the use of natural resources and maximising low (zero) carbon and renewable energy principles.

Justification

231. The policy reflects the Government's commitment, as set out in the NPPF, to securing sustainable economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the area's strengths and meeting the challenges of global competition and a low carbon future.

232. Solihull benefits from having a prosperous and productive economy, with its advantageous location at the hub of the national motorway network, international connectivity via Birmingham Airport, and the presence of a number of key economic assets that contribute to employment and wealth creation for the Borough and Region. The arrival of the High Speed 2 rail link within the Plan period, and the development of the Interchange Station at Arden Cross present a unique opportunity for growth to be boosted through development within the UK Central Solihull Hub.

233. The policy sets out the key objectives that development will be expected to contribute towards, including sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Growth that is inclusive should demonstrate that the benefits will accrue to all by building on the strengths of communities, ensuring that wealth is more evenly spread and enabling everyone to contribute and participate.

UK Central Solihull Hub Area

234. UK Central Solihull encompasses the main growth areas in the Borough; Blythe Valley Business Park, North Solihull, the Solihull Town Centre, and the UK Central Solihull Hub Area. This policy focusses on the UK Central Solihull Hub Area, which, as a result of the High Speed 2 rail Interchange Station, offers the greatest potential for economic growth in the Borough, and recognises the added value that co-ordinating growth aspirations can bring.

235. The Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan (2018) sets out a vision for the development of a globally renowned business, leisure and entertainment destination providing opportunities to live, work and play as well as a major economic driver for the Borough. The objectives in the HGIP have informed the key objectives in this policy.

236. The Hub Framework Plan (2018) shows how sustained growth could potentially be delivered up to 2047. It estimated up to 77,500 jobs in total over that period, with over 130,000 sqm of office floorspace, 225,000 sqm of industrial floorspace, 90,000 sqm of retail and leisure floorspace and 18,000 sqm of hotel floorspace by 2033. Up to 4,000 new homes could be

provided up to 2047, with about 1,000 delivered by 2033. The Hub Framework Plan is a non-statutory plan which will be updated from time to time in response to changing circumstances.

237. The Hub Growth and Infrastructure Vision (2019)[20] sets out the vision to create Europe's best-connected destination for business, leisure and living and a new outstanding gateway to the UK. Significant additional work has been undertaken over recent years, including updated illustrative masterplans, and design and business case development for key elements of supporting infrastructure. The need for flexibility is important given the time-period over which development is expected to come forward in the area.

238. The Council will expect those promoting development via planning applications to demonstrate, in greater detail, how the criteria in this policy have been met, and to use guidance from overarching strategic documents for the Hub to inform proposals.

239. It is recognised that given the time span for development to be undertaken, and the uncertainties about what may take place in the later years, there needs to be an increased emphasis on monitoring what does come forward, and what the implications are for the plan.

240. Adjacent to the Airport and the NEC is the rail interchange site that serves Birmingham International Station. The APM connecting the HS2 Interchange Station and Birmingham Airport passes through the site and will form an important connection as work continues on redesigning Birmingham International Station into a multi-modal transport exchange providing seamless connections to the new HS2 Interchange Station, Birmingham Airport and the NEC. The Council considers that the site plays a significant role because of its important transport interchange purpose but ancillary or complementary facilities for Interchange, Airport or NEC purposes should be allowed provided they are justified and do not prejudice the use of the site for commuter parking serving the railway station. Development of any land within the site that can be clearly demonstrated as surplus to any of these requirements will be allowed provided that it does not conflict with other policies of this local plan or policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy SMBC/E2: Arden Cross

1 The Council will support and encourage the development of the Arden Cross land as the location of an exemplary high speed rail station, with new public realm that contributes to the creation of a sense of place supporting the potential for commercial, residential and other opportunities, that will be well integrated into the surrounding environment, seamlessly linking to Birmingham Airport and the NEC in a well-coordinated way.

2 The Council will support proposals that include offices, and residential together with associated ancillary uses (including retail, leisure and hotel developments of an appropriate scale) and education-based uses.

3 Land bounded by the M42, A452 and A45, as shown as Site UK1 on the Policies Map, will be released from the Green Belt to accommodate new development that will capitalise on the unique opportunity presented by the UK Central Solihull Hub Area. The exceptional circumstances justifying the removal of the land from the Green Belt are set out in the justification to this policy

4 It will be expected that proposals for development of the area will be promoted in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, taking account of overarching strategic

guidance and plans for the UK Central Hub developed to inform detailed proposals and phasing and that will realise the potential the wider UK Central Solihull area.

Arden Cross

241. The Arden Cross proposals focus on the HS2 Interchange Station and the triangle of land east of the NEC bounded by the A45, A452 and M42 (some 140ha in area) and present an important and unique opportunity to maximise economic and social benefits. The High Speed 2 rail line bisects the site from north to south. As well as the station, the proposals include an Automated People Mover connecting to the NEC, Airport and Birmingham International station, a bus station and surface car parking for 7,500 vehicles[33]. The HS2 Base Scheme would have urbanised a substantial proportion of the site, significantly impacting on its contribution to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. It would fail to realise the potential of the substantial economic and social benefits associated with growth around the transport hub, contrary to Government policy.

242. Several site-level masterplans for the Arden Cross area have been produced since the UKC Masterplan (2013), which demonstrate that the site can make a significant contribution to economic growth. The 2020 masterplan vision featured a number of urban quarters, comprising a residential community with up to 3,000 new homes, an innovation district for employment and higher education, a transportation hub plaza incorporating leisure, retail and cultural attractions with office accommodation, together with a key movement corridor, a parkland area based on the Holywell Brook, based on sustainable transport principles.



243. Muse have been appointed by the consortium of landowners bringing forward the Arden Cross land to develop a new masterplan to guide the future development of the site. They are working in collaboration with the Council and key stakeholders to develop a public private and academic partnership to include the University of Warwick, the NHS, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority, The Department for Transport as well as industrial partners.

[33] Whilst the original scheme included this number, subsequent work has demonstrated that 2,750 spaces will be required initially, expandable to 4,500 if required.

244. Proposals for the site are being prepared in collaboration with these partners to bring forward future proposals for the site including the potential for a unique HealthTech Campus. The proposals are described as a £3.2bn opportunity to drive substantial growth across the West Midlands and the national economy. It has the potential to accommodate 400,000 to 600,000 sqm of commercial floorspace including an innovation district, anchored by the University of Warwick HealthTech Campus, consisting of office, R&D, industrial and warehousing, alongside leisure, retail and hotel.

245. The Department for Transport has confirmed that land around the HS2 interchange station will be available from 2030 to allow commercial development to come forward. This reflects a collaborative approach between HS2, the Department for Transport, and delivery partners to unlock development opportunities around the Interchange Station and accelerate long-term growth. Confirmed land release and the consolidation of land required for car parking will maximise the regeneration potential of Arden Cross.

246. The Arden Cross proposals require land to be taken from the Green Belt. The exceptional circumstances to justify this approach are as follows:

- The proposals are vitally important to the aim of maximising the economic growth and job creation potential of the Hub Area that is of national significance and will meet the NPPF aim to proactively promote economic growth;
- The need to capitalise on the arrival of the High Speed 2 rail station at Arden Cross by maximising the substantial national infrastructure investment at this location;
- Stimulus to local, regional and national growth to support the UK economy, and accommodate growth for the wider West Midlands;
- Significant socio-economic advantages, including additional housing to meet local housing needs, the generation of high skilled jobs, increased GVA output and the agglomeration affect at the key economic assets that make up the Hub area;
- Improved access to employment from East Birmingham and North Solihull, an area of persistently high unemployment;
- The multiple locational advantages of the area with its unrivalled transport facilities make this one of the most sustainable locations for growth in the Borough;
- The land is lower performing in the Solihull Green Belt Assessment 2026
- The importance of maximising the efficient use of the Arden Cross land that would not have been possible if the land were not removed from the Green Belt and the HS2 base case developed instead;
- The proposals are site specific in that they rely on the development of HS2 and its interchange station that will be built in the Green Belt and will address the needs of key economic assets that are of crucial significance to the local and regional economy;
- There are no similar opportunities for growth on this scale outside the Green Belt; and
- The land will be bounded by main roads that provide strong defensible Green Belt boundaries and minimises the impact on the Meriden Gap.

247. There are therefore exceptional circumstances for releasing Site UK1 defined in this plan from the Green Belt.

Policy SMBC/E3: National Exhibition Centre (NEC)

1 To enable the NEC to meet its future aspirations and to drive economic and employment growth, the Council will enable a broad range of developments to enhance the visitor offer, diversify facilities and increase international competitiveness.

2 The Council will support and encourage development needed for operational purposes, such as new or refurbished exhibition halls, transport facilities and other development needed to enable the NEC to enhance its international competitiveness.

3 The Council will also support a broad range of ancillary and complementary facilities needed to enhance visitor experience and support operational needs. These will include hotels, administrative offices, warehouses, catering, meeting space, appropriate leisure and entertainment facilities and other supporting development, provided it is justified in terms of scale, its support for the NEC as a whole, and is appropriately located within the NEC.

4 The Council will also support development proposals where it can be demonstrated that efficient use can be made of the NEC site and that these contribute towards wider placemaking objectives.

5 The Council will support employment led development including industrial and logistics uses where it accords with the other policies of this Plan and the NPPF.

6 The provision of new residential development within the NEC campus will be supported in principle where it accords with the other policies of this Plan and the NPPF.

7 Any redevelopment proposals which would result in the loss of car parking for alternative uses should be supported by a parking review to justify the loss of spaces.

National Exhibition Centre

248. The role of the National Exhibition Centre has evolved since opening in 1976. The NEC is now acknowledged as a nationally significant economic asset as a venue for major exhibitions, events, tourism and leisure and an important driver of the visitor economy. The campus attracts more than 7million visitors per annum, supports thousands of direct and indirect jobs and generates £2billion per year in wider economic impact.

249. In order for the NEC to remain competitive in a market where key competitors are international it will need to respond to changing markets and expectation and provide an improved offer. The NEC aspires to maintain its competitive position in the market for hosting major events but also intends to widen its product offer to encompass a wide range of major leisure and entertainment uses. The NEC aims to fulfil its ambitions by:

- Maximising commercial opportunities of current footfall through enhanced activities to increase dwell time at the NEC site;
- Creating new footfall by introducing new facilities as an attractor to the NEC;
- Providing a more compelling sense of arrival to the Region;
- Increasing reputation and brand of the NEC and the Region through partnerships;

- Providing a site that has appeal across ages, cultures and social types.
- Redevelopment of land currently constituting the Northern car parks
- Potential redevelopment opportunities at the Central campus

250. This will require new investment to refurbish or replace halls, create new floorspace and meet new challenges in meeting visitor expectations and on-site experiences including improved visitor management, upgraded choice in its food offer and greater opportunities for relaxation and entertainment.

251. The NEC are developing proposals for employment led regeneration of underused car parking (northern car parks) for the development of an Industrial and Logistics Hub. There is a need for flexibility to enable a broad range of development that will support operational needs but also a need for ancillary and complementary supporting facilities together with provision for sustainable transport and links to employment opportunities.

252. Any opportunities for residential development at the NEC campus will continue to be supported in principle so long as they accord with other plan policies (locally and nationally). Such uses would benefit from the highly accessible nature of the campus (especially for public transport) and access to services and facilities within the campus and planned for neighbouring sites

253. Developments at the NEC will play a key part in the place-making role that is expected across the Hub Area, especially given its position between the Airport and Arden Cross. Any development at the NEC Campus will be expected to retain and enhance the existing plantation as part of delivering Biodiversity Net Gain.

Policy SMBC/E4: Birmingham Airport

1 The Council will support and encourage the continued sustainable growth and development of Birmingham Airport as a key component of national aviation infrastructure, the principal international gateway to the region and as a key component of the UK Central Hub. The Council will support further development needed for operational purposes, such as passenger and freight facilities, terminals, apron and airfield infrastructure, transport infrastructure and surface access facilities and other development that supports operational needs, makes efficient use of land and which allows the capacity of the extended runway to be maximised.

2 The Council will also support a broad range of ancillary and complementary facilities including hotels, administrative offices, car parks, surface access facilities and other appropriate development required to support the operation and sustainable growth of the Airport and/or serve the needs of air travellers using the Airport. Proposals should be justified in terms of scale and in terms of supporting the Airport function, make efficient use of land and be appropriately located so as not to detract from Airport function

3 Where justified, development for Airport-related uses beyond the Airport boundary will be permitted, providing that it accords with other policies in the Plan, including Green Belt policy (if applicable). This could include opportunities within the allocated employment site (UK2).

Birmingham Airport

254. The UK Aviation Policy Framework (2013) and the Future of UK Aviation: Making the best use of existing runways (2018) place a renewed emphasis on making the best use of airport runways and airport capacity. The most recent Airport Master Plan (2018) forecasts that passenger related air transport movement will grow substantially over the plan period (2018 throughput 13m passengers/year, 2033 throughput 18m passengers/year). The Master Plan also sets out a higher growth scenario for up to 24m passengers/year, and either scenario can be delivered off a single runway, in line with Government policy. Forecasts for airport activity and its continuing development indicate a strong market for new investment as evidenced by the extension to the main runway that was completed in 2014. The airport is currently undertaking work on a new masterplan, expected to be published in 2026. This will continue to forecast significant growth for the airport and explore options for further development to support that growth.



255. In order to enable the Airport to meet its aspirations a variety of operational development will be required as well as ancillary and complementary developments to serve the needs of travelling passengers. Appropriate types of development are described in this policy.

256. The Airport has indicated that there will be a need for more land for ancillary facilities as set out in the policy beyond the Airport area. The Council considers it is appropriate that the airport should be supported to maximise the capacity and capability of the existing extended runway, by accommodating such ancillary facilities outside the airport boundary. This policy provides a framework for responding to this need within the plan period if necessary. The Council would expect any proposals to be set out and justified in a comprehensive masterplan with a view to making the most efficient and effective use of land and to support economic growth of the Borough and wider region.

Policy SMBC/E5: Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)

1 The Council will support JLR to compete and further its success in the global vehicles industry. To achieve this, the JLR site will need to continue to evolve and where necessary expand.

2 The Council will support and encourage the development of JLR within its boundary defined in this Local Plan. This will include a broad range of development needed to maintain or enhance the function of JLR as a major manufacturer of vehicles.

3 Site UK2 on the Policies Map, is being released from the Green Belt to accommodate the Borough's employment development needs and this includes the operational needs of JLR (both directly and indirectly through their component suppliers) which requires a location close to the existing plant.

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)

257. The Council will continue to support the further development and modernisation of the vehicle plant in order to enable its continued success in the competitive global vehicles market. JLR is constrained in terms of its ability to expand by its location within the main urban area. To reflect this and having regard to the vital importance of JLR to the region's economy and to job creation, Policy SMBC/UK2 includes proposals to remove land at Damson Parkway from the Green Belt to support this aim, which at least in part reflects the existing position as development to support JLR operations has already taken place in the Green Belt adjacent to the plant.

258. In addition to meeting JLR needs, this land will provide for local employment opportunities to meet employment needs identified in the HEDNA, as well as for potential ancillary requirements for Birmingham Airport.

Policy SMBC/E6: Birmingham Business Park

1 The Council will support and encourage the development of Birmingham Business Park within its boundary defined in this Local Plan to support its role as a prime employment location and enhance its important role as a high quality, managed business park.

2 Development will be supported that includes offices, light industrial, general industrial and warehousing uses. The Council will expect development to progress in a well-planned way that will maintain the attractiveness of the business park to investors, and that will protect and enhance the environment including the natural environment.

3 The Council will also support a broad range of ancillary or complementary uses needed to enhance the attraction of the business park to occupiers. These could include hotels and commercial/business/service uses of a scale that does not compete with existing or planned facilities outside of Birmingham Business Park.

Birmingham Business Park

259. Birmingham Business Park has an important role in the Borough's economy providing high-quality employment premises. The original Business Park was supplemented by a 9ha allocation in the SLP (2013) - site 31 located to the southwest corner of the business park. This

was intended to supplement the land offer of the business park and potentially accelerate the delivery of new employment opportunities and enable stronger links to North Solihull, especially by public transport. The Business Park will continue to occupy an important role as part of the wider UK Central Solihull Area.

260. A buffer zone of green space was retained between the business park and the residential development along Coleshill Road and Blackfirs Lane. This buffer, together with that existing to the northwest of the business park, is to be positively managed and enhanced. This would facilitate public transport access to the site from North Solihull via a new bus link into the business park from Blackfirs Lane that would also link to the National Exhibition Centre.



Provision of land for Employment

261. Building a strong and competitive economy is a key principle of National Planning Policy set out in Chapter 6 of the NPPF (2024) and Chapter 7 of the updated NPPF (2026).

262. In the NPPF (2024) paragraph 85 is clear that planning policies should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt'

263. Paragraph 86 sets out that planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. This should give regard to the UK Industrial Strategy as well as local and strategic strategies for economic development and regeneration.

264. Policies should ‘set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period’. Regard should be given to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, and identifying locations for uses. Potential barriers to development such as infrastructure should be identified.

NPPF Approach to building a strong, effective economy.

265. Policy E1 of the updated NPPF (August 2026) builds on this approach setting out how development plans should support business investment and employment. It states that plans should take into account local business needs and wider needs and opportunities for economic growth, market signals and priority places for key sectors in the Industrial Strategy and the location of industrial zones. Plans should allocate sites to implement the economic vision and strategy and meet anticipated needs over the plan period taking account of the needs of the economy, and

- clusters, networks and sites and locations for specific uses such as knowledge and data driven and high technology industries.
- Freight and logistics operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.
- The expansion or modernisation of other businesses of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience. There should be flexibility to respond to future needs.

266. National decision-making policies E2 to E4 set out a national policy framework for supporting economic growth proposals. Policy E2 sets out criteria to support business growth and meet the need for business land and premises. National policy for freight and logistics is set out in Policy E3. Policy E4 supports the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas.

Solihull Economy

267. The Borough enters the plan period from a position of economic strength. The economy within the Borough is supported by high levels of economic activity and comparatively low economic inactivity, strong resident earnings and a skilled workforce and productivity levels above the West Midlands average and broadly comparable with the UK average.

268. Solihull's economic growth exceeded the regional and national rate from 2016 onwards and since 2020 the economy in Solihull has grown by 13% in line with West Midlands and England. Five sectors account for 78% of value added within the Solihull economy; professional and other private services, manufacturing, public services, finance and Insurance and construction.

269. In terms of growth in jobs Solihull's total employment grew by 13% over the last two decades with the last decade being particularly strong.

Policy SMBC/E7: Provision of Land for Employment

1 To ensure sustainable economic growth and to meet the Borough's local employment land needs during the plan period 2026 to 2043 provision will be made to accommodate the following:

A Up to 60.1 ha (gross) of industrial and warehousing land

B 6.8 ha (gross) of office land

2 The table below identifies the strategic sites which comprise the Council's supply of main employment land for this purpose, the Council will continue to monitor the supply to ensure the need is met throughout the plan period and to avoid unnecessary release of further Green Belt land. The Council expects non allocated sites to come forward during the Plan period which will provide a range of employment land and premises. The Council also expects the UK Central Solihull sites to contribute towards the delivery of strategic employment land.

3. The Council will support the allocated sites set out in the table for employment purposes. Small-scale supporting facilities may be allowed where needed to specifically enhance or complement business use in the particular business locality and are compatible with sustainable development principles

4 To ensure that an adequate supply of land remains available for employment purposes, sites will be protected for their allocated purposes.

5 Non-allocated employment sites will also be protected for employment use (offices, industrial and warehousing). Alternative uses may be allowed where the following criteria are met:

A The site is relatively isolated from other business premises or is out of place in the context of other neighbouring uses, such as residential; or

B It is clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain the site for its intended business class purpose; or

C In the case of vacant premises, there is no longer a reasonable prospect of attracting business development in market terms;

D The alternative use will support sustainable development principles and will directly support employment locally;

E There is no conflict with other policies of the Local Plan or National Planning Policy (including National Decision Making Policies E1, E2, E3 and E4).

6 The Council will encourage the retention of small and medium sized enterprises, and the creation of new ones, both in urban and rural areas as a key economic driver and to help facilitate growth in a broad variety of locations, including North Solihull as a priority, subject to the following criteria:

A Form, use and scale are appropriate to the character of the particular location

B There is no significant harm to the local environment, including landscape quality and character

C Proposals for home-working are compatible with the character of the local environment and are consistent with the amenity policies of the Local Plan and any made Neighbourhood Plan

D The land or premises are not in the Green Belt, or are compliant with Green Belt policy

E In the case of development in rural areas, it is consistent with other local plan policies and those in any made Neighbourhood Plan, and does not undermine the quality and character of the natural environment

7 The Council will expect development proposals on business sites to include the necessary infrastructure to accommodate high-capacity digital communication.

8 In order to encourage sustainable access to business developments and reduce the need to travel, applicants for planning permission for business use will be expected to demonstrate the anticipated level of employment that will be generated and how this will be of benefit to meet local employment needs.

9 Employment development will not be allowed where it:

A Sterilises natural resources or key sites needed to secure sustainable development, particularly in regard to provision for distributed heat and energy networks, or

B Where it would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses by way of noise, odour, vibration or significant visual intrusion.

Major Employment Site	Available land
Land at Arden Cross (Site allocation policy SMBC/UK1)	140 ha (gross) Potential for 400,000 to 600,000 sqm of commercial floorspace including an innovation district and health tech campus
Land at Damson Parkway (Site allocation policy SMBC/UK2)	57.5 ha (gross), 40 ha (net) - Advanced manufacturing and logistics floorspace Phase 2 - 42 ha (gross) 28 ha (net) Phase 3 – 15.5 ha (gross) 12 ha (net)
Land at the NEC	30 ha brownfield land potential capacity of in the region of 100,000 sqm. for industrial and logistics uses

Justification

270. To identify employment land requirements for the plan period the Council commissioned the preparation of a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2026 (HEDNA). This considered local employment land needs and also analysed strategic employment land need for the Borough arising from the West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Assessment WMSESS (2024).

271. The Local plan provides a policy framework for delivering the identified employment land needs for the Borough and in doing so meeting local, regional and national policy objectives for achieving sustainable economic growth. It seeks to deliver the economic opportunities at the UK Central Solihull Area.

272. The HEDNA considers office floorspace and industrial and warehousing need separately. Industrial and warehousing requirements are considered in terms of local and strategic need.

273. The HEDNA (2026) highlights that:

> *"... future growth will depend on maintaining labour market resilience, improving skills supply, supporting high-value sectors and ensuring that the right mix of employment land and premises is available to accommodate both local business growth and wider strategic opportunities."*

Local employment need - office floorspace requirement

274. Evidence in the HEDNA (2026) indicates it is appropriate to plan for a need of 6.8ha or 34,000 sqm of gross office floorspace. This should be a gross requirement allowing for the loss of or repurposing of office space in out-of-town locations and new provision within the town centre. This reflects evidence of current and future office demand within the Borough which suggests the office market in Solihull in the post pandemic era has moved towards town centre high-quality space offering amenity access and away from larger out of town tradition HQ premises.

275. The office market vacancy rate is 15% which indicates excess supply. Market signals suggest that future demand is likely to be ad hoc rather than driven by continued demand for office space.

Industrial and warehousing need

276. Evidence in the HEDNA (2026) presents the local need for industrial and warehousing floorspace between 44.1ha and 60.1 ha.

277. Market evidence demonstrates a constrained supply position reflected through above average rents, the absence of vacant strategic units and agent feedback identifying shortages of units of all sizes. Cranmore Industrial Estate was identified as one site with higher-than-average rental values for industrial and warehousing reflecting the impact of lack of supply constraining the market and driving up rents. There is also evidence of strong demand for smaller industrial accommodation. Demand is concentrated in higher quality industrial and business space. Policy SMBC/E7 seeks to plan for the upper end of the range of identified need.

278. The strategic employment site need across the West Midlands region has been established in the WMSESS (2024). The study identified areas of opportunity for strategic sites. The Borough is within Area 6 identified in the study.

279. The WMSESS defines strategic sites as sites which are typically over 25 ha or above (or extensions to existing strategic sites of > 10 ha), can accommodate strategic sized industrial and logistics units of > 9,300 sqm in size, and benefit from strong accessibility to the Strategic Road Network.

Meeting the employment land requirement

280. Taking account of existing supply there is a need for in the region of 5.1 ha of office floorspace over the plan period. Within the Borough opportunities for office floorspace are likely to come forward at existing business parks. It is also likely that commercial floorspace delivered at Arden Cross (and any relevant developments in the town centre) will contribute towards the local office floorspace requirement.

281. Taking account of existing supply, the Council consider there is a local industrial and warehousing land need in the region of up to 48.5 ha of floorspace. However, the Council consider this to be the upper end of what is needed given the large-scale development proposals at UK Central Solihull.

282. The WMSESS took account of Phases 2 and 3 of proposed employment development at Damson Parkway which at the time of writing was a Draft Local Plan allocation. The study identified a residual strategic employment land need of between 50 to 125 ha. Analysis in the HEDNA (2026) identifies a gross strategic site need of between 92 and 167ha for industrial and

warehousing. This reflects updated information on the remaining land at Damson Parkway provided by stakeholder discussions. If Damson Parkway is allocated this would lead to a residual strategic employment site need of between 50 and 125ha.

283. However as noted in the HEDNA (2026):

> *"... there is overlap between local and strategic employment land requirements. In practice, sites do not exclusively serve either local or strategic markets, with many employment locations accommodating a range of occupiers operating at different geographic scales. Historic take-up and future demand cannot always be clearly segmented between local and strategic requirements."*

284. In considering the upper end of the requirement based on past completions and the figure for strategic employment land it should be taken into account that within the Borough a significant proportion of historic employment land delivery has occurred on sites with strategic characteristics. The HEDNA notes that:

> *"Blythe Valley Business Park was a Regional Investment Site (RIS); however, much of this delivery has not comprised large-scale strategic units but has instead accommodated office, industrial and business occupiers serving a range of markets, including demand generated from within the local economy."*

285. Such sites demonstrate that strategic employment locations have contributed towards meeting both strategic and local requirements.

286. It is also important to note that further work on the delivery of strategic employment sites to meet the need identified in the WMSESS (2024) will be undertaken through the SDS, the current timetable for this is set out in an earlier chapter of this Local Plan.

287. The Council therefore consider that the provision of employment land within the Borough will meet both Local and strategic needs.

288. The provision of employment land presented by development proposals at UK Central Solihull together with the wider economic benefits relating to the growth and expansion of key assets within the area provide a focus for economic growth within the Borough.

289. The Council consider it is reasonable to expect Land at Damson Parkway and Arden Cross to provide for local and strategic employment land needs. There is potential for development proposals at Arden Cross to deliver in the region of 400,000 to 600,000 sqm of commercial floorspace. Master planning for these sites is still evolving therefore it reasonable to expect further floorspace could be provided.

290. Land at Damson Parkway and Arden Cross are allocated within this Local Plan (Policy SMBC/UK1 and SMBC/UK2) as sites which will be released from the Green Belt for development. The exceptional circumstances to provide justification for release of land at these sites from the Green Belt is set out in these policies. Phase 1 of development at Site UK2 has already been completed for a despatch area and logistics operations centre, approved under very special circumstances. Two further phases of development are expected to provide local and strategic employment land needs, any further needs for JLR and ancillary airport needs. This will provide flexibility in the provision of land to meet employment needs and avoid the necessity to release further Green Belt for development.

291. Whilst masterplanning for UK1 is still evolving evidence indicates that the site is likely to have a role to play in meeting local employment needs, especially later in the Plan period.

292. The Council consider that it is reasonable to expect proposals at the NEC to contribute towards the employment land need. Whilst proposals for the site are evolving and there is flexibility as these are brought forward it is anticipated that in the region of 30ha of land could be redeveloped for an industrial and logistics hub. This site is brownfield land and expected to come forward as a windfall site as set out in Policy SMBC/E1 (UK Central Solihull). This development constitutes efficient use of land contributing towards the delivery of sustainable economic growth. A development of this size would make a significant contribution to the delivery of the industrial and warehousing employment land requirement identified above.

293. The Borough has a range of non-allocated business sites and parks of local significance of varying age and quality. These are important for local employment opportunities to provide a broad range of employment opportunities to provide a range in size and type of premises.

294. Evidence in the HEDNA demonstrates the significant role these play in meeting the demand for industrial floorspace within the Borough accommodating a diverse mixture of industrial and warehouse and office uses. They also support the activities and supply chain associated with economic assets within the UK Central Hub. For example, areas close to Birmingham Airport such as Elmdon Trading Estate continue to attract occupiers with aviation related activities. It is expected given the age of premises on these older business sites there will be opportunities for redevelopment and reuse of land within the plan period.

295. The Council recognise the importance of ensuring that existing employment land is protected. Solihull does not have substantial amounts of previously developed land that would be suitable or available for employment purposes. It is therefore important to protect the limited supply of employment land and premises from alternative uses, including types of economic development that would be more appropriate in a town centre environment.

296. The policy sets out the particular circumstances when alternative development may be accepted. These include, for example, small, isolated premises in predominantly residential surroundings that render the premises out of context and better able to support sustainable development principles in an alternative use. These criteria are set in the context of supporting the economy.

297. Mixed business uses may be enabled on employment sites where this will help to support sustainable development principles. Business class uses should predominate. Other uses of an ancillary nature may be enabled provided they are small scale in the context of the mixed-use development and justified in terms of supporting the business function of the mixed-use development and do not conflict with National Planning Policy, particularly in regard to its aims of supporting sustainable economic development and growth and supporting town centres.

298. Small and medium sized enterprises will be encouraged in all areas of the Borough, including rural areas, North Solihull and within established business sites, through redevelopment and creation of other opportunities for the development of small business space, provided they meet the criteria in the Policy that seek to protect the environment, local amenity and the Green Belt.

299. Digital connectivity and high-capacity communication networks are key to commercial success in the 21st Century. Solihull is committed to increasing digital capacity across the Borough to help in remaining competitive, attracting inward investment, reducing inequalities and remaining a leading centre of enterprise.

300. It will be important to ensure that any proposals to redevelop employment land support the delivery of economic development and accord with national planning policy E2

301. The rural economy has an important function in supporting the need for small and medium floorspace. National Planning Policy E3 sets out a framework for supporting the rural economy.

Protecting Green Belt Land

Introduction

302. Around two-thirds of the Brough is made up of land designated as Green Belt. There are few other places in the country where conurbations or cities the size of Birmingham/Solihull and Coventry are separated by Green Belt in quite the same way as occurs in the West Midlands. This strategically important area is known as the Meriden Gap.



303. National policy makes clear that established Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances and only when a local plan is being prepared or reviewed. It also describes the circumstances when built and other development should be considered as an exception to inappropriate development.

304. The pressure on the Green Belt in Solihull has been intensified by the requirement for development emerging from housing needs; the lack of vacant and derelict land in the Borough; and local requirements for employment land, waste management and mineral extraction. This is reflected both in the significant number of sites in the Green Belt in the SHELAA, and the paucity of sites in the urban area.

305. Significant adjustments to Green Belt boundaries are required in the UK Central Hub Area to provide an appropriate planning framework for the Council's ambitions for the HS2 Interchange and adjoining area, and to meet the needs of the key economic assets within the area. Further significant adjustments are required elsewhere to meet local housing and employment land needs. Where land is to be deleted from the Green Belt as part of this Plan, exceptional circumstances are considered to be met to justify the change in boundaries, as required by the NPPF.

National Planning Policy Changes

306. The 2024 NPPF saw what some have described as the most fundamental reform to Green Belt policy since it became a national planning policy in the 1950s. This included the introduction of the concept of Grey Belt[34], and since then reforms in the 2026 NPPF have seen further significant amendment (for example in relation to development near to railway stations) which collectively means that Green Belt designation is less of a barrier to development than it once was.

[34] See the glossary in this document for an explanation of how Grey Belt is defined.

307. These changes in national policy will either need to be directly addressed in this plan or will have an indirect impact as a result of how the determination of planning applications will be influenced by the new NPPF.

Green Belt Assessment (GBA)

308. Given the significant changes to national Green Belt policy, it was considered that the Council's 2016 GBA would not provide a suitable evidential basis for considering Green Belt matters and therefore a fresh GBA was undertaken, taking into account the 2024 NPPF and 2025 PPG. This culminated with the publication of the new GBA in July 2026.

309. The GBA considers all of the Green Belt in the Borough (at either a parcel or broad area level) and assesses the area in question against the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, namely:

A. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

B. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

C. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

D. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

E. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

310. National policy sets out that it is only purposes A, B and D that are to be taken into account when assessing whether land should be considered as Grey Belt or not.

311. The NPPF (paragraph 146) states that when considering whether exceptional circumstances exist, meeting needs can be such a circumstance and Green Belt boundaries should be reviewed:

> *"to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan."*

312. To assist in assessing whether this test is met, the GBA sought to identify areas of fundamental importance. It noted[35]:

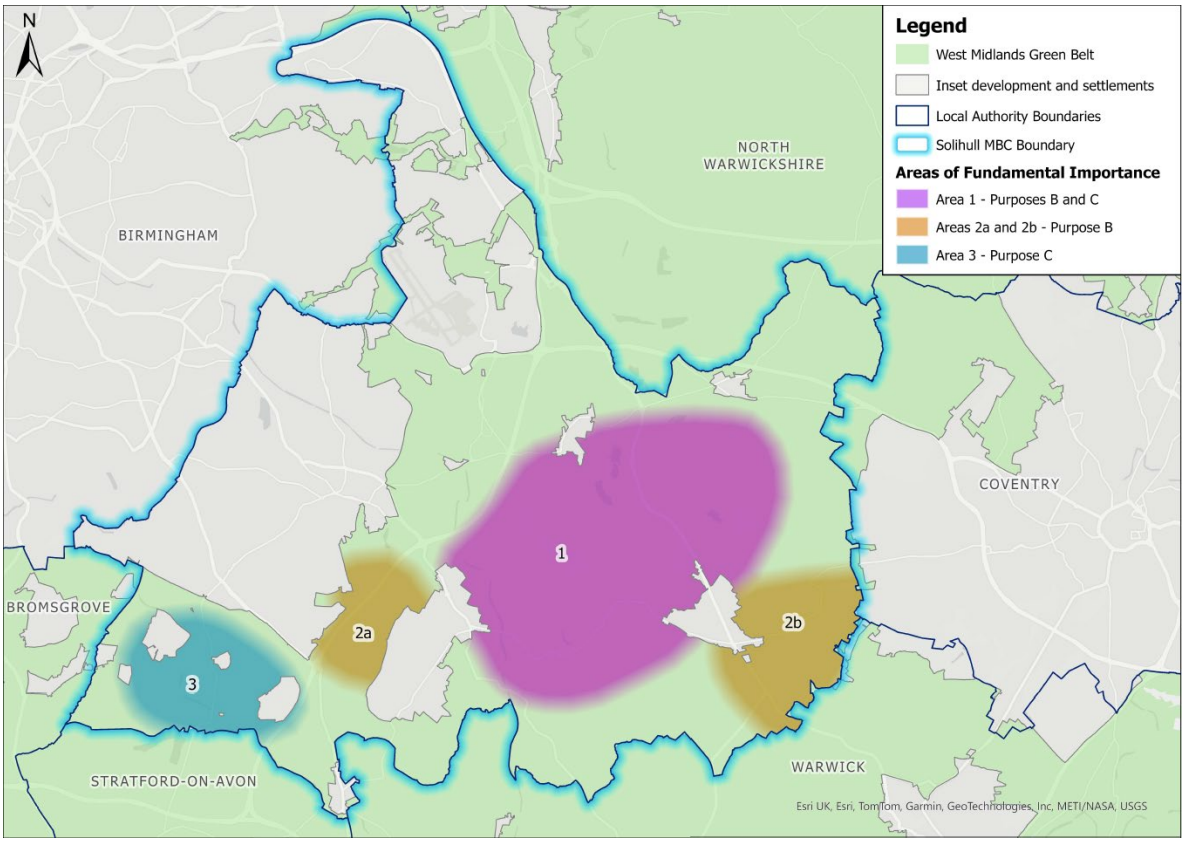
> *"Areas of 'fundamental importance' are those which perform a strategically important role against the Green Belt purposes within the context of the wider Green Belt across the plan area and are therefore considered the most sensitive to change."*

313. The GBA went on to identify three such areas as follows:

- Area of Green Belt within the Meriden Gap (Area 1)
- Areas of Green Belt located between towns (Areas 2a and 2b)
- Areas of Green Belt to the south and southwest of Solihull/Shirley (Area 3).

[35] Section 6.1

314. These are indicated in figure 11 of the GBA which is reproduced below:



Policy SMBC/GB1: Green Belt Boundaries

1 Land designated as Green Belt in the Borough is identified on the Policies Map. Development proposals within the Green Belt will be subject to consideration against the NDMPs of the NPPF.

Policy SMBC/GB2: Limited Infilling in Villages Lying in the Green Belt

1 For the purposes of NDMP GB7 (1)(c), the following settlements are considered to be villages where limited infilling may be considered as not inappropriate:

A Chadwick End

B Barston

C Berkswell

D Bickenhill

E Eastcote

F Illshaw Heath

G Temple Balsall

2 For the purposes of NDMP GB7 (1)(c), limited infilling shall be interpreted as the filling of a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage with not more than two dwellings.

Amending Green Belt Boundaries Around Settlements as a Result of Recent Permissions for Development

315. The now withdrawn 2020 Draft Submission Plan included significant proposals for Green Belt land release of some 574ha[36]. Following submission of the plan for examination, a number of planning applications were submitted for many of the sites to be allocated. These ranged in size from proposals for around 80 dwellings, to some that were just short of 1,000 dwellings. Initially, these submissions were made on the basis of dealing with the technical development management issues that inevitably arise as a result of large-scale developments, so that when the plan was adopted (and the land removed from the Green Belt) they could be determined accordingly. As the examination of the plan became protracted, some applicants amended the basis of their applications to make a case for demonstrating 'very special circumstances' (VSC) for the proposed development that they then invited the Council to determine.

316. Following the publication of the 2024 NPPF the basis of some of these submissions was amended further to argue that under the new approach to Green Belt policy, the sites ought to be considered as Grey Belt, and with other criteria in paragraph 155 of the NPPF being complied with, the proposals should be viewed as not being inappropriate.

317. The Council has sought to determine such applications is a positive manner, where justified. This has therefore resulted in a number of planning permissions being in place (with others having a resolution to grant that are likely to be converted into permissions before this plan is adopted). There is no reason to believe that these permissions will not, in due course, be implemented, and as this occurs this will create anomalies in the boundaries of the Green Belt around the rural settlements or around the urban edge.

318. Similar considerations are also applicable to more speculative applications that have been submitted in relation to Green Belt sites that weren't necessarily included in the 2020 plan as an allocation but nevertheless have now got permission. They too will create anomalies in the boundaries of the Green Belt around the rural settlements or around the urban edge.

319. To address these potential anomalies, it is proposed that the Green Belt boundaries be amended to exclude the sites where permission has been granted. These are considered in more detail on a site-by-site basis in the settlement chapters. However, the over-arching exceptional circumstance for this approach is common to all and is set out as follows:

- The strategic purposes of the Green Belt would continue to be met by the surrounding Green Belt land.
- With the implementation of these permissions, the settlements will evolve into a more substantial and permanent built-up areas, such that the additional developed area no longer meaningfully contributes to Green Belt openness.
- Were the existing washed-over designations to remain they would create an illogical Green Belt boundary, with Green Belt policy applying to predominantly urbanised land rather than to open countryside.

[36] Paragraph 421 of the plan indicated this would be 140ha for the HS2 Interchange, 94ha for the employment allocation at Damson Parkway and 340ha for the residential allocations.

- A clearly defined inset boundary can provide a stronger and more enduring Green Belt edge than what would be a washed-over approach.
- Defining a settlement boundary provides greater certainty and clarity for decision-making, enabling appropriate infill, redevelopment and housing delivery within a planned framework.

320. The permissions simply reinforce that those sites are now committed and that the Green Belt boundary should be realigned to reflect the adopted planning strategy.

321. For the allocations in the 2020 plan that have not received planning permission, they are included (if still appropriate) as an allocation for a proposed development as set out in the settlement chapters.

Washed Over Settlements

322. Alongside the GBA a Green Belt Village Study (GBVS) was also published in July 2026. The principal purpose of this study is to objectively assess the extent to which villages washed over by the Green Belt meet the NPPF requirements of paragraph 150:

> *"If it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt."*

323. Such an assessment was considered important since it was not considered in detail when the 2013 SLP was drawn up and the current position remains from a period when the (then) relevant national policy considerations were in the 1995 PPG2 – Green Belts.

324. The study looked in detail at the following 'washed over' settlements

- Barston
- Berkswell
- Bickenhill
- Chadwick End
- Cheswick Green
- Eastcote
- Illshaw Heath
- Millisons Wood
- Temple Balsall
- Tidbury Green

325. It should be noted that of the above, Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green are already partly inset from the Green Belt. This is largely as a result of the treatment of so-called long-term housing sites in the 1997 and 2006 Unitary Development Plans where two sites at Tidbury

Green and one at Chadwick End were treated as potential future housing sites and so weren't designated as Green Belt, whereas the rest of each settlement was washed over with the Green Belt designation. All three of these sites have now been built out and this creates somewhat of an anomaly with the settlements where parts of the area are (washed over) Green belt and parts are not designated Green Belt.

326. The study recommends that the whole of these two settlements should be inset from the Green Belt and additionally the small settlement at Millison's Wood should be inset.

Policy SMBC/GB3: Insetting Settlements from the Green Belt

1 The Green Belt boundaries around the following settlements are revised so that all of their built-form will be inset from the Green Belt:

A Cheswick Green

B Millison's Wood

C Tidbury Green

327. This approached is justified as:

- The strategic purposes of the Green Belt would continue to be met by the surrounding Green Belt land.
- The settlements have evolved into a substantial and permanent built-up areas, such that its developed character no longer meaningfully contributes to Green Belt openness.
- The existing washed-over designation creates an illogical Green Belt boundary, with Green Belt policy applying to predominantly urbanised land rather than to open countryside.
- A clearly defined inset boundary can provide a stronger and more enduring Green Belt edge than the current washed-over approach.
- Defining a settlement boundary provides greater certainty and clarity for decision-making, enabling appropriate infill, redevelopment and housing delivery within a planned framework.
- In the case of Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green this removes the current anomaly whereby parts of each settlement are treated differently and thus the new boundary will be logical.

328. The above justification contributes to the exceptional circumstances needed to justify making changes to the Green Belt boundary.

Promoting Sustainable Travel

Vision Led Approach

329. The National Planning Policy Framework promotes a vision-led approach to transport planning. This will help to ensure that transport and land use planning issues are integrated from the earliest stages of development. The previous transport approach was to 'predict and provide', where likely traffic impacts were predicted or modelled and then infrastructure was provided to mitigate those impacts. The vision-led approach seeks to shape patterns of growth and movement that support sustainable and well-connected places. The Council will work with transport authorities, infrastructure providers and developers to ensure that development contributes to achieve this approach which will support the delivery of the spatial strategy and wider Local Plan objectives.



The Council's Vision Led Approach

330. A simple vision of places where people will be able to live without depending on their cars. To achieve this, we will support the development of business and housing proposals that:

- Are tied into the existing travel networks so people have a choice when it comes to deciding how to travel.
- Consider connections between more than one development site to allow for through trips on foot, on bike or by bus.
- Create places where people with reduced mobility or who are elderly or infirm can live and travel independently.

- Provide access to bus and rail networks through connections to existing infrastructure or offering new infrastructure. This may be as simple as providing additional seating. Our population is forecast to grow in age.
- Provide safe routes for active travel and connect to existing networks.
- Reduce the need for travel and the distances that people travel.

331. Proposals that are forecast to generate a significant rise in trips should provide a transport assessment or transport statement that shows how the new proposal will impact cycling, roads and junctions, public transport and walking along with any other transport impacts. This will enable us to decide if the impacts of the new proposal are manageable within the existing network and enable us to draw up a mitigation plan to implement alongside the new proposal.

332. Those new proposals that do generate a significant rise in trips should be located in a sustainable location, close to existing services and facilities that will reduce the reliance on the private car. These will normally (but not exclusively) be situated near existing local centres, district centre or the three larger centres in the Borough (Chelmsley Wood, Shirley and Solihull). The new proposals should be adjacent to and connected to the bus, cycle, rail, and walking networks either through use of the existing network or adding to the existing network, for example through extensions to existing bus links or providing new cycle parking opportunities. Where shortfalls in service provision are identified contributions may be deemed appropriate through Section 106 agreements to support enhancement to services.

333. New proposals will also need to consider highway access, impacts on public rights of way, onsite parking and where relevant existing highway safety concerns.

334. Successful delivery of our Vision led Transport Approach will:

- Address the objectives in the Local Plan and Solihull Connected.
- Extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough.
- Improve safety on our transport network.
- Improve the quality of life in the Borough.
- See that all the Borough can access health, employment, leisure, education and retail opportunities.
- Support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity.

Transport Strategy

335. The West Midlands Combined Authority, has through its 'Movement for Growth' strategy set out the strategic direction for the region, while the Council's transport strategy 'Solihull Connected' (adopted 2023) sets out the strategic vision for managing the quality and performance of the transport system within Solihull and connections with the rest of the region and the UK. The Combined Authority is in the process of preparing a new Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands.

336. Solihull Connected has four primary objectives:

- Objective 1: To make the transport network accessible to all people
- Objective 2: To help the economy grow in a way that is equal and fair for everyone

- Objective 3: To be safe and secure for all users
- Objective 4: Transport will contribute to improving the quality of life in our Borough

337. Both 'Movement for Growth' and Solihull Connected support an approach of expanding the public transport network in the Borough, developing bus, bus rapid transit, rail and ultimately Metro.

338. Planning applications that include upgrades to the following to support the transport policies in the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and Solihull Connected transport strategy will be welcomed:

- Accessibility and the spread of step-free routes.
- Bus routes and bus waiting facilities. This may include on site roads that connect developments, bus priorities, turning circles and/or the vehicles themselves.
- Cycle routes and cycle parking.
- Measures to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions from transport.
- Measures to improve the resilience of the transport network during periods of extreme weather conditions.
- Mobility hubs particularly at local centres or the district centres.
- Railway stations.
- Road safety.
- Walking routes including public rights of way and/or canal towpaths.

339. The UKC Hub will be one of the country's most strategically important development sites and one of the region's major drivers of economic growth. The ambition is to create a globally renowned and internationally connected destination for business, leisure and living, facilitated by the Council with wider support from local, regional, and central Government. Developments that form part of the UKC Hub, will be expected to contribute to the transport strategy for the area.

340. To inform transport policy, the following documents have been adopted by the Council:

- Cycle & Walking Strategy (2021)
- Local Cycle Walking Investment Plan (2021)
- Solihull Connected (2023)
- Air Quality Strategy (2024)
- Electric Vehicle Strategy (2025)
- Climate Change Action Plan (2026)
- Highway Network Management Plan (2026)

341. In addition, several partners produce documents that have an important influence on how travel and transport will evolve in the Borough. Some of these are listed below:

- Birmingham Airport: Surface Access Strategy
- National Exhibition Centre: NEC Masterplan
- National Highways: Road Investment Strategy Delivery Plan
- Network Rail: Long Term Planning Process
- Transport for West Midlands: Local Transport Plan (Movement for Growth) and West Midlands Freight Strategy
- West Midlands Rail Executive: West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy

342. The development of policies in this section of the draft local plan have had regard to Solihull's role in the wider area recognising that both national road and rail networks cross through the Borough.

343. The Borough Portrait and Challenges identify the local transport issues in the Borough. This includes the difficulty in delivering sustainable modes of transport in the rural parts of the Borough, due to the number of small settlements and dispersed population, whilst many of the Borough's roads suffer from congestion during peak hours. As well as creating social exclusions these issues can in turn detract from Solihull's attractiveness as a place to live, work and learn whilst also supressing its economic potential. Effective land use planning can, however, make a positive contribution towards rebalancing the transport system by influencing the location of development; supporting rural transport and encouraging take up of sustainable modes of transport.

Cycling and Walking Strategy

344. To support Solihull's Transport Strategy 'Solihull Connected' the Council has adopted a Cycling and Walking Strategy for the Borough.

345. Cycling and walking are recognised as important components to reduce congestion, improve air quality and support better physical and mental health. Cycling and walking have the real potential to enhance the vibrancy and special character of our Borough whilst providing opportunities to enhance connectivity and accessibility.

346. The Cycling and Walking Strategy presents the Council's overall approach to active travel in the Borough. The strategy sets out our vision for how we will deliver cycling and walking infrastructure, how we will improve the capability and confidence of our residents to cycle and walk more often and how we will ensure new developments cater for cycling and walking.

347. The Cycling and Walking Strategy is a key step in our approach to accommodate growth in travel demand on our network while maintaining Solihull's special character.

348. Purpose of the Cycling and Walking Strategy:

- set the overall vision for cycling and walking in Solihull
- set a clear standard for cycling and walking infrastructure
- ensure major developments consider active travel - more sustainable approach to transport
- embed cycling and walking initiatives into local policy

349. As part of the strategy, we have produced a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). LCWIPs identify cycling and walking improvements required at a local level. The Solihull LCWIP enables a long-term approach to developing a local cycling and walking network within the Borough. The aim of the Solihull LCWIP is to improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the Borough over the next ten-year period. Consideration may also be given to, where appropriate, enhancing PROWs to be bridleways not just footpaths.

350. The Council notes that NDMP TR3 relates to locating development in sustainable locations and a further local plan policy is not considered to be required.

Policy SMBC/TM1: Rapid Transit

1 The Council will support the principle of proposals for the delivery of Metro and Sprint as part of a network of rapid-transit lines across the West Midlands, particularly along the following corridors in the Borough that provide access to UK Central Hub:

A From Digbeth and the east of Birmingham to UK Central Hub.

B From Blythe Valley to central Solihull, UK Central Hub and Chelmsley Wood.

C From Hall Green to central Solihull and UK Central Hub.

2 Where development proposals sit either within or adjacent to these corridors, they will be requested to contribute towards the delivery of Metro or Sprint (as appropriate). In addition, developments will be expected to design in access opportunities to ensure connectivity to rapid transit infrastructure is maximised from the outset.

Rapid Transit

351. An efficient and accessible inter-connected rapid-transit network can play a vital role in improving the current transport system both locally and regionally whilst accommodating forecast increases in travel demand. The network can also help support wider urban regeneration and, in a more local context, go some way to reducing the transport severance between North and South Solihull.

High Speed 2 Rail

352. The HS2 Act received Royal Assent in February 2017, with the Notice to Proceed issued in April 2020 and construction works are now underway; with the line expected to be open between 2036-39.

353. The Act provides the powers and land necessary to construct and operate High Speed 2. Detailed matters relating to design and construction arrangements will be submitted to, and considered by, the Council as the approval body (termed 'Qualifying Authority') under the HS2 Planning Regime.

354. However, the Act also 'disapplies' many aspects of national, regional and local legislation and policy, replacing it with that which is more directly relevant to the design and delivery of the railway. Specific grounds are set out upon which HS2 related applications can be considered, conditioned or refused; meaning that the policies set out in this Plan cannot be applied by the Council in the usual manner when considering such applications.

355. The Council will continue to work with HS2 Ltd on measures to minimise impacts on communities and the environment as a result of the construction of the railway and associated infrastructure.

356. Other policies in the plan (most notably Policy SMBC/E1), provide the policy framework for considering development proposals associated with the railway, such that no further policies are required in this chapter.

Bypass Improvement Lines

357. The 2006 UDP sought to safeguard the lines of three longstanding potential by-passes to Balsall Common, Hockley Heath and Knowle. The 2013 SLP concluded that the need to retain safeguarding of the lines was no longer justified. In relation to Hockley Heath and Knowle, there is nothing to suggest that this conclusion needs to be revisited. However, this is not the case in relation to Balsall Common.

358. The traffic associated with the HS2 Interchange site (and wider Hub area), and growth potential south of Coventry, especially when combined with traffic generated from new housing in the area, is likely to have an effect on the A452 as it passes through Balsall Common. This justifies the provision of an alternative route that could accommodate through traffic and provide a basis for new residential developments to access the network in an appropriate manner. The Balsall Common settlement chapter gives more detail in relation to this.

Promoting Healthy Communities

Health and Wellbeing

359. The built and natural environment is a key determinant of health and wellbeing. The NPPF states that one of the three overarching objectives of the planning system is supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities. It includes specific requirements for planning policies and decisions to promote healthy, inclusive and safe spaces. The health of Solihull residents is generally good, but health outcomes are not equal across the Borough. High levels of deprivation are associated with persistent inequalities in health. This means that the Local Plan must play a stronger role in improving the wider determinants of health, including housing, green infrastructure, active travel, access to opportunities, services and facilities, and the quality of the local food environment. The Council is committed to improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities across Solihull. This is set out in:

- The Solihull Council Plan for (2025-2030) - based on the belief that a thriving economy, environmental sustainability and health and wellbeing go hand in hand;
- The Solihull Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024-2032) - published by Solihull Health and Wellbeing Board which provides a forum in which key leaders from the local health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population. The Strategy is developed using various sources of information, including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA);
- The Health Inequalities Strategy - sets out Solihull's aims to reduce health inequalities over the next seven years. It draws on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System Health Inequalities Programme and prevention priorities. The objective of the strategy is to reduce health inequalities by supporting those population groups at greatest risk of poor outcomes. Development proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to reducing health inequalities, particularly in areas identified through the JSNA, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, deprivation indices and other local health evidence. Health Impact Assessments will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Policy SMBC/HC1: Health and Wellbeing

1 The Council will work with partners to create healthier places, improve wellbeing and reduce health inequalities across the Borough.

2 Development proposals will be supported where they demonstrate how they will contribute to improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities, having regard to local evidence including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and other relevant health evidence.

3 Particular emphasis will be given to development that:

A Contributes to reducing health inequalities, particularly within areas experiencing poorer health outcomes or higher levels of deprivation;

B Supports healthy, active and independent lifestyles through access to facilities, employment, education, open space, green infrastructure, sport, recreation and opportunities for everyday physical and social activity;

C Applies Active Design principles promoting direct walking connections to services and active travel connections to schools, and centres;

D Provides safe, attractive and inclusive environments which promote social interaction, community cohesion and personal wellbeing;

E Supports the delivery of healthy, adaptable and accessible homes suitable for people of all ages and abilities incorporating accessible neighbourhood design and lifetime homes principles;

F Improves access to primary care, community health services and other health-supporting infrastructure where a need arises from development;

G Maintains safe and appropriate levels of air quality, informed by appropriate assessment and adequate mitigation where justified by the scale or nature of development; and

H Avoids or mitigates adverse impacts on health arising from other pollutants (in addition to those considered under G), noise, overheating, poor accessibility, social isolation or other environmental factors.

Policy SMBC/HC2: Health Impact Assessments.

1 Relevant planning applications will need to be supported by an appropriate Health Impact Assessment.

2 Where any adverse health impacts are identified, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate how these will be addressed and mitigated.

360. The Council's local validation criteria will incorporate the need for HIAs in accordance with this policy (and to satisfy NDMP DM2: Information requirements), and it will include the criteria set out in the following paragraphs.

361. A proportionate Health Impact Assessment (HIA), or health impact screening assessment, will be required where a proposal is likely to have significant health and wellbeing implications.

362. Health impact screening will be required for all major development proposals. The screening process will determine whether a Rapid HIA or Full HIA is necessary and the impacts to be assessed.

363. A Rapid HIA will normally be required for:

- residential development of 50 dwellings or more;
- non-residential development exceeding 1,000 sqm;
- development which may have significant impacts on local health and wellbeing.
- development in areas of significant health deprivation or known health inequalities

364. A Full HIA will normally be required for:

- residential development of 150 dwellings or more;
- development exceeding 5 hectares;
- major mixed-use developments;

- proposals where the Council considers the health impacts to be potentially significant, complex or cumulative.

Health infrastructure planning

365. Major residential development should demonstrate that sufficient primary care, community health, mental health and social care infrastructure capacity exists. Where development would place additional demand on health infrastructure, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how those impacts will be addressed through on-site provision, financial contributions, partnership working or other appropriate mitigation measures.

366. Opportunities to expand Solihull Hospital will be supported by the Council in principle, including opportunities to expand existing services to support the needs of the Borough. Any development proposals will be considered in accordance with NDMP HC4.

Hot Food Takeaways

367. The Council will determine applications for hot food takeaways in accordance with NDMP HC5: Hot food takeaways.

368. The Council will investigate whether evidence exists as to whether a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local heath, pollution or anti-social behaviour.

Air Quality

369. NDMP P3: Living conditions and pollution, includes specific reference to how matters of air quality should be considered as part of the decision-making process. This requires development proposals to have regard to appropriate local evidence, including the most recent Air Quality Strategy (adopted in 2024 for Solihull). To help demonstrate compliance, relevant applications will need to provide sufficient evidence that assesses the likely impacts on surrounding air quality alongside any relevant mitigation including, where appropriate, damage costs that can be secured either via condition or Section 106 agreement. Necessary mitigation, where justified, should have regard to the scale or nature of development.

Justification

370. As Solihull's ageing population grows the emphasis upon creating environments that support healthy ageing becomes more important. Responding to the needs of older residents will play an increasingly important part in the shaping Solihull as a place embracing the principles and features of an 'age friendly city' and creation of dementia-friendly environments. National planning policy establishes a framework for creating healthy, safe and inclusive places. However, local planning authorities also have an important role in responding to local health challenges, planning for health infrastructure, promoting healthier food environments and ensuring that major development proposals consider their potential impacts on health and wellbeing.

371. Particular attention will be given to areas experiencing poorer health outcomes, lower healthy life expectancy and higher levels of deprivation. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how proposals have responded to local health evidence and how opportunities to improve health and wellbeing have been incorporated into the design and delivery of development.

372. Development proposals should be informed by local evidence relating to deprivation, life expectancy, healthy life expectancy, obesity, physical inactivity, mental wellbeing and access

to services and opportunities. In assessing development proposals, particular regard will be given to opportunities to improve health outcomes, especially within the Borough's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods

373. Health Impact Assessments provide an important mechanism for identifying the likely health effects of development and ensuring that opportunities to improve health outcomes are maximised and negative impacts appropriately mitigated. Assessments must demonstrate how potential adverse impacts have been avoided or mitigated and how opportunities to improve health outcomes have been maximised.

374. The provision of and access to health facilities and services has a direct effect on health. It is therefore crucial to ensure that health care is available and accessible to those who need it. New planned housing should be aligned with health infrastructure planning to avoid infrastructure issues and the overburdening of existing health provision. Planning for social infrastructure should consider what the area's wider needs are and provision should attempt to address existing as well as projected needs.

Open Space

375. Open space is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as:

> *"All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity".*

376. Open spaces include green spaces such as parks, allotments, natural habitats, playgrounds and amenity space.



377. Publicly accessible open spaces are a key component of the Borough's multifunctional green infrastructure network. They have many roles including providing for recreation and physical activity; encouraging social interactions; promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing and quality of life; providing facilities for a child's development; encouraging walking and cycling; reducing flood risk; and safeguarding biodiversity. They are essential to promoting and facilitating healthy lifestyles, benefitting wellbeing and a key component of the quality and visual amenity of the local character of areas. Furthermore, open spaces, in particular natural green spaces, are a vital part of the Borough's natural capital and key feature of the biodiversity and ecology of Solihull.

378. National Planning Guidance is clear that existing open spaces, sports and recreational buildings or land should not be built on unless development proposals meet the exceptions set out in the NPPF.

379. Policy SMBC/HC1: Health and Wellbeing, seeks to ensure new developments will support the provision of new open spaces or the improvement of existing provision in the area, in line with the Council's Open Space Assessment and future revisions.

380. Further detail on open space provision associated with development sites is contained within the Council's adopted Public Open Space SPD (2026).

Playing Pitches, Indoor and Outdoor Sport

381. The latest Playing Pitch Assessment and Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) for Solihull MBC is the December 2023 refresh, prepared by Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. It was formally adopted by Cabinet on 20 June 2024. This strategy is the current Sport England-compliant evidence base that the Council should use when seeking playing pitch and outdoor sports contributions through planning obligations and when assessing the impact of Local Plan growth.

382. The PPOSS is supported by an ongoing programme of annual reviews and updates, keeping the strategy robust and up to date. These annual updates ensure that supply, demand, site capacity, participation trends, facility developments and planned housing growth are regularly reviewed, maintaining the strategy as a robust and defensible evidence base for planning and investment decisions.

383. The assessment concluded that, across the Borough, all sports either have existing shortfalls or are only just meeting current demand. Future housing growth is expected to:

- Exacerbate existing deficiencies.
- Create additional deficiencies for some pitch and facility types.
- Increase pressure on existing sites and changing facilities.

384. The strategy therefore focuses on:

- Protecting existing playing fields and outdoor sports facilities.
- Improving pitch quality to increase carrying capacity.
- Providing additional facilities where shortages exist.
- Using developer contributions and external funding to support delivery.

385. The provision of accessible sport and physical activity infrastructure also supports wider health and wellbeing outcomes, helping residents of all ages to be more active and contributing towards the prevention of ill health and health inequalities.

386. Alongside the PPOSS, the Council is currently in the process of bringing forward an Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy. The strategy will assess current and future provision of indoor sports facilities across the Borough, including sports halls, swimming pools and health and fitness facilities.

387. It is in this context that development proposals will be assessed against NDMPs HC3: Community facilities and public services infrastructure serving new development and HC7: Development affecting existing recreational land and facilities.

388. As noted in the Delivery chapter of this plan, it has been identified that four new sports hubs should be brought forward to accommodate the additional demand for sports pitches as a result of new development.



Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Introduction

389. The Council recognises the importance of the environment, amenity and the natural capital benefits it provides.

390. The Council will seek to:

- Protect, enhance and restore the local landscape character and distinctiveness
- Overcome fragmentation, increase and connect the natural environment
- Secure measurable net gains in biodiversity



391. The full value and benefits of the natural environment, landscape character and local amenity, including the contribution to the green economy, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, the health and wellbeing of residents, and the role of green infrastructure in reducing the impacts of climate change and improving air quality, will be taken into account in considering all development proposals.

392. Joint working with neighbouring authorities and partners will be supported, recognising the need for a landscape-scale approach to the natural environment and conservation of biodiversity and geodiversity.

393. The Borough is home to a rich and varied natural environment and an extensive green infrastructure network both within the rural and urban landscape. These include rivers, canals, ponds, wet grasslands, species-rich wildflower meadows and pastures, acid grasslands, hedgerows, heathland, fen, woodlands including ancient woodland, veteran and ancient trees, geomorphic features, parks and green spaces, gardens and tree-lined streetscapes.

394. These assets constitute the Borough's natural capital and provide a wide range of Ecosystem Services.

395. The Borough's geological and geomorphological features also form an important component of its natural environment and contribute to landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity interests. These assets should be protected, conserved and enhanced and new sites designated where appropriate.

396. Parts of the Borough's natural environment is fragmented, degraded, at risk of pollution, poorly managed, and under pressure from visitor use. The impact of new development that changes the landscape need to be considered from the outset to minimise harm and maximise opportunities for nature recovery, including the opportunity for connecting habitats and wildlife corridors. This will improve ecological condition, restore degraded habitats, and increase resilience to future pressures.

397. Strategic initiatives, including the Tame Valley Wetlands Nature Improvement Area and the emerging Meriden Gap Strategic Grassland Nature Improvement Area, demonstrate the importance of landscape-scale action to restore habitats, improve ecological connectivity and support nature recovery across the Borough. The aims and objectives of these will need to be considered to limit the potential for ecological harm and maximise opportunities.

398. Approximately two thirds of Solihull Borough is countryside, and this plays an important role in shaping Solihull's image and character. Not only does it provide an attractive setting to many of Solihull's towns and villages, but its accessibility is important in enhancing the quality of life enjoyed by the Borough's residents as well as its economic prosperity.

399. Solihull Borough lies within the Arden Landscape Character Area, for which guidance is provided in Natural England's National Character Area 97, the Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines: Arden, and Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2016 and Review and Update Statement 2026. These identify the landscape types that are characteristic to the area and the need for enhancement or restoration.

400. Developers will be expected to take the Landscape Character Area, Local Nature Recovery Strategy (West Midlands and adjacent LNRS where relevant), Nature Improvement Areas (or any successors into account), in locating and designing development.

401. The Borough is supporting several landscape-scale nature recovery initiatives, including the Tame Valley Wetlands Nature Improvement Area and the emerging Meriden Gap Strategic Grassland Nature Improvement Area. These complement the priorities of the West Midlands Local Nature Recovery Strategy by helping to create larger, better connected and more resilient ecological networks across the Borough and wider sub-region.

NPPF

402. The NPPF includes plan-making policies for climate change. In accordance with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008, the Council expects development to recognise the importance of existing vegetation and soils, including trees, hedgerows etc. in capturing and storing carbon and therefore retain these features. The Council will request carbon valuation evidence where tree removals are proposed and require suitable mitigation demonstrating compensation.

403. The NPPF includes National Development Management Policies designed to help conserve and enhance the natural environment that are relevant to the Borough. These include:

- N2: Improving the natural environment.
- N3: Trees in new development.
- N4: Protected landscapes.
- N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity.

404. NDMP N2 (1)(d). sets out that development proposals should conserve and enhance natural features and therefore the Council will require compensation for trees, hedgerows and other landscape features where they are not retained. Compensation will be informed by recognised valuation methodologies, and in accordance with Solihull's Urban Forestry Strategy.

405. NDMP N6 sets out a hierarchy approach to international, national and local importance for sites of biodiversity and geodiversity value. A separate local policy for international and national sites (such as SSSIs (for instance the River Blythe that runs through the Borough)) is not therefore considered necessary. However, it is considered necessary that a policy be included to enable Local Wildlife Sites to be designated in accordance with the NPPF.

Policy SMBC/N1: Local Wildlife Sites

1 The boundaries of sites designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) are as indicated on the policies map. Proposals that may affect LWSs will be determined in accordance with NDMP N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity.

406. NDMP N6 (1)(c) provides a DM policy to consider proposals against that relate to sites identified as a Local Wildlife Site. The glossary of the 2026 NPPF indicates that this is a term used to describe non-statutory areas identified by local authorities in the development plan for their biodiversity value. This policy therefore provides the opportunity to identify the boundary of LWSs in the Borough.

407. In Solihull, Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are not designated by a national body such as Natural England. They are non-statutory sites identified through a local partnership process, as an independent assessment.

408. New LWS are anticipated over the lifetime of this Local Plan, therefore any sites identified as pLWS are to be considered as of LWS value, unless proven otherwise. This will be expected to be evidenced in planning submissions.

How the designation process works

409. The Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull area operates a long-established Local Wildlife Sites system, as part of the former Habitat Biodiversity Audit (HBA) project, now the Natural Capital Assessment Partnership (NCAP). Habitats are surveyed across the sub-region and potential wildlife sites are assessed against agreed ecological and community criteria, supported by strong scientific evidence.

410. The process broadly involves:

- Identification of candidate sites through habitat surveys, species records, planning work, local knowledge and ongoing ecological monitoring.
- Assessment against LWS criteria
- Sites (new or existing pLWS) are evaluated for the presence of important habitats, species diversity, rarity, naturalness, connectivity and ecological significance.
- Selection is based on the most important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species in the local area.
- Consideration by an expert panel - in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, designation is considered by a panel including representatives from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust,

Natural England, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Warwickshire Ecological Services and occasional input from independent ecological experts.

- Designation and inclusion in the LWS register - once approved, the site is recorded as a Local Wildlife Site and used in planning and conservation decision-making.

411. The review of ecological data for new development sites against the LWS criteria is especially important for identifying areas that are of high local, regional or national value that are worth of retention, or enhancement. This should consider the ecological potential or restoration potential of such habitats too.

412. In general, developments and projects should seek to avoid impacts upon designated sites and should include mechanisms and design refinements to buffer and protect such designated sites from negative impacts and seek to restore prior condition, where this is favourable.

Protected and Priority Species and Habitats

413. The Borough supports a range of irreplaceable, Habitats of Principal Importance (Priority Habitats) and otherwise notable habitats. For species the Borough supports many protected species, Species of Principal Importance (Priority Species) and otherwise notable species. Some of these are threatened at National, to Regional to local levels, with many of Material Planning consideration. These are reliant on the local landscape, habitats within and the ecotones (interface) between these habitats. Continued support for the habitats present in the local landscape is necessary to continue to support these species. With development comes change and species shifts, this Local Plan identifies the need for appropriately informed ecological assessment to understand the context take account of the impacts of any new developments and projects and the positive or negative changes anticipated upon the Borough's habitats and species and their extent and/or use of the local landscape.

414. Applicants are encouraged to make use of strategic approaches to species conservation where available, which when applied correctly, can help secure positive outcomes for nature recovery whilst facilitating sustainable development.

415. Specific habitat considerations are expected to also include review of hydrological connections outside of a development or project's site boundary, where development within the site boundary has the potential to impact either negatively or positively on habitats, sites or features that are hydrologically connected.

416. Development proposals should avoid adverse impacts on protected and priority habitats and species and will be expected to demonstrate how the mitigation hierarchy has been followed.

417. If, having followed the mitigation hierarchy, there is a requirement for additional off-site biodiversity compensation to fully address impacts on species and habitats, development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that viable off-site habitat proportionate to the impact can be provided; details of which should be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to a planning decision. Any required mitigation or compensation should be provided locally in the first instance, then within the National Character Area or Local Nature Recovery Strategy Area, then elsewhere in adjoining LA areas and then beyond. This may be for example by joining an approved off-site biodiversity compensation scheme where there is an operational scheme covering the local area, such as through Biodiversity Net Gain

processes or the District Licensing Scheme for great crested newts or further future government endorsed schemes.

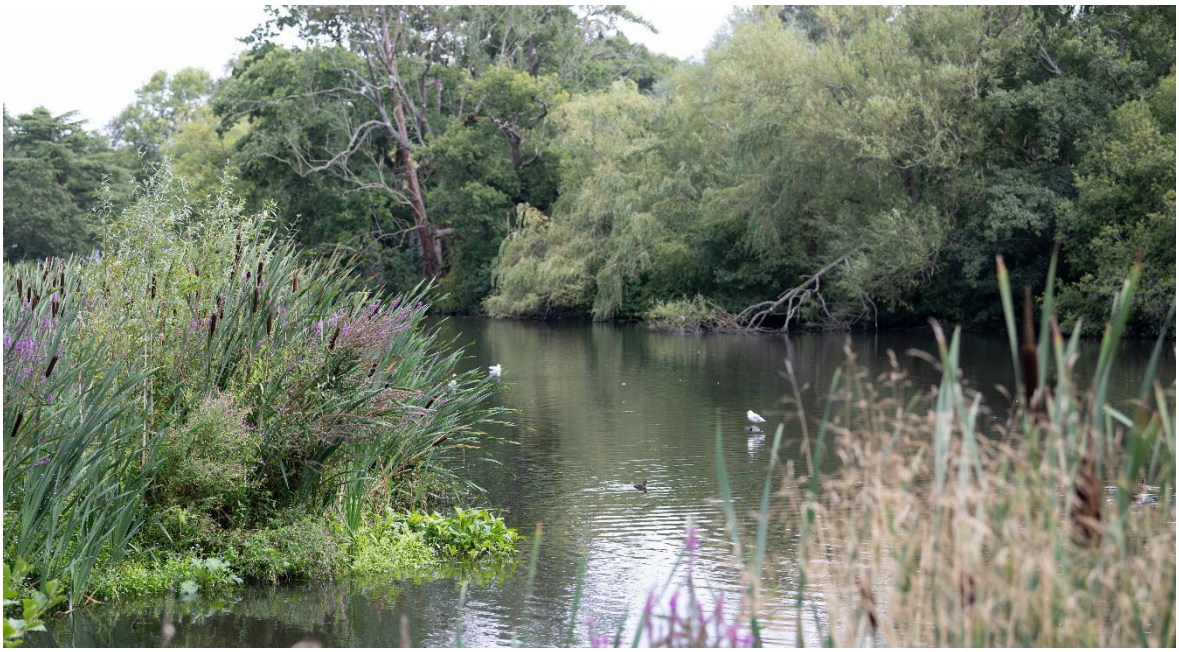
418. For protected great crested newts, the Council holds an Organisational (or 'District') Licence, granted by Natural England (NE), this provides an alternative licensing option for developers to address impacts and provide compensation locally. Whilst this method exists, due care will also expect to be taken regarding other species using such habitats and these will require appropriate design measures and consideration following the mitigation hierarchy and be fully mitigated or compensated for where impacts are identified.

419. Any off-site habitat compensation must be capable of being managed, maintained and monitored for at least 25 years and secured through planning conditions, legal agreements, or conservation covenants, to be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Transparent and regular reporting will also be required, where specified in planning responses.

420. Plans and projects will be expected to contribute to improvements in the abundance, diversity and long-term resilience of protected, threatened or otherwise notable species. Especially where this aligns with LNRS objectives or other specific local objectives that require targeted action but at a smaller scale.

Biodiversity Net Gain

421. Chapter 19 of the 2026 NPPF (including policies N1 and N2) make specific reference to the delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This was introduced through the Environment Act 2021, with a phased role out beginning in February 2024. Whilst it has since been subject to adjustment it relates to a range of development types and requires a mandatory 10% net gain in BNG. Where there is evidence that the habitat has been deliberately degraded or cleared in order to reduce the site's biodiversity baseline, the local planning authority will, in accordance with national guidance, assess the habitat based on its earlier condition rather than its degraded state. As a backstop this will be assessed as of 30th January 2020.



422. In accordance with National Guidance, BNG should be delivered on site wherever possible to align with other local strategies, such as the West Midlands LNRS and adjoining LNRS. The

Council consider on site delivery as the best way of maximising environmental benefits for the Borough and will work with applicants to achieve this wherever physically possible and viable to do so. When designing schemes from the outset applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the priorities identified within the West Midlands Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Council's Natural Capital Investment Strategy to maximise opportunities for delivering biodiversity net gain in locations that support wider nature recovery objectives.

423. BNG proposals either on-or off site will be expected to demonstrate cohesiveness and validity of design, that is sensitive and supportive of the objectives of the NPPF and commensurate with the policy here and elsewhere in this Local Plan. These should maintain habitats identified as stepping stones, increase ecological network functionality, and improve climate and ecosystem resilience. BNG proposals also must not conflict with species objectives where there may be conflicts, such as ground based organisms or species with low dispersal mechanisms / small home ranges. The Council will continue to support monitoring of BNG provisions and will secure specific monitoring fees in accordance with policy SMBC/D2 to help ensure their appropriate delivery, maintenance and management.

Environment Banks

424. The Council will continue to work with colleagues across the WMCA and Warwickshire to help maximise opportunities for environmental enhancement. Where appropriate this can include environment banks to help deliver biodiversity net gain at a larger, Borough wide scale.

Nature-based Solutions (NbS)

425. In line with National Policy due consideration of the study, retention, enhancement and creation of Nature-based Solutions are sought. Existing Nature-based Solutions provide buffering for our inhabitants (both wildlife and people) from the effects of climate change and often form complex habitats that support a diversity of flora and fauna. Justification will be required to be demonstrated for any negative impacts or losses to these habitats and appropriate mitigation or compensation sought. Developers and through projects and plans designers and consultants will be expected to integrate nature-based solutions that provide both water quality and true biodiversity benefits.

Soilscapes

426. Developments and projects should also seek to maintain local topography to support our landscape character and soil diversity and quality, with appropriate soil considerations from design through to the delivery of such schemes. Due consideration of expected of current and future soil types, soil health, soils biodiversity, soil function, protection and reuse of topsoils (with associated seed bank) and sub-soils (to provide substrate of lower nutrient status), and protection of areas of peat where evident, noting these may be small and not yet mapped or found at considerable depth.

Water Quality

427. Our Borough's natural environment is largely supported by the river systems present and the health of these affects wider ecosystem health both within the Borough and wider catchment. Development will be expected to support and enhance the health, function (geomorphology and connectivity) and biodiversity value of our local river systems, many listed as designated sites. Provision of engineered solutions are not expected to affect the existing value of NbS

and are expected to support local biodiversity (SuDS and rainwater harvesting, green and blue roofs, water treatment and attenuation).

428. We will expect developers and in council actions through our plans and projects to:

- Protect aquatic, riparian and wetland habitats from degradation, fragmentation and pollution. Promote the conservation of protected, priority and locally important species associated with freshwater and wetland environments. Seek opportunities to restore natural hydrological processes and improve habitat connectivity between waterbodies. Support the creation, enhancement and long-term management of ponds, wetlands, reedbeds, floodplain habitats and riparian corridors, where appropriate.
- Identify and manage risks from sediment, nutrients, chemicals, fuels, waste materials and invasive non-native species. Implement pollution prevention measures during construction, maintenance and operational activities. Provide sustainable water design that supports both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity. Ensure incident response procedures are in place to minimise environmental harm from accidental pollution events. Encourage responsible and sensitive use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers, where necessary. Recognise the importance of all watercourse and waterbodies for regulation of local climate. Promote habitat diversity and ecological functioning to improve resilience to drought, flooding and climate change for our people and wildlife.

Light pollution

429. Development across the Borough has the potential to change the nightscape permanently. Specific species and habitats are particularly sensitive to light pollution or are intolerant so development will need to consider the changes in this and the impacts this has on wildlife and the natural environment.

Air Quality

430. Air quality in general is good and is improving across the Borough, but that is not withstanding the threats to the natural environment. The Council will seek additional measures beyond those for human health that have the potential to affect our biodiversity.

Generic disturbance and cumulative impacts

431. Developments and projects will be expected to consider the cumulative impacts of development across the Borough, where this results in significant impacts either positive or negative. Each development is considered on its own merits, but the recognition of the cumulative impacts will be expected to be considered at a level relevant to the assessment type.

Biodiversity Duty

432. The Council will discharge its biodiversity duty through the implementation of actions and objectives within The Natural Capital Investment Strategy and this Local Plan (and supporting neighbourhood plans) and expects development proposals to demonstrate how they contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and the delivery of nature recovery objectives.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

433. The Council recognises the importance of the historic environment to the Borough's local character and distinctiveness, and to civic pride, and the cultural, social, environmental and economic benefits that its conservation brings. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved as appropriate to their significance, sustained and enhanced, and put to viable use consistent with their conservation. The Borough's historic environment includes designated and non-designated heritage asset, historic landscapes and archaeological remains which contribute to its distinct character and sense of place. As part of reviewing the Boroughs historic environment, the Council considers that the following characteristics make a significant contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the Borough:

- The historic core of Solihull Town Centre and its adjacent parks;
- The historical development and variety of architectural styles within the Mature Suburbs and the larger established rural settlements of Meriden, Hampton-in-Arden, Balsall Common, Knowle, Dorridge, Bentley Heath, Hockley Heath, Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green;
- The Arden landscape, historic villages, hamlets, farmsteads, country and lesser houses and the distinct historic core of settlements including Berkswell, Barston, Temple Balsall, Meriden Hill, Walsal End, Hampton-in-Arden and Bickenhill, together with the historic core of Knowle.
- Parks, gardens and landscape including common, woodland, heathland and distinctive fieldscapes as defined in the Warwickshire Historic Landscape Characterisation; and
- The canal and railway network, including the working stations at Solihull, Olton, Dorridge and Shirley, together with associated structures.

434. The NPPF expects Local Plans to "deliver a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment". The Council's strategy is to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, support viable uses consistent with their conservation, address risks arising from neglect, decay and other threats, and maximise the contribution that the historic environment makes to local character, distinctiveness and sustainable development. To do this the Local Plan should:

- Identify the heritage assets within the plan area, including those heritage assets at most risk through neglect, decay or other threats. The Council will work with Historic England, asset owners, developers and local communities to identify heritage assets at risk and support measures that assist their repair, sustainable use and long-term conservation;
- Be supported by a local heritage list to identify non-designated heritage assets that are important to the local community. The Council will maintain and periodically review the Local Heritage List to ensure that locally significant heritage assets continue to be appropriately recognised and considered in planning decisions.

- Maintain an appropriate suite of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, reviewed periodically, to help manage development and identify opportunities and issues, and inform decisions affecting conservation areas.
- Maintain, update and make publicly accessible an appropriately scaled Historic Environment Record containing up-to-date evidence about the Borough's historic environment and archaeological resource, to support plan making and development management.



435. NDMPs HE4 – HE10 of the NPPF (as set out in Chapter 20 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) provide a clear national policy basis upon which planning applications effecting the historic environment should be assessed.

436. Generally, Conservation Areas are designated through a separate statutory process under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, whilst Listed buildings are already designated nationally under the statutory listing system and recorded on the National Heritage List for England, maintained by Historic England on behalf of the Secretary of State. In addition, the Council maintains a robust HER that helps identify the respective heritage assets across the Borough, including a list of locally designated non-statutory heritage assets. The Historic Environment Record, Local Heritage List, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans form an important evidence base for understanding heritage significance and informing planning decisions affecting the historic environment. In accordance with national policy, Conservation Areas are updated periodically and amended as and when appropriate with input from local communities and stakeholders.

Policy SMBC/HE1: Assessing Effects on Heritage Assets

1 The Council will determine relevant planning applications affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets, including their setting, in accordance with the respective policies and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and support planning applications that appropriately and proportionately:

A Conserve designated and non-designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and where opportunities arise, secure enhancements to the historic environment.

B Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas to sustain their significance.

C Preserve archaeological remains and areas of archaeological potential and where preservation is not practical or feasible ensure appropriate investigation, recording and mitigation.

D Take account of the Historic Environment Record, Conservation Area Appraisals, Management Plans and any adopted supplementary planning guidance relevant to the heritage asset concerned.

E To support this approach the current list of Conservation Areas are identified on the Policies Map and will be maintained accordingly.

F All Heritage Assets will be maintained through the national listing process and the Councils Historic Environment Record.

Waste Management

437. The National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) remains a national policy statement which must be considered when preparing plans and determining proposals. The NPPW specifically says waste planning authorities should provide sufficient opportunities to meet identified waste management needs, drive waste management up the hierarchy, consider existing capacity and work collaboratively on cross-boundary requirements.

438. The Council is an active participant in the West Midlands Waste Planning Advisory Group (formerly West Midlands Resource Technical Advisory Body), working collaboratively alongside other regional planning authorities to consider waste planning requirements in the context of the Duty to Cooperate. The work of this group is also expected to feed into the ongoing development of the West Midlands Mayoral SDS. It is within this context, and as noted in an earlier section, the Council is intending to bring forward a minerals and waste plan under the new plan-making arrangements.

439. Notwithstanding, the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), situated off Coventry Road, Bickenhill is at capacity and in its current format is not suitable for enhancing the recycling of materials. The Waste Needs Assessment (prepared for the previous plan in 2020) highlights the fact that additional household waste recycling capacity will be required to meet the needs of the increased population and number of households in the Borough during the plan period. The additional growth pressures facing the Borough mean this need will only increase.

440. In that respect, work is currently underway to identify the preferred option from an operational and deliverability perspective, to ensure the waste management needs of the Borough are met. This could be provided by an expansion of the existing HWRC, or by relocation to a larger site elsewhere in the Borough. Current work however is indicating the option to expand the existing centre is likely to be favoured. However, should this prove not to be the case then setting out an alternative, criteria-based approach to identifying a site is considered prudent.

Policy SMBC/WM1: Waste Management Facilities

1 The Council will support the development of an efficient and sustainable network of waste management infrastructure which enables waste to be managed at the highest practicable level of the waste hierarchy, contributes towards a circular economy and provides sufficient capacity to meet identified waste management needs.

2 Proposals for new waste management, recycling, recovery and processing facilities, or for the extension or intensification of existing facilities, will be supported where the following criteria are satisfied:

A The proposal contributes to an appropriate network of waste management facilities and, where relevant, addresses an identified need for additional or replacement waste management capacity;

B Facilitates the beneficial reuse, recycling or recovery of waste and, where appropriate, the production and use of secondary and recycled materials;

C The design and operation of the facility should incorporate appropriate climate change adaptation measures that minimise greenhouse gas emissions; maximise resource and energy efficiency and facilitate the recovery and

beneficial use of materials. Where practicable opportunities to utilise any heat or energy generated on site should be incorporated into the development.

D Where a proposal is situated within the Green Belt, it will be considered in accordance with the policies of the NPPF. Particular regard will be given to the specific locational requirements of the proposed waste management activity; any existing onsite activity of a similar nature; and to whether a suitable alternative location outside the Green Belt is reasonably available.

E The location and scale of the development must be appropriate to the proposed waste management activity. Particular support will be given to proposals which make effective use of: existing waste management sites; previously developed land; and/or land or buildings within established employment or industrial areas where the proposed activity is compatible with neighbouring uses.

F There is safe and suitable access to the highway network and the volume, nature and routing of traffic generated can be satisfactorily accommodated without unacceptable effects on highway safety, congestion, residential amenity or the environment. This should have regard to operational hours and associated vehicle movements.

G The proposal must demonstrate that it would not result in unacceptable effects upon local communities, sensitive receptors or the environment, including from: noise and vibration; dust, fumes and other emissions to air; odour; litter; vermin, insects or birds; artificial lighting; visual intrusion; land contamination or instability; effects upon surface water or groundwater; and flood risk.

H The proposal must be capable of being satisfactorily integrated into its surroundings and must achieve a high standard of design appropriate to its context and function. This should include the appropriate consideration of landscape, ecology and heritage matters in accordance with the policies of this Local Plan, any respective Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF.

I The proposal should demonstrate that aviation safety and the safe operation of Birmingham Airport would not be adversely affected.

3 When considering the above points, the Council will have regard to the type and scale of the facility and the potential for impacts to occur throughout construction, operation and, where relevant, restoration.

4 Opportunities to expand and modernise the existing HWRC at Bickenhill will be supported in principle. The detailed design of the new facility will be considered against the appropriate criteria set out in part 2 of this policy. The site is considered to already satisfy the location requirements of part 2D of this policy.

5 Where the development is temporary, or where restoration will ultimately be required, proposals must provide for the timely restoration and appropriate after-use of the site to a high environmental standard. Where necessary, satisfactory arrangements for implementation, aftercare and long-term management will be secured by condition.

Delivery

Comprehensive Development

441. In order to support the delivery of sustainable development the importance of embedding a strong masterplanning framework within the Local Plan cannot be underestimated. The NPPF (2026) defines masterplans as “a flexible, placemaking tool, providing a three-dimensional spatial framework and long-term vision for the development or regeneration of area-specific or site-specific locations”. This is specifically supported by the NDMP DP3 which sets out Key principles for well-designed places.

442. The purpose of this policy is not to duplicate the requirements of National Development Management Policies, including NDMP DP3, or other national policies relating to design, placemaking and sustainable development. Instead, it seeks to ensure that major development is planned and delivered comprehensively, particularly where proposals come forward as individual phases or parcels within a larger allocation or broad location. The local plan policy therefore focuses on the process, coordination and evidential requirements associated with comprehensive development rather than repeating national policy tests.



443. A comprehensive masterplanning approach helps secure coordinated infrastructure provision, appropriate developer contributions, effective integration between development phases, and meaningful community involvement. Where applications are submitted for only part of a larger site, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the proposal contributes positively to the delivery of the wider area and does not prejudice future development opportunities or infrastructure requirements that could limit or restrict the wider delivery of new development within the Borough.

444. This approach allows flexibility in how development is brought forward whilst ensuring that individual applications contribute to an agreed strategic vision for the whole site and its surrounding communities.

445. Where necessary applicants will be expected to engage with neighbouring landowners and site promoters to support the requirements of this policy. Where that is physically not possible then the applicant should clearly demonstrate the efforts made to engage with neighbouring landowners and promoters and evidence why effective results have not been possible.

446. The cumulative impacts of development will continue to be assessed as part of the consideration of individual planning applications where necessary.

Policy SMBC/D1: Comprehensive Masterplanning for Strategic and Major Development

1 Proposals for major development on allocated sites, broad locations or areas identified for significant growth shall be brought forward in accordance with a comprehensive masterplanning approach which demonstrates how the development will support, contribute to and achieve the coordinated, sustainable and comprehensive delivery of the wider site or broad location.

2 Planning applications for all or part of such sites shall be accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposal:

A Accords with an approved masterplan or, where no masterplan has been approved, contributes towards a comprehensive framework for the development of the wider site or area;

B Supports rather than prejudices the planned delivery of adjoining land, later development phases or associated development;

C Incorporates, safeguards or enables the timely provision of necessary infrastructure, services, facilities, movement networks, green infrastructure and utilities required to serve the wider development;

D Delivers, or makes appropriate contributions towards, necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures (as indicated by site specific policies, the IDP or other appropriate supporting plan or strategy) reasonably related to the cumulative development of the wider site or area;

E Provides for the comprehensive integration of land uses, access arrangements, movement corridors, public spaces, landscape structure and environmental enhancements across the wider development area; and

F Demonstrates how community and stakeholder engagement has informed the evolution of proposals and how relevant matters raised have been taken into account. This should involve clear engagement with neighbouring landowners and promoters (as appropriate).

3 In addition to the requirements outlined in Part 2 of this policy, where an application relates to only part of a larger allocation, site or broad location, the applicant shall provide proportionate evidence demonstrating:

A The relationship of the application site to the wider developable area;

B How the proposal will not compromise the efficient and comprehensive development of the remaining land;

C How infrastructure requirements, planning obligations and delivery responsibilities have been considered across the wider site; and

D The mechanisms by which future phases or adjoining land can be integrated with the proposed development.

4 Development proposals that would prejudice, fragment or otherwise compromise the comprehensive planning and coordinated delivery of a wider site, allocation or broad location will not be supported.



Infrastructure Delivery

447. Paragraph 35 of the NPPF sets out the expectation that development plans should set out the contributions expected from developments. The policy below is included to fulfil this expectation.

448. In addition to this policy, developer contributions and infrastructure provision are also likely to be tested against Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations (2010) (as amended) which includes the following:

"planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is:

(a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

(b) directly related to the development; and

(c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development."

449. The approach under this local policy recognises and supports NDMP HC3 (Community facilities and public service infrastructure serving new development).

Policy SMBC/D2: Infrastructure Provision and Developer Contributions

1 Major Development will be expected to provide, or contribute towards, provision of:

A Measures to directly mitigate its impact and make it acceptable in planning terms

B Physical, social, green and digital infrastructure to support the needs associated with the development.

2 Infrastructure and mitigation measures will be provided in a timely manner to support the objectives of the Local Plan.

3 The Council will, where appropriate, seek to secure site-specific measures through planning obligations. The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought will be related to the form of development and its potential impact on the site and surrounding area. The cumulative impact of developments will also be taken into account.

4 The Plan has been subject to a Viability Assessment, to ensure the policies are deliverable. In the exceptional circumstances where site -specific issues generate viability concerns, applicants should discuss these with the Council at the earliest possible stage in the development process. Proposals that are unable to comply with the Plan's policies on viability grounds must be accompanied by a detailed Viability Assessment.

5 Developer contributions in the form of the Community Infrastructure Levy will contribute towards strategic infrastructure required to support the overall development in the Local Plan. An element of CIL will, where appropriate, also be utilised to deliver local infrastructure requirements in accordance with Neighbourhood Plans, in accordance with CIL legislation.

6 Contributions secured through planning obligations may be pooled to address need or cumulative impacts arising from more than one development proposal. The Infrastructure Funding Statement will inform decision making on the use of planning obligations.

7 The Council will work in partnership with infrastructure providers and other delivery agencies in updating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

8 Whilst minor developments are less likely to contribute towards developer contributions, requests may still be sought where the proposal has a specific impact upon local infrastructure that requires mitigation in order to make it acceptable in planning terms.

9 To support the efficient and sustainable delivery of infrastructure as part of relevant planning applications the Council will seek a monitoring fee contribution reflective of the sites size and capacity.

450. The paragraphs below set out the known infrastructure requirements that will need to be taken into account within development proposals in accordance with the above policy.

Affordable Housing

451. The Council's approach to the provision of affordable housing is set out in the chapter "Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes" chapter and is referenced here just for completeness.

Education

452. Most major residential developments result in new homes that are occupied by families with early years or school age children, and this usually places additional demand on schools and early years providers in the vicinity of the site. To address this demand the Council, as education authority, will assess capacity at existing schools/provision and, where necessary, will seek commuted payments to be used to increase the capacity at appropriately located schools/provision. This will be done in a proportionate manner taking into account the DfE's pupil yield dashboard and revised guidance on Developer Contributions for Education (August 2023). The approach is set out in the Education Sufficiency Strategy (2025 to 2028) and the Council's approved Developer Contributions for Education Policy approved in January 2024.

453. The policy calculates education contributions by:

- Estimating pupil yield[37] from developments using the DfE pupil yield methodology;
- Separately assessing impacts on:
- Early Years
- Primary
- Secondary
- Post-16
- SEND provision; and
- Applying a cost per place to determine the required contribution.



[37] For instance, a site of 100 dwellings (40% of which would be affordable) would result in a pupil yield of 34 for primary school and 18 for secondary schools.

454. Within the settlement chapters, more locally specific commentary is given to education infrastructure requirements, including where the scale and location of expected growth will result in the need for a new school to be provided.

Education Transport

455. Whilst accessibility of new developments will be taken into account to determine whether a particular development would be located in a sustainable location or not, there may be occasions where dedicated school transport may be required.

456. A contribution may be sought where:

- The development is located beyond the statutory walking distance from the relevant school and pupils generated by the development would be entitled to Council-funded transport.
- The statutory walking distance is exceeded, namely:
- 2 miles for children under 8 years old.
- 3 miles for children aged 8 and over.

457. The contribution is based on the number of eligible pupils generated by the development × the transport cost × the relevant number of school years.

458. Even where a development is within the statutory walking distance, if there is no safe walking route, the Council may seek a contribution towards highway works to create a safe route to the relevant school or a transport contribution.

Healthcare

459. The Council has been working with the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB) to assess the healthcare infrastructure needed to support new development. This has included the development of a model that predicts the likely additional health care engagements/activity that would be generated by a development and converts this into the space required to deliver the additional activity. An assessment is then undertaken to determine whether there is any spare capacity in the area. If not, the space required to provide the additional activity is converted into a cost that is then used to identify an appropriate and proportionate commuted sum.

460. The model considers the impact of development on the following healthcare sectors:

- Primary Care.
- Community Care.
- Mental Health.
- Acute Outpatients.
- Acute Emergency.

461. BSOL ICB have confirmed that they will then work directly with healthcare providers (be they GP practices and/or hospital trusts) to determine how such funds will be deployed to ensure that appropriate capacity improvements are undertaken to the healthcare estate to facilitate the additional demands arising from the development.

462. The Council believes that by engaging with BSOL ICB on this basis allows for a single, coordinated and consistent approach to be taken for developments across the Borough rather than engaging with individual healthcare providers. This approach recognises the ICB's role to coordinate and plan for service delivery rather than directly providing that service.

463. It should be stressed that this approach seeks to identify the physical infrastructure needed to support the development and does not include the operational or on-going revenue costs of actually proving the service (for example where any additional GPs need to be provided) as it is considered that this is more appropriately funded through general taxation that will be generated in the area as a result of the new development/residents.

Playing Pitches & Sport Hubs

464. As noted in an earlier chapter, the Council's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (December 2023) and associated Playing Pitch Assessment identifies that additional playing pitch demand will arise as a result of new developments[38]. This strategy is the current Sport England-compliant evidence base that the Council should use when seeking playing pitch and outdoor sports contributions through planning obligations and when assessing the impact of Local Plan growth.

465. In assessing the quantum of additional need that may arise, the Council has used Sport England's Playing Pitch calculator. This is then used to calculate a proportionate and appropriate contribution that will be used to provide additional facilities.



466. The Council is seeking to pool these contributions at a settlement level that will then be used to bring forward sports hubs that will be larger more sustainable facilities than had new facilities been provided in a more dispersed and isolated fashion with smaller facilities. A pooled approach will help ensure that contributions are sufficient to deliver strategic facilities

[38] This is in addition to any replacement playing pitches may be required in connection with developments that may take place on existing facilities, and thus the replacement pitches are required as mitigation.

capable of meeting demand generated by multiple developments and serving wider communities. This may include associated ancillary infrastructure such as changing accommodation, parking, access arrangements, lighting, and other supporting facilities where appropriate.

467. Hub locations will be pursued to serve new developments at the following locations:

- Balsall Common
- Blythe
- East of Solihull.
- Knowle

468. At this stage specific sites for these hubs have not yet been identified as more work will need to be undertaken when the actual level of growth for each location is understood through the adoption of this plan and the determination of speculative applications that is expected to occur before the plan is adopted. It is the level of growth that will determine the size of each hub, and therefore the land required to support its delivery.

469. Whilst these broad locations have been identified, the precise location, scale and form of provision may evolve as further evidence, masterplanning and development proposals come forward.

470. Delivery of sports hubs will be pursued in partnership with Sport England, National Governing Bodies, sports clubs, schools, community organisations, and other relevant stakeholders where appropriate. The delivery of these hubs will play a key role in mitigating the impacts of growth and ensuring that new and existing communities have access to sufficient, high-quality sports and physical activity infrastructure throughout the plan period.

Public Transport

471. Whilst accessibility of new developments will be taken into account to determine whether a particular development would be located in a sustainable location or not, there may be occasions where public transport enhancements are required to enable access to developments by means other than the private car.

472. This will be assessed on a site-by-site basis and may result in the need for commuted sums to be used toward enhancing public transport that can be used to serve the site. This could include enhancements to bus services and/or measures to improve the accessibility of rail services and in doing so will work with public transport providers in doing so.

Travel Plans

473. The need for travel plans is often identified through the transport assessments prepared for major developments. Where this does illustrate the need for a travel plan the Council is open to the developer taking on responsibility for the delivery of the plan, or if requested the Council will do so. In these instances, this will generate the need for commuted sums to cover the delivery costs.

Police

474. The Council will work with the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner to seek to identify, where justified, infrastructure improvements that may be necessary as a result of additional

development occurring in an area. These infrastructure improvements will not be expected to cover operational or revue related matters that are, like health services, more appropriately funded through general taxation that will be generated in the area as a result of the new development/residents.

475. Measures could include physical infrastructure (such as charging points for vehicles and/or welfare facilities for officers when working remotely from a permanent base.

Other Potential Infrastructure

476. The above infrastructure needs should not be considered as a closed list, as other examples may come forward during the plan period. Where this occurs the Council will set out a justification for any additional payments using the principles of necessity and proportionality that are included in the Regulation 122 tests.

Monitoring Fees

477. In addition to the above, the Council will also include a monitoring fee in relation to relevant planning obligations. In setting the monitoring fee the Council will ensure that these will be set based on the following considerations:

- The sum to be paid fairly and reasonably relates in scale and kind to the development; and
- The sum to be paid to the authority does not exceed the authority's estimate of its cost of monitoring the development over the lifetime of the planning obligations which relate to that development.

Recent Experience

478. Since the end of 2024 the Council has been determining a number of major residential developments on sites (including sites within the Green Belt) and has been seeking appropriate section 106 obligations. These have included the types of infrastructure contribution listed above. On at least one occasion, most of these contributions have also been included in a planning permission granted on appeal[39]. This is highlighted to demonstrate that the Council's approach to date has been in accordance with the regulations that require such contributions to be necessary; directly related to the development; and fairly & reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

479. From the last quarter of 2024 until mid-2026, at least 14 major residential developments have been granted planning permission which include proposals for up to 3,700 dwellings. The associated S106 agreements to these applications make provision for up to £44 million in commuted sums to be collected and used to address the infrastructure improvements noted above. Some of these developments have not commenced, and some will have a range of trigger points/phasing that will influence when the monies are actually paid. As payments are made these will be reported in the Council's annual Infrastructure Funding Statements.

Monitoring

480. The Council will develop a monitoring framework following adoption of this plan.

[39] For instance, the development of 80 dwellings on land west of Stratford Road (Hockley Heath) (appeal reference: 6005246) (planning application reference PL/2025/01366/PPOL)

Balsall Common

The Settlement Now

481. Balsall Common is largely a post-war suburban town bisected by the A452 which links east Birmingham, the NEC and Birmingham airport with Kenilworth and beyond to the south-east. It is located in the 'Meriden Gap' just 2km from the boundary with Coventry[40].

482. The settlement straddles the parish boundary between Balsall & Berkswell parishes, with most of the settlement being located within Balsall parish. Beyond the main settlement are the smaller villages of Berkswell and Temple Balsall; both of which have primary schools but otherwise only a very limited range of facilities. The population of the town is around 7,000 in some 2,900 households.

483. The settlement is characterised by popular, low density residential areas with an open plan, cul-de-sac style layout. It has a small but thriving local centre astride the A452 with a range of shops, facilities and services, although there are some opportunities to improve the Centre. A recently constructed medical centre is located on the northeast side of the settlement.

484. The Heart of England secondary school (which accommodates around 1,200 pupils) is located in the settlement, as is Balsall Common Primary School which has three forms of entry. Its restricted location together with its size does result in congestion around school drop off/pick up times. Berkswell CE Primary School is located around 1km north of the settlement.

485. Berkswell railway station to the north-east of the town provides access to London, Birmingham and Coventry via the West Coast mainline. It has a small car park which fills up rapidly in the morning with commuter parking resulting in overspill parking in roads nearby.



486. The Berkswell Neighbourhood Plan and Balsall Neighbourhood Plan were formally 'made' by the Council in September 2019 and June 2021 respectively.

[40] And it is noted that there have been and will be further developments in Coventry on its western outskirts close to the Borough boundary.

The Settlement in the Future

487. Balsall Common is one of two rural towns in the Borough that has a full range of facilities including both secondary & primary schools, health services and a range of retail and associated facilities. As such it is well placed to accommodate levels of growth in excess of just its own local needs.

488. Although Balsall Common is of a size that caters for many residents' day-to-day needs, it does not have significant areas of employment uses, other than service uses. Many of the area's economically active residents travel beyond the settlement for employment. The Jaguar Land Rover vehicle operations base and test track is located to the south of Balsall Common at Fen End.

489. The A452 will continue to provide an important part of the highway network enabling vehicles to travel from Kenilworth and beyond up towards east Birmingham (including the UKC Solihull Hub area). The road carries much through traffic (e.g. over 80% of traffic passes through the village during the am peak time without stopping) and now is the opportunity to use new development to complete the highway network so that there is a functioning by-pass enabling through vehicles to avoid using the village centre. This in turn will allow for environmental improvements (including cycle lanes) to be undertaken along the Kenilworth Road within the village as it would no longer need to accommodate the same levels of through traffic.

490. The HS2 rail link enters the Borough in the southeast corner of Berkswell parish and for this initial stretch it uses the line of the Greenway (the now disused rail link to Kenilworth) before reaching the west coast main line. Here the HS2 line crosses over the existing rail line (just to the south of Berkswell station) and continues north westwards on a line roughly parallel to the west coast mainline before entering Hampton in Arden. To accommodate the crossing of the existing rail line, the new high-speed line will necessitate the construction of a viaduct some 250m long and 10m high. Initial enabling works in the vicinity of Balsall Common commenced in January 2019. During this period there will be a focus of construction traffic in and around the Balsall Common area as many vehicles will access the construction zones having travelled southeast along the A452 from the A45 and into the settlement.

What is Required for the Settlement in the Future?

491. Development in and around the settlement is not only an opportunity for it to play a major part in accommodating Borough needs, but also to accommodate a scale of development that is capable of supporting significant infrastructure provision that can help play a part in dealing with existing issues and provide the necessary facilities for future residents. In particular the following areas have been identified and should be taken forward:

492. **Balsall Common Relief Road** – Evidence shows that there is a need for a bypass to serve Balsall Common currently, and that the additional growth proposed in this Plan will make its delivery necessary to facilitate development and HS2 activity. It also indicates that continuing the line of Hall Meadow Road around the eastern side of the village, crossing Waste Lane to the west of Little Beanit Farm and joining up with the A452 around the Meer End Road junction is the preferred route.

493. The delivery of the relief road continues to be supported by the Council as part of a multi modal package of works, with the relief road coming forward in 3 parts and a fourth part capturing changes to the Kenilworth Road through the centre of the town:

- Phase 1 would see the upgrade of Hallmeadow Road.
- Phase 2 would provide a new section of road between Station Road and Waste Lane, to be delivered as part of the Barretts Farm development.
- Phase 3 would include a new section of road between Waste Lane and Kenilworth Road.

494. The design of the road would be single carriageway with direct access points minimised thus being attractive to through traffic as an alternative to using Kenilworth Road through the centre. However, the road would be expected to provide the main vehicular access into the Barratt's Farm development as well as any development brought forward as part of the Broad Location for Growth identified as part of Phase 3. Delivery of the road will comprise of direct on-site delivery; financial contributions coupled with potential CIL funding; and grant funding opportunities that may be available through, for instance, the WMCA.

495. In March 2025 the Council adopted the Balsall Common Multi Modal Transport Package (MMP) Position Statement as a material planning consideration, and this included how a proportional contribution towards its delivery would be calculated in relation to new developments.

496. **An Enhanced Centre** – Although the centre provides for a range of retail services, the level of growth proposed provides an opportunity for additional residents to support new facilities. Furthermore, the environmental improvements along Kenilworth Road made possible through the provision of a by-pass will also provide a catalyst for enhancements to the centre. Most of the centre is located within Balsall parish, but areas in Berkswell may also be included. In February 2022, Balsall & Berkswell Parish Councils published a Balsall Common Centre Master Plan which includes details on how the centre could be enhanced.



497. **Station Parking** – The northern part of the Barratt's Farm development can be used to provide parking facilities for station users. This would be a short walk from the station and would seek to address the issue over commuter parking.

498. **Improved Public Transport** – A higher population gives greater potential for improved public transport services to be viable, e.g. better frequency of bus services and as HS2 starts to operate, the existing main line has the potential to provide for greater local commuter services.

499. **New Primary School** – Based on the sites allocated for development, a new two form entry primary school, including early years provision, is to be accommodated on the Barratt's Farm

development. Funding for the school will be expected via developers' contributions associated with the development of the allocated sites. Further development around broad locations may also add provision for a further primary school.

500. **Secondary School** – Heart of England School is located in Balsall Common but serves a far wider area, including a significant number of pupils living outside of Solihull. The school will be able to cater for pupils from some of the proposed developments from within its existing capacity, however expansion of places will be required at the school and should be funded through developers' contributions

501. **Sports and Recreation** - It has been identified that a sports hub to serve the new development in and around the settlement should be provided. This is set out under policy SMBC/D2.

502. **Green Space Improvements** – In accordance with the NPPF and the 'golden rules', opportunities for the provision and improvement of local green space that is accessible and of high quality will be maximised.

503. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

504. **Community Infrastructure Levy** – Both parish Councils that cover the area have a Neighbourhood Plan in place, and so will receive 25% of the levies received in the area. This will provide a significant source of funding that can be used to take forward appropriate projects that the community have identified as priorities. This can include simple relatively low-cost actions (e.g. further traffic regulation orders) through to more substantial projects. It will be for the parish council to decide how this 'local' element of the CIL receipts is to be spent and there is potential for partnership working to maximise the use of monies from this source.

Proposed Approach

505. Whilst Balsall Common is identified for significant housing growth it will be important that future development is managed to respect its relationship to neighbouring settlements, especially the historic village of Berkswell to the Northeast. The settlement has a broad range of facilities including the rail station with links to Birmingham, Coventry and the UK Central Solihull Hub Area, schools, medical practice, library, retail and recreational facilities. The HS2 rail line will form a significant barrier on the east side of the settlement.

506. The Green Belt boundary around Balsall Common will need to be amended to accommodate the level of growth proposed for the settlement. To provide a logical, strong and defensible new eastern boundary it is proposed to use the west coast mainline[41] as the new boundary from where Kenilworth Road crosses the line to the north of the settlement to the point the HS2 line crosses the existing railway just to the south of Station Road; then the line of HS2 will be used as the boundary to the point where it crosses Waste Lane. Thereafter the boundary will be drawn close to the eastern edge of site BC4 before following the line of Windmill Lane to the southern point of site BC3 where it then cuts across to Kenilworth Road. Development opportunities through the 'call for site' process within this line will form the basis for the bulk of the allocated sites.

[41] With the exception of that part of the line adjacent to Lavender Hall Farm. At this point the Green Belt boundary would extend north-eastwards beyond the railway line so that DLP site 21 (r/o Lavender Hall Farm) can be included as an allocation.

507. A mix of market and affordable housing, as well as smaller market homes for young people wishing to remain in the area and specialist housing to meet the needs of older people will be provided in the settlement. This will seek to align the types and sizes of homes to be made available and the needs of the community. However, there will need to be a careful balance struck between making the most efficient use of land and respecting the character of the local area.

Recent Planning Applications

508. A number of recent planning applications need to be highlighted as they are relevant to how the settlement will develop in the future, and they will have implications for determining what an appropriate amended boundary to the Green Belt ought to be. The proposals include the following:

Development of up to 1,060 dwellings at Barratt's Farm.

509. A resolution to grant outline planning permission for part[42] of this Green Belt site that was an allocation in the 2020 plan known as BC1 has now taken place. This will accommodate up to 970 dwellings, new local centres and new care provision.

510. A further application for a smaller part of the former allocation has been submitted but not yet determined. This relates to up to 90 units off Oxhayes Close[43] with the site sitting between the existing urban area and the wider Barretts Farm development proposal.

511. As planning permission is likely to be granted at Barretts Farm before this plan is adopted and there is no evidence to suggest that the permission will not subsequently be implemented, it is appropriate that the Green Belt boundary around this part of the settlement be amended so that the new dwellings do not (needlessly) remain in the Green Belt. Using strong physical features that are readily recognisable and are likely to remain permanent, the new Green Belt boundary will be formed by Station Road, the HS2 line and Waste Lane.

Development of up to 110 dwellings at Frog Lane[44].

512. Outline planning permission has been granted for this Green Belt site that was an allocation in the 2020 plan known as BC2.

513. As planning permission has been granted, and there is no evidence to suggest that the permission will not be implemented, it is appropriate that the Green Belt boundary around this part of the settlement be amended so that the new dwellings do not (needlessly) remain in the Green Belt. Using strong physical features that are readily recognisable and are likely to remain permanent, the new Green Belt boundary will be formed by Frog Lane.

[42] This relates to the majority of the site and is included under reference 2023/01520
[43] Planning application reference 2023/00693
[44] Planning application reference 2023/02248.

Development of up to 268 dwellings on land south of Waste Lane[45].

514. Detailed consents[46] have been granted for this Green Belt site that was an allocation in the 2020 plan known as BC4.

515. As planning permission has been granted, and there is no evidence to suggest that the permission will not be implemented, it is appropriate that the Green Belt boundary around this part of the settlement be amended so that the new dwellings do not (needlessly) remain in the Green Belt. There is no strong physical feature that is readily recognisable to form the eastern boundary of the land to be removed from the Green Belt and therefore field boundaries have been used as the new Green Belt boundary.

Development of up to 95 dwellings at 722 Kenilworth Lane[47].

516. Outline planning permission has been granted (on appeal) for this Green Belt site that wasn't an allocation in the 2020 plan.

517. As planning permission has been granted, and there is no evidence to suggest that the permission will not be implemented, it is appropriate that the Green Belt boundary around this part of the settlement be amended so that the new dwellings do not (needlessly) remain in the Green Belt. There is no strong physical feature that is readily recognisable to form the eastern boundary of the land to be removed from the Green Belt and therefore field boundaries have been used as the new Green Belt boundary.

Development of 37 dwellings on land west of Hob Lane[48].

518. Full planning permission has been granted for this Green Belt site that wasn't an allocation in the 2020 plan.

519. As planning permission has been granted, and there is no evidence to suggest that the permission will not be implemented, it is appropriate that the Green Belt boundary around this part of the settlement be amended so that the new dwellings do not (needlessly) remain in the Green Belt. There is no strong physical feature that is readily recognisable to form the eastern boundary of the land to be removed from the Green Belt and therefore field boundaries have been used as the new Green Belt boundary.

Previous Allocations

Policy SMBC/BC3: Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road

1. The site is allocated for 132 dwellings

2. Development of the site should include:

   A Provision of low-density housing, and where relevant single storey housing, to protect the setting and functionality of Berkswell Windmill.

[45] Planning application reference 2023/02214.
[46] The wider allocation has come forward in two parts, namely the larger Pheasant Oak Farm area (applications 2023/02214 and 2026/00479 for 250 dwellings) and a smaller part of the site in the NW corner known as Catchams' Corner (applications 2023/02281 and 2025/01422 for 17 dwellings).
[47] Planning application reference 2021/01360
[48] Planning application reference 2025/00092.

B Provision of public open space and a range of play areas for children and young people in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and future revisions.

C Enhancement of public rights of way through the site as a pedestrian route and key green infrastructure link.

D Trees and hedgerows along to be retained.

E 5% of open market dwellings to be provided in the form of Self and Custom Build Plots in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO4.

F Provision of above ground SuDS features.

3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:

A Developer contributions to education provision.

B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).

C A proportionate contribution towards the Balsall Common Multi Modal Package (incorporating the Balsall Common Relief Road) calculated in accordance with the Council's March 2025 Position Statement.

D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Berkswell rail station, Balsall Common centre and Balsall Common health centre.

E Avoidance of flood risk areas to north –west of site and potential for flood alleviation measures to benefit the wider area;

F Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

520. This site is bounded by the settlement edge to the north and Kenilworth Road and Windmill Lane as far south as the existing development allocated in the SLP 2013. In the Draft Local Plan and Supplementary Consultation undertaken for the 2020 plan, this site was proposed for 200 dwellings. Evidence has indicated that this level of development would have a significant adverse impact on the ecological quality of the site and the setting of the adjacent heritage asset, Berkswell Windmill. As a result, the capacity has been significantly reduced and the southern part of the site excluded from development.

521. Although the site is located a greater distance from the centre of the settlement than others, this did not prevent the SLP Inspector concluding that the area was not so remote that it would justify the omission of the two sites in this parcel brought forward under the SLP 2013. The proposed allocation now extends no further south than the existing housing.

522. In Green Belt terms the parcel performs moderately. At least in part this is due to the development and encroachment that has already taken place in the parcel. The site is located in an area with low capacity to accommodate change in the Landscape Character Assessment, 2016.

523. The Heritage Impact Assessment[49] for Site BC3 identifies potential harm to the setting of the Grade II* Berkswell Windmill and recommends mitigation by leaving undeveloped the paddocks adjacent Windmill Lane and any areas where development would adversely affect the functionality of the Windmill or the view cone from the south-west. Evidence from the Berkswell Mill Wind Flow Study 2019 indicates that the parts of the site closest to the Windmill would be subject to significant height constraints. Excluding the southern part of the site, protecting areas of ecological value and restricting the height of development where necessary elsewhere will ensure that the development does not result in harm.

Policy SMBC/BC5: Trevallion Stud

1. The site is allocated for 310 dwellings
2. Development of the site should include:
   - A Provision of public open space and a range of play areas for children and young people in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and future revisions.
   - B Trees and hedgerows along to be retained.
   - C 5% of open market dwellings to be provided in the form of Self and Custom Build Plots in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO4.
   - D Provision of above ground SuDS features.
3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:
   - A Developer contributions to education provision.
   - B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).
   - C A proportionate contribution towards the Balsall Common Multi Modal Package (incorporating the Balsall Common Relief Road) calculated in accordance with the Council's March 2025 Position Statement.
   - D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Berkswell rail station, Balsall Common centre and Balsall Common health centre.
   - E Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

524. This site is focussed on the land associated with the stud farm, but it also includes some adjacent parcels, much of which is previously developed and included on the BLR. The area to be removed from the Green Belt would be that bounded by Kenilworth Road and Wootton Green Lane. It would use strong, defensible boundaries to establish the extent of the Green Belt.

525. Although this is in a wider parcel assessed in the Green Belt Assessment (2016) as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, it is considered that due to the presence of built

[49] Undertaken for the 2020 plan.

development and encroachment in this part of the parcel that this smaller area actually performs less well in its own right. A large part of this area is included on the Council's BLR.

526. The site is located in an area with very low capacity to accommodate change in the Landscape Character Assessment, 2016, although as it is substantially brownfield, its contribution to the character of the landscape area is more limited. It has overall medium accessibility, with very high accessibility to a food store.

Policy SMBC/BC6: Lavender Hall Farm

1. The site is allocated for 92 dwellings

2. Development of the site should include:

   A Provision of public open space and a range of play areas for children and young people in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and future revisions.

   B Trees and hedgerows along to be retained.

   C Facilitating easy access by walking and cycling to the rail station and other facilities,

   D Provision of above ground SuDS features.

   E Protection of the setting of heritage assets adjacent the site.

   F Provision of a buffer between new housing and both the existing railway line and HS2.

3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:

   A Developer contributions to education provision.

   B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).

   C A proportionate contribution towards the Balsall Common Multi Modal Package (incorporating the Balsall Common Relief Road) calculated in accordance with the Council's March 2025 Position Statement.

   D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Berkswell rail station, Balsall Common centre and Balsall Common health centre.

   E Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

527. This site is focussed on the previously developed land part of the site that sits behind Lavender Hall Farm itself, to the north-west of the fishing lakes.

528. Although the site sits in a strongly performing broad area parcel within the Green Belt Assessment, 2026 the HS2 line will provide a new feature separating the site from the wider Green Belt that will remain to the northeast. It is considered that, due to the presence of built development and encroachment in this part of the parcel, this smaller area actually performs less well in its own right. A large part of this area is included on the Council's BLR.

529. The site is located in an area with very low capacity to accommodate change in the Landscape Character Assessment, 2016, although as it is brownfield, its contribution to the character of the landscape area is more limited. It has medium high accessibility, with footpath access to the rail station and medical practice.

SLP Site 19 – Riddings Hill/Hallmeadow Road (capacity 65)

530. The adopted Solihull Local Plan (2013) allocated this 1.6ha site off Hallmeadow Road/Riddings Hill for development of approximately 65 dwellings. The 2013 amended the Green Belt boundary to accommodate this site and the wider changes to Green Belt boundaries around the settlement noted above will also see the adjacent heath centre being removed from the Green Belt.

531. As the 2013 plan will fall away when this plan is adopted, it is considered necessary to include an allocation policy for this site as follows.

Policy SMBC/BC7: Hallmeadow Road/Riddings Hill

1. The site is allocated for 65 dwellings
2. Development of the site should include:
   - A Provision of public open space and a range of play areas for children and young people in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and future revisions.
   - B Provision of above ground SuDS features.
3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:
   - A Developer contributions to education provision.
   - B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).
   - C A proportionate contribution towards the Balsall Common Multi Modal Package (incorporating the Balsall Common Relief Road) calculated in accordance with the Council's March 2025 Position Statement.
   - D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Berkswell rail station, Balsall Common centre and Balsall Common health centre.
   - E Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

532. The Green Belt boundary was adjusted in the 2013 plan to accommodate this site, and as such it can be considered as 'white land', i.e. land with no policy designation. No policy changes are required in this plan to bring the site forward.

533. This Council owned site has recently been marketed, and the Council is seeking to dispose of its interest to a housing developer.

Broad Locations[50]

534. Four broad locations for growth have been identified for Balsall Common alongside one notable site within the SHELAA. These are reflective of known development pressures and site opportunities promoted through the call for sites and informed by national policy. These include:

BC8 - Land West of Lavender Hall Lane and South of Park Lane.

535. This area is currently in use as an HS2 depot. The timetable for release of the land remains under discussion with HS2 however with the known operating window for HS2 now expected by 2039 there is scope for the delivery of homes within this area within the later years of the Plan period, especially if the existing site is released earlier. This site is considered predominately brownfield land within the Green Belt and would be expected to meet the requirements of Policy SMBC/D1 terms of comprehensive masterplanning) and NDMPs GB7(g) and GB8. The opportunity to deliver c400 homes within this site is referenced within the SHELAA housing land supply (and is included in row 3 of the land supply table in the Housing chapter).

BC9 - Land at Phase 3 of the Balsall Common Relief Road.

536. The delivery of the new relief road to the south and east of Balsall Common will create a new defensible boundary to the south of the town between Waste Lane and Kenilworth Road. This section of the relief road (known as phase 3) remains subject to ongoing technical development work to confirm its final alignment. The Council will continue to work with landowners, the parish councils and other respective stakeholders to bring forward a comprehensive development within this broad location that will help accelerate the delivery of phase 3 of the relief road. The future amendment of Green Belt boundaries in this location will be confirmed through one of the following 3 mechanisms:

- The next review/update of the Councils local plan;
- an update to the respective Neighbourhood Plan; or
- A new Supplementary Plan brought forward under the new planning system.

537. In the interim period, any development proposals within this broad location will be considered on their own merits. They should however be considered in the context of a comprehensive masterplan approach (having regard to policy SMBC/D1). The Council is of the view that the delivery of the relief road in this location would constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt (in accordance with NDMP GB7 (1)(f)(i)) as it would be considered essential transport infrastructure requiring a current Green Belt location. In accordance with the principles of this broad location for growth however, the Council considers that the delivery of the relief road (either in part or full) would constitute a Very Special Circumstance to be weighed as part of a respective planning application. Any development brought forward within this broad location would also need to give careful consideration to existing properties and the setting of the Grade II* Berkswell Windmill.

[50] See Policy SMBC/HO2: Broad Locations for the policy wording relating to these areas.

BC10 - Land around Berkswell Railway Station

538. NDMPs S5 (1)(h): Principle of development outside settlement and GB7 (1)(h) Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, now support development within reasonable walking distances of railway stations and as such development consistent with these national policies can be expected to come forward in this settlement. This will include development around Berkswell station and as such it is included as a broad location in this plan.

BC11 - Land around Tile Hill Railway Station

539. NDMPs S5 (1)(h): Principle of development outside settlement and GB7 (1)(h): Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, now support development within reasonable walking distances of railway stations and as such development consistent with these national policies can be expected to come forward in this settlement. This will include development around Tile Hill station and as such it is included as a broad location in this plan.

540. Although Tile Hill station is located within Coventry, it is located close to the Borough boundary such that parts of Solihull Borough are within a reasonable walking distance of the station, and thus it is included as a broad location.

Blythe

The Area Now

541. For the purposes of this chapter, the Blythe area comprises the parishes of Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green, which lie to the south of Shirley and the Stratford Road; and west of the M42.

542. This area consists of distinct villages set within, and separated by, attractive countryside and Green Belt, which gives each village a sense of remoteness. The landscape is characterised by smaller hedged fields and numerous hedgerow trees of Arden pasture with the River Cole to the west and River Blythe SSSI from the south. Small ponds and pockets of ancient woodland punctuate the landscape. There are no Conservation Areas, but several farmhouses are Grade II listed buildings within a farmland setting.

543. Tidbury Green comprises predominantly inter-war linear development along key roads. Recent residential developments at Tidbury Green Farm and Lowbrook Farm have provided a greater mix of housing types and much needed affordable housing to the area. Tidbury Green primary school has accommodated the pupils arising from these new developments. Wythall railway station, which has services to Birmingham and Stratford upon Avon, is within walking distance from the centre of the village, but bus services are poor. The south of the Parish borders the popular Earlswood Lakes and Clowes Wood SSSI. There is a railway station with limited services at Earlswood, but few amenities. Tidbury Green parish contains 2,373 residents in 755 households.



544. Cheswick Green is predominantly a planned new village from the 1970s and consists almost entirely of post-war development characterised by cul-de-sac, open plan layouts. There are a

number of key local facilities, including a newly expanded primary school, GP surgery, village hall, pub and local shops. Public transport is via the bus service, which runs to Shirley and Solihull. Planning permission was granted at Cheswick Green Primary School to expand to a two-form entry school to accommodate pupils from new housing development at Blythe Valley Park and Mount Dairy Farm. The hamlet of Illshaw Heath lies to the south. Cheswick Green has a population of 4,405 residents in 1,393 households.

545. The modern, multi-award winning village of Dickens Heath was 'created' in the late 1990s, guided by an architect-led masterplan. It has since undergone rapid expansion with a variety of architectural styles of development and a village centre. Whilst housing densities are higher around the village centre, the area has an attractive, mature woodland, a Country Park and canal side setting, with a few early cottages adding sporadic visual interest.

546. The centre has a range of community facilities including a two-form entry primary school, library, GP surgery, shops and services. Due to limited land availability the school does not currently have scope to expand on-site. There is a railway station close to the village at Whitlock's End, which benefits from a car park and two services per hour to Birmingham, however pedestrian and cycling access needs to be improved. Dickens Heath has a population of 4,969 residents in 2,136 households.

547. Blythe Valley Park comprises a modern campus style commercial development within an attractive parkland setting. There are several award winning signature buildings providing a contemporary and sustainable working environment. A total of 750 homes and a care home at the southern end of the park have been built, which has created a new community and increased the diversity of housing types and tenures in the area. Close to Junction 4 of the M42, there is excellent access to the strategic road network, but limited bus services.

548. As a whole, the villages benefit from some key facilities and Whitlock's End Station has 2 services per hour to Birmingham and 1 service per hour to Stratford. However, the wider sub-area suffers from poor public transport provision with limited bus services between settlements, which perpetuates travel by private car.

The Area in the Future

549. The area will be provided with affordable homes and market housing for a range of people such as families, young professionals and those wishing to down-size.

550. Significant new development in the area will add to its vibrancy and vitality, whilst retaining the intrinsic character of distinctive villages separated by open countryside.

551. Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green will be inset from the Green Belt in accordance with Policy SMBC/GB3.

552. New and existing communities will be integrated and benefit from increased infrastructure provision and enhanced access to natural green spaces and the canal network.

553. Improvements to local facilities, services and public transport will have been realised, encouraging more sustainable travel patterns and improved connectivity to surrounding communities.

554. It is recognised that this area of the Borough has a complex pattern of settlements that are located both in close proximity to each other, but also close to the urban edge. Each has its own sense of identity, and this is reinforced by maintaining a reasonable separation between

each settlement and/or the urban edge. It is important that adequate separation continues to be provided between these settlements to avoid them coalescing. Whilst some development is proposed in this area it does mean that the gaps between settlements that will remain are now more sensitive to change and it is important that they are protected so that they still provide an adequate separating function.

What is Required for the Area in the Future?

555. **Improved Public Transport** – A higher population gives greater potential for improved public transport services to be viable, e.g. better frequency of bus services.

556. **Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity** – Cycling and walking links to Whitlock's End station, village centres, local services and Shirley town centre will be improved to facilitate active travel and reduce car dependency, especially for short journeys.

557. **Highway improvements** – It is likely that highway improvements will be required at various locations in the settlement, as well as capitalising on highway improvement initiatives along the Stratford Road. These could include speed reduction measures, access and junction improvements around development sites, highway capacity improvements or adjustments to traffic priority arrangements.

558. **Parking Improvements** – The provision of appropriate additional off-street parking may be considered in Dickens Heath.

559. **New Primary School** – Pupils arising from Site BL1 will be accommodated at Tidbury Green Primary school. A new two-form entry primary school will be required to serve the approved developments at 'Land South of Dog Kennel Lane (former site BL2), The Green (former site 11) and BL3. The school is to be situated at 'Land South of Dog Kennel Lane. Funding for the school will be expected via section 106 agreements associated with the development of the respective sites.

560. **New Secondary School and a Further Additional Primary School** – Until this plan is adopted there will be some uncertainty about the overall level of growth that will come forward in this area. This uncertainty is principally because of the number and scale of speculative planning applications that have been submitted in the area. As these applications have not yet (all) been determined it is not yet clear whether the level of growth has or will trigger the need for additional education facilities over and above that identified in the preceding paragraph. This could include the need for a new secondary school and a further additional new primary school or school expansions. The Council will continue to monitor any further approvals of such applications and will if necessary, seek to identify a location for additional education facilities.

561. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

562. **Sports and Recreation** - Replacement of any lost recreation / sports provision as a result of development will be required to an equivalent or better standard, including access and use by the wider community where appropriate. Several sites have been shortlisted in the vicinity of the existing clubs West of Dickens Heath. It has been identified that a sports hub to serve the new development in and around the settlement should be provided. This is set out under policy SMBC/D2.

563. **Play and Open Space** - Provision of play and areas of open space within potential development sites will be required. There is also a need to ensure that best use is made of existing green and blue infrastructure assets within development sites, together with provision for linkages to the surrounding area.

564. **Green Space Improvements** – In accordance with the NPPF and the 'golden rules', opportunities for the provision and improvement of local green space that is accessible and of high quality will be maximised.

565. **Community Infrastructure Levy** – Presently the parish councils will directly receive 15% of the levy collected in the area. This will increase to 25% once any Neighbourhood Plans are adopted. This will provide a significant source of funding that can be used to take forward appropriate projects that the community have identified as priorities. This can include simple relatively low-cost actions (e.g. further traffic regulation orders) through to more substantial projects. It will be for the parish councils to decide how this 'local' element of the CIL receipts is to be spent and there is potential for partnership working to maximise the use of monies from this source.

566. **Affordable Housing** – Affordable housing will be required on development sites in accordance with adopted planning policy.

Proposed Approach

567. Given that the opportunities to develop on previously developed land in Blythe are extremely limited, Green Belt release will be required and a redefined Green Belt boundary will need to be established. In accordance with national planning policy, such boundaries should be defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Sites that are close to the existing settlement or are / can be well-served by public transport will be preferable, subject to their performance against the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as supported in the Green Belt Assessment and any other evidence base and constraints.

568. A mix of market and affordable housing, as well as smaller market homes for young people wishing to remain in the area and specialist housing to meet the needs of older people will be provided in the area. This will seek to align the types and sizes of homes to be made available and the needs of the community. However, there will need to be a careful balance struck between making the most efficient use of land and respecting the character of the local area.

569. It is important that sites are considered in a comprehensive manner to avoid piecemeal developments occurring. This needn't necessarily preclude a phased approach where one parcel of land or part of a site may be available for development in advance of another, but this should be in accordance with an approach agreed by the Council.

Recent Planning Applications

570. A number of recent planning applications need to be highlighted as they are relevant to how the area will develop in the future, and they will have implications for determining what an appropriate amended boundary to the Green Belt ought to be. The proposals include the following:

Development of up to 1,250 dwellings at Land South of Dog Kennel Lane.

571. Both a resolution to grant outline planning permission and an outline planning permission for this Green Belt site that was an allocation in the 2020 plan known as BL2 have now taken place (two separate planning applications[51]). This site in total will accommodate up to 1,250 dwellings and includes provision of land for a primary school, a care/retirement home and a commercial centre.

Development of up to 86 dwellings at Land North of Tythe Barn Lane

572. A resolution to grant full planning permission[52] has now taken place for this Green Belt site that was the northern part of an allocation in the 2020 plan known as BL1.

Development of up to 110 dwellings at Land West of Rumbush Lane

573. Outline planning permission[53] has now been granted for this Green Belt site to the west of Rumbush Lane, Tidbury Green. The site will accommodate up to 110 dwellings as well provision for a football pitch and associated infrastructure for Leafield Athletic FC. This site was not allocated in the 2020 and has come forward as a speculative development utilising Grey Belt land. It is applications such as this that contribute towards the short-term interim supply of Grey Belt land included in row 10 of the land supply table.

Proposed Allocations

Policy SMBC/BL1: West of Dickens Heath

1 The site is allocated for 450 dwellings.

2. Development of the site should include:

A Connection to proposed Dickens Heath to Solihull town centre cycle route.

B Provision of public open space, including children's play in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and any future revisions.

C Relocation of the existing sports provision to a suitable site in the vicinity;

D Retention of Local Wildlife Sites, with potential for enhancement and appropriate buffer to Tythe Barn Coppice ancient woodland.

E Retention of trees and hedgerows within the site and along Tythe Barn Lane to conserve the character of this approach into Dickens Heath;

F Provision of suitable SuDS and flood risk management;

G On site accommodation for older people in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO5.

H 5% of open market dwellings to be provided in the form of Self and Custom Build Plots in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO4.

[51] Western side of the site (700 dwellings) has a resolution to grant under reference 2024/02926 and the eastern side of the site has a planning permission in place (for 550 dwellings) under reference 2024/00598.
[52] 2024/00728
[53] 2025/01502

3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:

   A Financial contribution to education provision as required by the Local Education Authority;

   B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).

   C Relocation of the existing sports provision;

   D Highway improvements as required including speed reduction measures and access improvements along Tilehouse Lane and Tythe Barn Lane.

   E Provision of above ground SuDS features and deculverting of existing watercourse through site where feasible.

   F Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Dickens Heath and Whitlocks End Station in accordance with the Council's LCWIP.

   G Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

4. To support sustainable development within the area, the site should be promoted in a comprehensive basis supporting the positively planned relocation of the existing sports facilities south of Tythe Barn Lane to alternative locations within the surrounding area. Until such time as these facilities are appropriately relocated or robust plans have been confirmed to secure a timely relocation that would prevent the closure of any associated clubs (either for a short period of time or permanently), development of the site will not be supported.

Justification

574. This allocation comprises of land to the west of the existing village. The site is bounded by Tilehouse Lane to the west, Tythe Barn Lane to the north and Birchy Leasowes Lane to the south.

575. The site is currently occupied by Highgate United FC, Wychall Wanderers FC and Old Yardleians Rugby Football Club, and re-provision will be required for these sports pitches. Tythe Barn Meadows Local Wildlife Site (LWS) to the west will be retained, as will the integrity of Little Tyburn Coppice, a remnant ancient woodland. Tyburn Farm pastures have been confirmed as a LWS as part of the 2020 Local Plan Review process; it is the area north of Tythe Barn Lane running up to the canal. The LWSs are expected to impact upon the ability to re-provide the playing fields within the site and therefore alternative options for their re-provision is being pursued.

576. The site is located in very close proximity to Whitlock's End Station, which has 2 train services per hour to the centre of Birmingham with a short journey time of 20 minutes. Furthermore, local services and shops in Dickens Heath village centre will be easily accessible by foot or bicycle, and it is important that convenient links are provided.

577. The Landscape Assessment (2016) states that the Blythe area has medium landscape value but high overall sensitivity to new development. As such, historic landscape features, such as

hedgerows and standard trees, and the meadows and woodland designated as Local Wildlife Sites should be retained.

578. Highway improvements will be required to the surrounding roads, and a connection to the pedestrian/cycling link north of the hedgerow along Tythe Barn Lane to provide a safe route to Whitlocks End Station.

Policy SMBC/BL3: Whitlock's End Farm

1. The site is allocated for 450 dwellings

2. Development of the site should include:

   A Respecting the setting of the Grade II Whitlocks End Farm.

   B Provision of public open space and a range of play areas for children and young people in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and future revisions.

   C Enhancement of public rights of way through the site as a pedestrian route and key green infrastructure link.

   D Trees and hedgerows along bridleway and public rights of way to be retained.

   E On site accommodation for older people in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO5.

   F 5% of open market dwellings to be provided in the form of Self and Custom Build Plots in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO4.

3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:

   A Developer contributions to new 2-form primary school and early years provision at 'Land South of Dog Kennel Lane' (former Site BL2 from 2020 withdrawn Local Plan).

   B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).

   C Provision of above ground SuDS features.

   D Avoidance of flood risk areas to north –west of site and potential for flood alleviation measures to benefit the wider area.

   E Highway improvements as required including access improvements on Bills Lane.

   F 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.

   G Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

Justification

579. Site BL3 will extend towards the western edge of the Borough where the boundary is marked by the Stratford railway line, and being on an embankment at this point the rail line itself will help provide visual separation between the new development and the built-up area of Major's Green to the west (which is in Bromsgrove District).

580. The site is located within easy walking distance of Shirley station and is accessible to Shirley Town centre by walking and cycling.

581. Site BL3 provides for a narrow front of the amended Green Belt boundary where only the minimum separation between the urban edge and Dickens Heath is provided (by shifting development to the west thus being 'off set' from the built-up area of Dickens Heath). Furthermore, it avoids further development in the gap between the urban edge and Dickens Heath along Dickens Heath Road, which is the principal route south from the urban edge to the village – as such, this is where the perception of the gap should be at its greatest.

582. The site is located in a Green Belt parcel that scores moderately (Green Belt Assessment 2026), and it is considered that this represents a trade off with the higher accessibility of the site being located on the urban edge close to where need arises.

583. Most forms of development in this area will reduce the gap between the urban edge and Dickens Heath. This will be reduced to approximately 300m (from 600m) and this should be seen as the minimum necessary to provide a meaningful gap provided it only occurs over a narrow front (i.e. just a pinch point) rather than over a broad front that simply results in a uniform corridor like gap between the urban edge and Dickens Heath.

584. Development would allow the retention of land as open and accessible space south of the site with access improvements to the open countryside further south

Broad Locations

BL4 - Land around Shirley, Whitlock's End, Wythall and Earlswood Railway Stations

585. NDMPs S5 (1)(h): Principle of development outside settlement and GB7 (1)(h) Development, which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, now support development within reasonable walking distances of railway stations and as such development consistent with these national policies can be expected to come forward in this settlement. This will include development around stations at Shirley, Whitlocks End, Wythall and Earlswood and as such these are captured as part of the respective broad location in this plan. Although Wythall station is located within Bromsgrove District, it is located close to the Borough boundary such that parts of Solihull Borough are within a reasonable walking distance of the station, and thus it is included as a broad location.

Hampton in Arden

The Settlement Now

586. The parish area includes the rural settlements of Hampton-in-Arden and Catherine-de-Barnes, both of which are small villages east of Solihull, which are located in close proximity to major transport links joining Birmingham with Coventry. The settlements are divided by the M42 motorway and are broadly bounded by the A45 and A452 trunk roads to the north, by the River Blythe to the east and south and by the Grand Union Canal, Hampton Coppice and the A41 to the west

587. The settlements are situated within the largely pastoral and historic Arden Landscape. This area of Green Belt which separates the wider Birmingham conurbation from Coventry Belt, is known as the 'Meriden Gap.

588. The central part of Hampton-in-Arden was first designated as a Conservation Area by Warwickshire County Council in order to preserve the historic core of the settlement. In 2015, Solihull MBC completed a review of the Conservation Area and expanded its boundaries to include other notable parts of Hampton-in-Arden.

589. A neighbourhood plan for the parish was adopted in August 2017.



590. The parish currently covers the village itself and associated hinterland, and by virtue of boundary changes that took effect in April 2019, the parish boundary was extended westwards up to the urban edge and all of Catherine-de-Barnes is now included in the parish.

591. The village of Hampton-in-Arden is located to the eastern side of the Parish whilst the smaller settlement of Catherine-de-Barnes is located to the western side. Between them, the settlements have a range of facilities including a primary school, a library, doctor's surgery and a number of shops including a post office and chemist together with recreational facilities.

592. Hampton-in-Arden has a railway station on the West Coast Mainline which provides access to London, Birmingham and Coventry. The station has a car park accommodating some 72

vehicles. A bus service runs through the village which connects Hampton-in-Arden to Meriden, Catherine-de-Barnes and Solihull

The Settlement in the Future

593. Given the limited range of services, it is considered that development options are restricted to what would be proportionate extensions to the settlement. A key aspect to this is to ensure that the existing infrastructure supporting the village, especially the school, is not overwhelmed from additional demands that may occur from larger expansions.

594. The M42, which separates Hampton-in-Arden and Catherine-de-Barnes, will continue to provide an important part of the strategic highway network. The ongoing improvements to Junction 6 of the M42 include a new road linking the motorway to the A45 via a new junction (junction 5a) located where Solihull Road currently crosses the motorway. The new road (A4545) was fully opened in June 2025.

595. The HS2 line will run through the parish. To accommodate the crossing of the River Blythe (and its floodplain), a viaduct of some 480m in length and over 10m above ground level will be constructed.

What is Required for the Settlements in the Future?

596. The parish area of Hampton in Arden will require protection from excessive development that may impact upon the character and attractiveness of the village; and the services it provides. Where development is provided, the following issues will need to be addressed.

597. **Community Infrastructure Levy** – Presently, the parish council will directly receive 25% of the levy for developments occurring in the parts of the parish covered by the Neighbourhood Plan. Elsewhere, principally around Catherine-de-Barnes (which was a later addition to the parish), 15% of the levy will be passed onto the Parish Council. This will provide a significant source of funding that can be used to take forward appropriate projects that the community have identified as priorities. This can include simple, relatively low-cost actions (e.g. further traffic regulation orders) through to more substantial projects. It will be for the parish council to decide how this 'local' element of the CIL receipts is to be spent and there is potential for partnership working to maximise the use of monies from this source.

598. **Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity** – Enhancements to encourage and promote walking and cycling in the settlement, particularly towards the local centre, schools and public transport will be required. Developments will be expected to ensure that walking and cycling connectivity is provided both within and beyond the site boundary, linking in with the existing and proposed cycle and walking networks identified in the Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy, as well as routes for recreation.

599. **Green Space Improvements** – In accordance with the NPPF and the 'golden rules', opportunities for the provision and improvement of local green space that is accessible and of high quality will be maximised.

600. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

601. **Other necessary improvements to local infrastructure** - Where development generates a need for new or improved infrastructure, developers will be expected to deliver such improvements to ensure that growth does not place unacceptable pressure on existing

infrastructure networks and services and contributes to the creation of sustainable, well-served communities.

Recent Planning Applications

602. A number of recent planning applications need to be highlighted as they are relevant to how the area will develop in the future, and they will have implications for determining what an appropriate amended boundary to the Green Belt ought to be. The proposals include the following:

603. A resolution to grant outline planning permission for residential development on Land at Oak Farm was taken in May 2023 for up to 95 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space. This site was an allocation in the 2020 plan known as HA2 Oak Farm, Catherine de Barnes.

Existing Allocation

SLP Site 24 – Land off Meriden Road, Hampton-in-Arden

604. The adopted Solihull Local Plan (2013) allocated this site off Meriden Road for development of approximately 110 dwellings. Planning permission was granted for 96 dwellings which is currently under construction.

Proposed Allocations

Policy SMBC/HA1: Meriden Road, Hampton in Arden

1. The site is allocated for 100 dwellings
2. Development of this site should be consistent with the following principles:
   - A Retention of TPO trees and established hedgerows;
   - B Provision of public open space and play facilities at the heart of the development;
   - C Protection of the local landscape, ecology and drainage assets;
   - D Perimeter block development to maximise natural surveillance and encourage active streets and views over the countryside;
   - E Higher density housing reducing towards the edge of the Green Belt;
   - F Facilitating easy access by walking through the site and into the countryside.
   - G No development within any area of higher flood risk zones
   - H Provision of above ground SuDS features
3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:
   - A Financial contribution to education provision as required by the Local Education Authority;
   - B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).

C Consideration to realigning the surface water flood risk within the site to continue in a west to east direction through the POS to the receiving floodplain;

D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Hampton in Arden rail station, shops and health centre;

E Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

Justification

605. This site sits adjacent to that allocated in the SLP 2013 and they should ideally be linked in a comprehensive manner. This will help improve connectivity between the new developments and maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of new infrastructure. It provides an opportunity to re-use the former ammunitions depot which is a brownfield site (and is included on the Council's BLR). Open space provision serving the development as a whole will be an important consideration.

606. The parcel of land immediately east of the village is a moderately performing parcel in Green Belt terms. The land has low capacity to accommodate change in the Landscape Character Assessment, 2016. The site has medium accessibility and is close to the rail station. A large part of this area is included on the Council's BLR.

607. The Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies surface water flood risk within the site and highlights the opportunity for realigning the flood risk east to west through the area of green infrastructure.

608. This allocation measures approximately 3.4 hectares. The site lies within the Arden landscape character area and is on the urban fringe. The site is well screened to the boundaries so views in are screened by existing vegetation although glimpses can be seen through the tree cover especially in the winter months

Site SO1 – East of Solihull

609. Whilst this site is located within the Parish boundary of Hampton-in-Arden and Catherine-de-Barnes, it functions as part of the urban area rather than as an expansion of one of the parish's villages. It is therefore not included within this chapter and is dealt with under the Solihull chapter.

610. The capacity from this site, together with other allocations in this plan, and the site under construction from the SLP, will see over 1,000 dwellings being accommodated within the parish on allocated sites.

Broad locations[54]

HA3 - Land around Hampton in Arden Railway Station

611. NDMPs S5 (1)(h): Principle of development outside settlement and GB7 (1)(h): Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, now support development within reasonable

[54] See Policy SMBC/HO2: Broad Locations for the policy wording relating to these areas.

walking distances of railway stations and as such development consistent with these national policies can be expected to come forward in this settlement. This will include development around Hampton in Arden station and as such it is included as a broad location in this plan. For the reasons outlined earlier in this chapter development associated with this broad location in particular will benefit from comprehensive masterplanning.

Hockley Heath

The Settlement Now

612. Hockley Heath village is a largely inter and post-war small settlement formed by ribbon development. It is bisected by the A3400 Stratford Road, which is a key connection to Junction 4 of the M42 to the north and Stratford-upon-Avon to the South.

613. Located within Hockley Heath Parish, near the boundary with Stratford and Warwick Districts, this semi-rural settlement lies to the far south of the Borough. The population of the parish is 1,900 in some 770 households with the majority of residents in the parish residing within the village of Hockley Heath.

614. The settlement is characterised by low-density residential areas, many dwellings of detached or semi-detached form. The settlement has a small village centre, which provides a range of shops and restaurants. However, it lacks some services such as a doctors surgery.

615. The village of Hockley Heath is inset in the Green Belt, which separates it from neighbouring Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath and gives it a sense of remoteness. The Green Belt is also valuable in the settlement's overall environmental quality and contributes to its semi-rural setting. Hockley Heath Recreation Ground provides valuable green space for residents to use within the village. The settlement also benefits from significant blue infrastructure in the form of the Stratford-Upon-Avon Canal, which provides a linear heritage asset with a village wharf.

616. The area has a high-quality residential environment and a good, popular school (Tudor Grange Primary Academy - Hockley Heath). This one-form entry primary school can accommodate some 210 pupils plus early years. However, secondary education needs are met outside of the Parish.

617. Hockley Heath has bus services running through the village connecting Solihull and Stratford and a more frequent service linking to Dorridge/Solihull and Cheswick Green/Shirley. Rail access is available at Dorridge railway station, connecting the settlement to Birmingham and London.

The Settlement in the Future

618. The A3400 will continue to provide an important part of the highway network, enabling vehicles to travel from Stratford-upon-Avon, and to travel to the north, connecting Hockley Heath to Blythe Valley Park and the M42.

619. Due to the proximity to the Borough boundary, future expansion of the settlement within Solihull Borough is limited and largely restricted to the north and west of the village.

620. Whilst being classified in the settlement hierarchy as a larger village, given the more limited ranges of services and the less accessible nature of the settlement, it is considered that development options are restricted to what would be limited and proportionate extensions to the settlement. A key aspect to this is to ensure that the existing infrastructure supporting the village, especially the school, is not overwhelmed from additional demands that may occur from larger expansions.

What is Required for the Settlement in the Future?

621. Hockley Heath will require protection from excessive development that may impact upon the character and attractiveness of the village, and the services it provides. Where development is provided, the following issues will need to be addressed:



622. **School Parking** – Congestion around school pick up and drop off times currently occurs in School Road. Development on land south of School Road will provide an opportunity to deliver access/parking improvements and routes for pedestrians that takes this into account.

623. **Community Infrastructure Levy** – Presently, the parish council will directly receive 15% of the levy collected in the area. This will increase to 25% once any Neighbourhood Plan is adopted. This will provide a significant source of funding that can be used to take forward appropriate projects that the community have identified as priorities. This can include simple, relatively low-cost actions (e.g. further traffic regulation orders) through to more substantial projects. It will be for the parish council to decide how this 'local' element of the CIL receipts is to be spent and there is potential for partnership working to maximise the use of monies from this source.

624. **Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity** – Enhancements to encourage and promote walking and cycling in the settlement, particularly towards the local centre, schools and public transport will be required. Developments will be expected to ensure that walking and cycling connectivity is provided both within and beyond the site boundary, linking in with the existing and proposed cycle and walking networks identified in the Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy, as well as routes for recreation.

625. **Green Space Improvements** – In accordance with the NPPF and the 'golden rules', opportunities for the provision and improvement of local green space that is accessible and of high quality will be maximised.

626. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

627. **Other necessary improvements to local infrastructure** - Where development generates a need for new or improved infrastructure, developers will be expected to deliver such improvements to ensure that growth does not place unacceptable pressure on existing infrastructure networks and services and contributes to the creation of sustainable, well-served communities.

Proposed Approach

628. Hockley Heath is identified for limited and proportionate expansion of the village, with no other large-scale allocations being considered appropriate. This reflects the semi-rural character of the village and the need to manage the capacity and viability of local infrastructure.

629. The Green Belt boundary around Hockley Heath will need to be amended to accommodate the level of growth proposed for the settlement. To provide a logical, strong and defensible new southern boundary, it is proposed to use the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal. Changes to the Green Belt boundary north of School Road are also proposed to recognise the existing built-up nature of this frontage.

630. A mix of market and affordable housing, as well as smaller market homes for young people wishing to remain in the area, and specialist housing to meet the needs of older people will be provided in the settlement. This will seek to align the types and sizes of homes to be made available and the needs of the community. However, there will need to be a careful balance struck between making the most efficient use of land and respecting the character of the local area.

631. In addition to the site south of School Road that would then fall within the settlement boundary, if the Green Belt boundary were amended as described above, a further small site may then be considered appropriate for development as it would then also be within the settlement boundary. The site is not being allocated as part of this plan but is being highlighted as it has been promoted for development by the landowner/developer and if the Green Belt boundary is changed, it would no longer be subject to Green Belt policy. The principle as to whether development would be allowed would be established through the planning application process. The site is as follows

- Land adjacent to 84 School Road

Recent Planning Applications

632. A number of recent planning applications need to be highlighted as they are also relevant to how the settlement will develop in the future, and they will have implications for determining what an appropriate amended boundary to the Green Belt ought to be. The proposals include the following:

Development of up to 99 dwellings on land south of School Road

633. A resolution to grant outline planning permission for up to 99 dwellings, subject to a S106 Agreement, has been made on this Green Belt site previously identified as allocation HH1 in the draft 2020 Local Plan. It also includes infrastructure and open space.

Development of up to 9 dwellings on land adjacent to 84 School Road

634. Planning permission in principle has been obtained for the provision of up to 9 dwellings on this site. Whilst technical details consent needs to be submitted and all relevant matters approved before full planning permission is secured, the permission in principle consent provides early certainty on the acceptability of development on this site.

Development of up to 80 dwellings on land west of Stratford Road

Outline planning permission for up to 80 dwellings and associated infrastructure was granted on appeal in July 2026.

Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath

The Settlement Now

635. Lying around 3 miles southeast of Solihull Town Centre, Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) is a town with a combined population of around 19,300 in some 7,900 households. It is inset in the Green Belt which separates it from the main urban area of Solihull and the surrounding rural villages.

636. Whilst Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath are essentially three communities, the significant post-war development in the area means that they are now physically and functionally linked such that they form one built up area. Reflecting this relationship and the scale of the settlement, the Council identified Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath as a town in October 2025. It is not obvious where one area ends and another one begins and there are strong links between each community as they share many local services and facilities. However, each area has its own shopping provision, park, primary school, community/village hall and churches which help to underpin the sense of individual identity.



637. The historic medieval core of Knowle is centred on the High Street and the church of St. John the Baptist, St. Lawrence and St. Anne, at the junction of two historic routes. This area is protected by Conservation Area designation and includes 53 statutory listed buildings and a number of locally listed assets. Knowle has a thriving and well used local centre with an extensive range of shops, facilities and services.

638. Similarly, development from the later Victorian and Edwardian periods around and near to Dorridge railway station (Station Approach and Granville Road) also benefit from Conservation Area status. The shopping parade in Dorridge provides up-dated modern facilities and a public realm that enhances the centre as a whole. It includes food and drink outlets, small business, shops and services.

639. Bentley Heath has a smaller range of shops and services providing more for the day-to-day convenience needs of residents.

640. Overall, the settlement benefits from an attractive residential environment with leafy green streets, access to a number of parks, open spaces and green spaces within the area, and links

to the countryside beyond. Green and blue infrastructure is a valuable attribute, with local wildlife sites and local nature reserves, as well as the canal which provides an important environmental and recreational feature.

641. KDBH is served by four primary schools (including a Catholic primary school) and the Arden Academy and Sixth Form Centre secondary school which has a current capacity of around 1,800 pupils. However, the recent housing developments in the area along with a fluctuating birth rate, is impacting school places.

642. The area is valued by residents for the wide range of community services and facilities that are enjoyed and used extensively. These include Knowle Library, Knowle and Dorridge scout huts, sports and recreation facilities, local allotments and commercial premises such as post offices, chemists and public houses that are a vital part of village life. The settlement is also well served in terms of health facilities with 3 GP surgeries and 5 dental surgeries.

643. The settlement as a whole has a high proportion of detached dwellings and low-density residential development is a characteristic of some parts of the settlement. House prices are amongst the most expensive in the Borough and affordability continues to be an issue for those seeking access to housing, as does the need to provide a more appropriate range of housing types and sizes to meet future needs.

644. The area has good links to key employment sites at Blythe Valley Park and Solihull Town Centre. The northwest of the settlement is crossed by the M42 with junction 5 providing access to the motorway network. The main A road through the area is the A4141 running from Solihull through Knowle, on to Chadwick End and out of the Borough towards Warwick.

645. The settlement is reasonably well served by public transport with bus services running throughout the area with routes to Solihull, Balsall Common and Coventry. Regular train services from Dorridge Station provide links to Kidderminster, Solihull, Birmingham, Leamington Spa and London. However, whilst Dorridge Station car park can accommodate over 100 vehicles, this well used station quickly reaches capacity in the mornings with commuter parking resulting in overspill parking in residential roads nearby. This also affects the availability of parking for local shoppers.

646. In April 2019 the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' by the Council. It is therefore part of the statutory Development Plan for Solihull and sets out the objectives and vision for the area as it develops in the future. The Neighbourhood Plan is currently undergoing an update which is not expected to change the nature of the plan. Therefore, further development within the Neighbourhood Area will be expected to support the vision and objectives, and planning applications should be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, where there is no conflict with the Local Plan.

The Settlement in the Future

647. Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath is one of two rural towns in the Borough that has a full range of facilities including both secondary & primary schools, health services and a range of shops, services and facilities. As such it is well placed to accommodate growth in excess of just its own local needs. Given that the area is mainly residential, the opportunities to develop on previously developed land in KDBH are extremely limited and Green Belt release around the settlement has been required to accommodate new development. However, maintaining separation of KDBH from Solihull and other settlements will continue to be important to preserve the character and context of the town.

648. Although the settlement does not have significant areas of employment uses (other than service uses) and many of the area's economically active residents travel out to work, there is good access to the motorway and wider road network. Whilst the main road through the centre of Knowle will continue to provide an important link in this regard, it can be congested at peak times and is likely to experience increased vehicle movements in the future, in any event. Given that the historic medieval core of Knowle is centred on the High Street and is protected by conservation area status, it will be important to mitigate congestion in this area in order to maintain the character of this part of the settlement. Similarly, other roads in the area such as Station Road, principally around school drop off and pick up times, see the free flow of traffic interrupted and notable parking difficulties. Opportunities will be explored to consider how these issues can be alleviated.

649. The area is however served by public transport, and it will be important to retain and where possible improve the public transport offer. Dorridge railway station will continue to provide an important facility for local commuters. Opportunities for enhancing existing walking and cycling routes and creating new routes will continue to be explored, particularly where these would provide access to schools, local centres and the railway station.

650. It will also be important to ensure that the local centres remain economically strong, vibrant and continue to provide, support and enhance the variety of services and facilities for the local population.

651. The historic core of Knowle will continue to be protected and enhanced and the local character and distinctiveness of the settlements conserved, particularly, the Victorian and Edwardian development around Dorridge railway station.

652. A mix of market and affordable housing, as well as smaller market homes for young people wishing to remain in the area and specialist housing to meet the needs of older people will be provided in the settlement. This will seek to align the types and sizes of homes to be made available and the needs of the community. However, there will need to be a careful balance struck between making the most efficient use of land and respecting the character of the local area.

653. Education facilities in the area will remain successful. Pressure on primary schools created by new development will be alleviated through the provision of an additional primary school and secondary school facilities will be significantly improved to ensure that the available capacity and full potential of the Arden Academy can be maximised.

What is Required for the Settlement in the Future?

654. Development in and around KDBH is not only an opportunity for the settlement to play a part in accommodating the wider needs of the Borough, but also to accommodate a scale of development that is capable of supporting infrastructure provision that can help play a part in dealing with existing issues and provide the necessary facilities for future residents. In particular the following areas are identified:

655. **Improved Public Transport** – A higher population gives greater potential for improved public transport services to be viable, e.g. better frequency of bus services.

656. **Parking Improvements** – The provision of appropriate additional off-street parking may be considered in centres. In addition, decked parking at Dorridge railway station could be considered in order to increase capacity and alleviate the impact of commuter parking on

surrounding roads. Options to provide park and ride facilities will also be encouraged where appropriate.

657. **Highway Improvements** – Traffic in the settlement is set to increase over the Plan period, even without any new development. Additional traffic growth as a result of site allocations is likely to exacerbate this situation and highway improvements will be required at various locations. Approvals or resolutions to grant permission have included both site-specific highway works and financial contributions towards wider transport improvements set out in the Knowle Transport Study. This study will be updated and expanded to have regard to possible wider impacts across Dorridge and Bentley Heath as well as Knowle.

658. **Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity** – Enhancements to encourage and promote walking and cycling in the settlement, particularly towards the local centres, schools and public transport will be required. Developments will be expected to ensure that walking and cycling connectivity is provided both within and beyond the site boundary, linking in with the existing and proposed cycle and walking networks identified in the Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy, as well as routes for recreation.

659. **New Education Provision** – Given the additional pressure for school places that will be generated as a result of further development in the settlement, a new primary school will be required in Knowle. Whilst the provision of secondary school places is theoretically sufficient to meet existing demand, the current infrastructure constraints of Arden Academy affect how efficiently it can be used in the future. The academy has a largely ageing built estate (particularly its supporting infrastructure (including kitchen/dining space and other supporting facilities)) and an undersized site relative to current DfE standards. The school is part of the Government's School Rebuilding Programme and any additional growth within the settlement is likely to place further pressure on demand for school places.

660. As part of the development proposals on land south of Knowle (also known as site KN2 in the previously withdrawn 2020 Local Plan), land will be made available for the wider redevelopment of Arden Academy to maximise its potential and allow for future expansion if this proves necessary. Additional primary school provision is also required to support the level of growth in the settlement and developer contributions will be expected to deliver this. Land has been made available for a primary school site on land formerly known as KN2 as part of an outline planning permission for 450 dwellings.

661. **Play and Open Space** – Provision of play and areas of open space within potential development sites will be required. There is also a need to ensure that best use is made of existing green and blue infrastructure assets within development sites, together with provision for linkages to the surrounding area.

662. **Sport and Recreation** – Replacement of any lost recreation / sports provision as a result of development will be required to an equivalent or better standard, including access and use by the wider community where appropriate. It has been identified that a sports hub to serve the new development in and around the settlement should be provided. This is set out under policy SMBC/D2.

663. **Green Space Improvements** – In accordance with the NPPF and the 'golden rules', opportunities for the provision and improvement of local green space that is accessible and of high quality will be maximised.

664. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

665. **Community Infrastructure Levy** – As the area is covered by 'made' Neighbourhood Plan, 25% of the levy collected will be spent in the area. The Local Authority will engage with the local community and agree with them how best to spend the funding, which could be used to take forward appropriate projects that the community have identified as priorities through the Neighbourhood Plan for example. This can include simple, relatively low-cost actions (e.g. further traffic regulation orders) through to more substantial projects.

666. **Affordable Housing and Smaller Market Homes** – Affordable housing will be required on development sites (in accordance with the Local Plan) and smaller market homes for younger people wishing to stay in the area will be sought.

Proposed Approach

667. Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath is a town identified for expansion. Given that the opportunities to develop on previously developed land in KDBH are extremely limited, Green Belt release will be required, and a redefined Green Belt boundary will need to be established. In accordance with national planning policy, such boundaries should be defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be defensible. Sites that are close to the existing settlement or are / can be well-served by public transport will be preferable, subject to their performance against the purposes in evidence base and constraints.

668. Sites where there are multiple and potentially complex land assembly issues and sites where the cumulative impacts of their development will impact the settlement will need to be considered collaboratively and comprehensively to ensure a quality development is delivered and that contributions are made to the provision of the required infrastructure.

Recent Planning Applications

669. A number of recent planning applications need to be highlighted as they are relevant to how the settlement will develop in the future, and they will have implications for determining what an appropriate amended boundary to the Green Belt ought to be. The proposals include the following:

Development of up to 845 dwellings (including 170 extra care units) dwellings on Land South of Knowle / Land to the West of Warwick Road

670. Outline planning permission on part of this Green Belt site that was an allocation in the 2020 plan known as KN2, has been granted for up to 450 dwellings. It also includes land for a primary school, infrastructure and open space.

671. Additionally, on another part of KN2, hybrid planning permission has been granted for the construction of an integrated retirement community of up to 170 extra care units (use class C2) with ancillary communal and care facilities, village centre and green space.

672. A resolution to grant outline planning permission, subject to a S106 Agreement, has also been made on a further area of KN2 for the erection of up to 200 dwellings. It includes landscaping and new vehicular and pedestrian access from Warwick Road, and a land parcel for future development at Arden Academy.

673. The remaining area of previous draft site allocation KN2, as identified for residential purposes, is also now the subject of a full planning application for the erection of 25 dwellings. This has not yet been determined.

Policy SMBC/KN1A: Land North of Hampton Road, Knowle

1. The site is allocated for 138 dwellings.

2. Development of the site should be consistent with the following principles:

   A Preserving the setting of the Grade I Listed Grimshaw Hall. Development should be set back from the immediate locality to avoid harm. Only if harm cannot be avoided should mitigation be considered, and then it should be fully justified and demonstrated to be successful in reducing harm;

   B Provision public open space in accordance with the Council's Open Space Assessment and any future revisions. Any formal play features will need to be sympathetic to the historic setting of Grimshaw Hall;

   C Retention of trees and hedgerows along Hampton Road to conserve the character of this approach into Knowle;

   D Retention of Local Wildlife Sites and provision of an appropriate buffer to Purnells Brook Woodland Local Wildlife Site. No development will be permitted on the Local Wildlife Site.

   E Provision of suitable SuDS and flood risk management. Development should be located outside of the areas identified as being higher risk flood zones.

   F Pedestrian and cycle connectivity within and beyond the site boundary

3 Infrastructure requirements should include:

   A Financial contribution to new and improved education provision in Knowle

   B Highway improvements as required including speed reduction measures and access improvements along Hampton Road, and highway capacity improvements at the A4141 junction;

   C Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Knowle centre and the Grand Union Canal towpath.

   D Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

Justification

674. The allocation lies immediately adjacent to the built-up area of the settlement, to the north of Hampton Road, with residential development already present on two sides. The allocation constitutes a 'rounding- off' of the settlement in a logical manner by continuing the Green Belt boundary on from the rear of the properties along Wychwood Avenue, down to Hampton Road. The site lies within a parcel identified as potential grey belt in the Council's July 2026 Green Belt Assessment.

675. The site is located immediately opposite the front elevation of the Grade I listed Grimshaw Hall. Evidence from the Council's Heritage Impact Assessment recognises the significance of this important heritage asset and identifies potential harm to its setting as a result of development in the immediate vicinity. It is therefore recommended that development should be confined to the western part of the site between the former hedge lines (now removed) and Purnell's Brook. The areas between Hampton Road and limits of any new development should be landscaped as amenity areas to enhance the setting of the Hall. In making the recommendations, the guiding principle is to ensure that development cannot be seen from within the grounds of Grimshaw Hall.

676. The site is subject to some further constraints including Purnells Brook Woodland Local Wildlife Site, which runs along the extreme northwestern edge of the site, as well as a number of significant trees. These will need to be carefully considered in the design of any future scheme. No development will be permitted on, and an appropriate buffer should be provided to the Purnells Brook Woodland LWS. Development should be limited to those parts of the site that are located outside the higher flood zones.

677. The site performs very well in overall accessibility terms and there is good access to all key facilities in Knowle. Development will be expected to build on this and ensure that walking and cycling connectivity is provided both within and beyond the site boundary, linking in with the existing and proposed cycle and walking networks identified in the Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy. Measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport such as the provision of pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Knowle village centre and the Grand Union Canal towpath will be expected.

678. The allocation is in an area with medium landscape character sensitivity and low visual sensitivity. The landscape value of the area is medium with an overall low landscape capacity to accommodate new development.

679. The site is in a sustainable location, adjacent to a rural town with an extensive range of services and facilities.

Policy SMBC/KN1B: Land South of Hampton Road, Knowle

1 The site is allocated for 55 dwellings.

2 Replacement sports provision.

A The existing sports provision and football pitches currently on site that are occupied by Knowle Football Club shall be relocated. The site will not be available for redevelopment until the existing pitches have been re-provided and are ready for use, at a suitable location within the vicinity of the existing site.

B Appropriate facilities associated with the reprovision may be permitted in the Green Belt, provided the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with Green Belt purposes.

3 Development of the site should be consistent with the following principles:

A Provision public open space in accordance with the Council's Open Space Assessment and any future revisions;

B Retention of trees and hedgerows along Hampton Road to conserve the character of this approach into Knowle;

C Provision of suitable SuDS and flood risk management.

D Pedestrian and cycle connectivity within and beyond the site boundary

4 Infrastructure requirements should include:

A Financial contribution to new and improved education provision in Knowle;

B Reprovision of the existing sports pitches;

C Highway improvements as required including speed reduction measures and access improvements along Hampton Road, and highway capacity improvements at the A4141 junction;

D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Knowle centre and the Grand Union Canal towpath.

E Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

Justification

680. The site lies to the south of Hampton Road, immediately adjacent to the built-up area of the settlement, with residential properties directly opposite. Development of the site would represent a continuation of development along Hampton Road but would not extend as far as the existing residential development on the opposite side. The site is relatively well-contained, and a defensible Green Belt boundary could be established.

681. The site currently accommodates Knowle Football Club. It has been recognised that the club's current facilities present significant challenges, particularly around pitch availability given the growth in teams at the club. The club has been exploring options to relocate to new premises and allocating the site in the plan provides more certainty around the future development potential of the current site and enables the club's aspirations for its disposal to be realised with realistic options for relocation.

682. The current playing pitches will need to be re-provided and available for use prior to the redevelopment of the existing football club site.

683. The site is within parcel 31 of the July 2026 GBA. The parcel as a whole is not identified as grey belt because of its strong performance against Green Belt purpose D (preserving the setting and historic character of towns). It is however recognised that the site itself is a small part of the wider parcel and lies a significant distance from the Knowle Conservation Area and the heritage assets within it. There is no intervisibility between the site, and the conservation area and development would not encroach upon the conservation area or any key views into or out of it. As such, the site in isolation is not considered to perform strongly. The site also includes elements of previously developed land.

684. The allocation is in an area with medium landscape character sensitivity and low visual sensitivity. The landscape value of the area is medium with an overall low landscape capacity to accommodate new development.

685. The site is located in a sustainable location, adjacent to a rural town with an extensive range of services and facilities and is therefore considered suitable for allocation.

Policy SMBC/KN2: Safeguarding Land for Arden Academy

1 Land as identified on the Policies Map shall be safeguarded for education uses in connection with the expansion/redevelopment of facilities at Arden Academy.

Justification

686. As noted in proceeding paragraphs, permissions are now largely in place for the residential development of the wider site known as KN2 (Land South of Knowle), which was proposed as an allocation in the 2020 plan. Part of the overall policy approach set out within the 2020 plan is that land would be made available for the expansion/redevelopment of Arden Academy to ensure sufficient space is available for both quantitative and qualitative improvements to facilities at the site.

687. Following the withdrawal of the 2020 plan in October 2024 the Council worked with the respective landowner's/site promoters and an indicative land use masterplan was produced and consulted on in Autumn 2024. This was latterly endorsed at Cabinet in December 2024 and helped provide a basis upon which subsequent planning applications have been considered. This included the provision of 1.8 ha of land being identified for transfer to the Council, primarily in connection with the development of 200 dwellings on land west of Warwick Road[55] but also linked by way of condition to the other associated applications. In all cases this has been given significant positive weight when the applications were considered, helping support cases of Very Special circumstances. The Council remain in active engagement with all parties, and the land is expected to be formally transferred (on a phased basis) later this year.



[55] Planning application reference 2025/00155.

Broad Locations[56]

KN3 - Land around Dorridge Railway Station

688. NDMPs S5 (1)(h): Principle of development outside settlement and GB7 (1)(h): Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, now support development within reasonable walking distances of railway stations and as such development consistent with these national policies can be expected to come forward in this settlement. This will include development around Dorridge station and as such it is included as a broad location in this plan.

[56] See Policy SMBC/HO2: Broad Locations for the policy wording relating to these areas.

Meriden

The Settlement Now

689. Meriden is located approximately 9km to the east of Solihull Town Centre and the wider parish forms the north-eastern corner of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, bordering Coventry to the east and North Warwickshire to the north. It lies in the rural 'gap' between the Coventry and Birmingham conurbations (known as the 'Meriden Gap').

690. The main settlements within the Parish are Meriden Village itself (where approximately two thirds of the population of the Parish live), Millison's Wood (approximately 1.5km to the east of Meriden Village) and Eaves Green. At the 2022 Census, the parish had a population of approximately 3,246 residents living in 1,324 households, representing growth from the 2011 Census when the population was around 2,800 and there were approximately 1,220 households. Further residential development has subsequently been permitted within the parish, including 75 affordable dwellings at land east of Maxstoke Lane, which commenced construction in 2025.



691. The A45 (Birmingham to Coventry Road) crosses through the Parish just to the north of Meriden Village. It is located approximately 2.5km to the east of junction 6 of the M42 and the entrance to the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham International Airport and Birmingham International Rail Station. Meriden benefits from regular bus services, with the National Express West Midlands X1 route providing frequent connections between Birmingham and Coventry via Birmingham Airport and the NEC. In addition, a Stagecoach service provides links to Solihull and Coventry, while the Flexibus service connects Meriden with neighbouring rural settlements. These services provide access to key employment, retail, education and transport hubs, although service frequencies are generally lower during evenings and weekends than during daytime periods.

692. The settlement derives its special character from its rural setting and its historical roots. There are two conservation areas: Meriden Green Conservation Area (including the village green at the centre of the settlement and the 'old' village located on Meriden Hill with its cluster of listed buildings including the church of St Laurence.

693. The area surrounding the village of Meriden is predominantly Green Belt. It is a mix of agricultural land and woodland (parts of the former Forest of Arden) with some large sand and gravel extraction quarries to the west.

694. The village has a small local centre around the Village Green, providing a range of shops and services including a recently developed sports and play facility on the south-west side of the Green and the Meriden Practice GP surgery. The village is also served by Meriden Church of England Primary School which accommodates up to 200 pupils. The nearest secondary school is Heart of England Secondary School located in Balsall Common.

695. The Meriden Neighbourhood Development Plan was approved by local referendum in May 2021 and was formally "made" by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council in June 2021. The Plan now forms part of the statutory development plan for the area and is used alongside the Solihull Local Plan in the determination of planning applications within the parish.

The Settlement in the Future

696. Meriden is identified as a village within Solihull's rural settlement hierarchy and serves an important role as a sustainable rural community with a range of local services, community facilities and public transport connections. The village benefits from its proximity to the A45, M42, Birmingham Airport, Birmingham International railway station and the NEC, providing good accessibility to employment, services and public transport.

697. The village supports a range of local facilities including a primary school, GP surgery, village centre and recreation facilities. Any additional community, retail or service provision should be directed towards the village centre and other accessible locations to reinforce the sustainability of the settlement and support the day-to-day needs of residents.

698. The distinctive historic and rural character of Meriden remains one of its defining features and should be conserved and enhanced. Particular regard should be given to the significance of the Meriden Green and Meriden Hill Conservation Areas, together with the wider landscape setting of the village and its heritage assets

699. The principal constraints to development remain the surrounding Green Belt, the Borough boundary, immediately north of the village and environmental, heritage and landscape considerations affecting the parish. This includes the mineral safeguarding area (sand and gravel) located to the west. The Council's 2026 Green Belt Assessment has replaced the previous 2016 Strategic Green Belt Assessment and reflects the requirements of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, including consideration of 'grey belt' land.

700. The Meriden Neighbourhood Development Plan (made June 2021) also includes a Local Housing Needs Assessment which should help inform any housing proposals for the settlement.

701. The High Speed 2 (HS2) route will pass approximately 3km to the west of Meriden serving the new Interchange Station located adjacent to the NEC, Birmingham International Airport and Birmingham International Station. The Interchange Station will be approximately 4km to the north-west of Meriden and remains under construction. Construction activity associated with

HS2 is expected to continue in the area for a number of years and may affect traffic movements. In the longer term, the operation of the Interchange Station is likely to increase accessibility and could place additional pressure on local services and housing demand in nearby settlements, including Meriden.

What is Required for the Settlement in the Future

702. **Development Principles -** Any development within or adjoining Meriden should contribute positively towards meeting the Borough's housing needs whilst supporting the long-term sustainability of the parish. Development should respond to local needs identified through the Meriden Neighbourhood Plan, particularly in relation to housing mix, affordability, infrastructure capacity, environmental quality, biodiversity enhancement and respect and maintain the distinctive rural character of the settlement through appropriate design, scale and layout.

703. **Local Infrastructure Requirements –** Meriden benefits from a range of local facilities; however, future development must be supported by proportionate assessment of infrastructure capacity. Proposals should demonstrate that sufficient capacity exists, or can be provided, in local schools, healthcare facilities, transport networks, utilities and community facilities. Contributions towards infrastructure improvements will be required where development generates additional demand.

704. **Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity** – New development will be expected to deliver safe, attractive and accessible walking, wheeling and cycling connections both within development sites and to destinations beyond site boundaries. Priority should be given to improving access to local facilities, schools, public transport services, recreational routes and surrounding settlements. Development should contribute towards the delivery of the Council's active travel objectives and provide connections to existing and future walking and cycling networks.

705. **Local Aspirations –** The Meriden Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (made in June 2021) forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough. Development proposals should demonstrate how they respond to the objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. These include protecting the character of the parish, supporting local infrastructure, maintaining the Green Belt, improving sustainable transport options, addressing environmental issues and providing housing that meets identified local needs, including affordable housing and accommodation suitable for older people.

706. **Local Housing Need –** The Meriden Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting Local Housing Needs Assessment provide important evidence regarding local housing requirements. Housing proposals should demonstrate how they respond to the latest evidence of local need and contribute to creating balanced and sustainable communities

707. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

708. **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) –** As Meriden has an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council is entitled to receive 25% of relevant Community Infrastructure Levy receipts arising from development within the parish. These funds provide an important opportunity to support local infrastructure improvements, community facilities, environmental enhancements and other projects identified as local priorities

709. The settlement is suitable for consideration for limited growth. This reflects the sensitive environmental nature of the area, the character of the villages and the need to manage the capacity and viability of local infrastructure.

710. A mix of market and affordable housing and specialist housing to meet the needs of older people should be provided in the settlement. There will need to be a careful balance struck between making the most efficient use of land and respecting the character of the local area

Proposed Allocations

711. Planning permission was granted in May 2024 for 75 affordable dwellings at land off Maxstoke Lane/Birmingham Road on the western edge of Meriden and construction commenced in 2025. The development provides a significant contribution towards identified local housing needs, particularly affordable housing and represents a major expansion of Meriden's housing stock. A small parcel of land fronting the Birmingham Road remains without planning consent having originally formed part of the ME1 allocation. This remains referenced within the table at Para 142 and Row 12 of the housing land supply table (para 109) and has a capacity of c10 dwellings. Provisions within the 2024 consent would ensure access into this site from the newly adopted highway as part of the existing consented development. This land will be removed from the Green Belt alongside the wider Maxstoke Lane/Birmingham Road development.

712. No further allocations in Meriden are proposed in this Plan.

North of the Borough

Castle Bromwich and Marston Green

713. Castle Bromwich and Marston Green are popular mature residential suburbs which are generally affluent in character with good schools, strong local centres and lower than average unemployment levels in the Borough. Both areas are largely characterised by relatively high house prices and a shortage of affordable housing. Modern estates within both of these suburbs tend to be open plan with a cul-de-sac layout and with a mix of predominantly semi-detached and detached properties.

714. Castle Bromwich has had a more historic pattern of development including traditional Victorian and Edwardian development.



715. Marston Green is more mixed in character benefitting from natural areas including a small watercourse and the Green Belt buffer. It is bounded by significant commercial development at Birmingham Airport and Birmingham Business Park and has areas occupied by more traditional business premises. The railway runs through the edge of the area with Marston Green Station providing access to Birmingham International, Birmingham and Coventry.

Chelmsley Wood, Fordbridge, Kingshurst & Smith's Wood

716. In contrast to the rest of the Borough there is part of North Solihull (covering the wards of Chelmsley Wood; Fordbridge; and Kingshurst & Smith's Wood) that has a high proportion of local neighbourhoods within the 10% most deprived in the country and some in the bottom 5%. The area is largely characterised by 1960's housing estates arranged around parking courtyards, small green spaces and precinct shopping areas. The separation of pedestrian and car access via a mix of subways and dual carriageways has resulted in poorly overlooked amenity spaces and pedestrian routes. This has contributed to antisocial behaviour, an increased fear of crime and an overall reduction in the quality of environment.

717. Since 2005 the area has been the subject of a large regeneration programme. This has delivered significant improvements to the area providing more than 1,710 new homes (social and private) on 40 different sites as well as a range of other improvements including two new

village centres, six new primary schools, six parks and improved green space and play facilities. Development has included the demolition of a large amount of unsuitable housing stock including 5 high-rise blocks. Alongside the physical regeneration, socio-economic programmes have been developed to support the local community and voluntary organisations. Important improvements have been secured in Key Stage 2 and 4 educational attainment and locally based job creation.



718. The area does benefit from a network of natural spaces including woodlands, nature reserves and parks which make up the setting of the River Cole. These are important features which influence the availability and focus of further opportunities for development in the future.

719. The North Solihull area has also been identified as part of the wider UK Central Solihull proposals (as one of the four interconnected economic opportunity zones) as an area with potential to benefit from the significant development proposed at the adjacent UK Central Hub. This will be dependent on addressing accessibility barriers both in terms of transport links in and out of the area and a relatively poor skills / training base within the area.

The Settlements in the Future

720. The residential areas of Castle Bromwich and Marston Green are already largely built up and as such there are limited opportunities for further development without compromising the quality of the environment and existing open spaces.

721. Although of limited scope, there is an opportunity for small scale growth within reasonable walking distance of the station at Marston Green. This has been identified as a broad location below.

722. In the Marston Green area industrial restructuring may mean brownfield sites currently occupied by traditional employment uses could become available later in the plan period however there is considerable uncertainty over this. The NEC and Birmingham Airport are significant assets on the edge of the area which together with the UK Central proposals including the HS2 interchange station will provide extensive economic growth during and beyond the plan period. The wider benefits of the proposals may result in opportunities for redevelopment within Marston Green. However, it will be necessary to ensure any development both within and adjacent to the area is sensitive to the existing residential character. The need to ensure an appropriate buffer between neighbouring large scale proposals and the existing built form should be incorporated into proposals.

723. In North Solihull the success of the extensive regeneration programme continues to be built upon with schemes being developed to improve existing facilities including Kingshurst Village Centre and Chelmsley Wood Town Centre. The SLP (2013) had a particular focus on the North Solihull Regeneration Area, and it released a number of Green Belt sites to support the regeneration programme. These have mostly been developed out. As a consequence of this strategy the remaining opportunities are focussed on development of the Simon Digby site, redevelopment opportunities and village/town centre redevelopment.

724. Access to employment opportunities, improving the skills base and environmental enhancements will be key issues when assessing potential opportunities.

What is required for the Settlements in the Future?

725. The suburbs would benefit from opportunities to expand the mix and affordability of housing however the lack of sites opportunities for development will impact on the extent to which this can be achieved.

726. Future development in North Solihull, described above, will provide the opportunity to further address existing issues relating to:

727. **Improving the skills base and access to employment**– The North Solihull area itself has very limited employment and commercial floor space and with car ownership lower than in other parts of the Borough access to jobs is limited. North Solihull forms one of the four zones identified through the UK Central programme which seeks to redistribute the benefits of the wider scheme.

728. **Improving the mix and quality of housing –** Although the regeneration programme brought about significant achievements, there is still opportunity to seek improvements in the quality of the housing stock and to ensure a wider mix in the type and tenure of housing. The ability to deliver improvements may be affected by economic viability and require different delivery mechanisms**.**

Improvements to Chelmsley Wood Town Centre and Kingshurst Village Centre

729. A masterplan has been approved for the Northwest Quarter of Chelmsley Wood Town Centre (CWTC). The Council is developing a long-term plan to ensure that Chelmsley Wood Town Centre continues to thrive and meet the needs of the local community. A concept masterplan for phased delivery of the site was prepared and approved by Cabinet in January 2023. The CWTC Phase 1 North-West Quarter project forms a key part of the Chelmsley Wood Town Centre Masterplan and is intended to support the long-term regeneration of the town centre. The project seeks to unlock underutilised brownfield land and deliver a vibrant mixed-use

development comprising a discount food store, residential development, commercial units, improved public realm and enhanced pedestrian connections to the existing shopping centre. These improvements are intended to increase footfall, attract investment, improve health and wellbeing outcomes, and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Since development of the masterplan, significant changes in the ownership of neighbouring land have impacted project progression. In particular, the acquisition of the shopping centre by new owners in 2023. The project also requires ongoing engagement with additional landowners, including West Midlands Police, to support future phases of development.

730. Phased delivery of the redevelopment of Kingshurst village centre is being undertaken, with Phase 1 having been completed in 2024. Phase 2 is due to commence development before the end of 2026 with later phases to follow after. The phased regeneration of the village centre is being delivered in accordance with planning consent granted in 2022.



731. **Improving access to public transport -** The provision of a well-integrated public transport system is key to provide access to jobs and facilities outside the area. It is proposed that as part of the development of the UK Central Hub there will be improvements which will provide access to the facilities and opportunities presented by the new development.

732. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

733. **Public space enhancements –** There are still pockets of the built-up area which would benefit from environmental enhancement to improve amenity and sense of place. It is important that public realm improvements continue to be pursued as part of the redevelopment of the remaining sites and that any further regeneration opportunities do not compromise existing public open spaces such as playing pitches, unless the impacts can be mitigated. The supply of open space is already constrained therefore finding replacement facilities in the local area will be challenging.

Proposed Approach

734. There have been no suitable sites identified in Castle Bromwich and any future development is likely to be confined to smaller previously developed infill sites with potential limited

opportunities to increase the mix and affordability of the housing stock. These would be more likely to come forward as windfall sites.

735. In Marston Green the availability of sites is further constrained by the presence of significant recreation assets, which make up the setting of the settlement. In addition, the Green Belt in this area provides an important open space buffer between built up areas and commercial premises to the south and east of the area thus preserving the identities of the settlements.

736. Development opportunities in North Solihull are focused on the remaining regeneration sites largely identified by the North Solihull Regeneration programme. These options are mainly on brownfield sites, which support the Council's strategic vision for promoting economic growth, local centres and making best use of previously developed land.

Recent Planning Applications

SLP Site 3 – Simon Digby, Chelmsley Wood (capacity 200)

737. This site was allocated for residential development in the adopted 2013 Local Plan (SLP site 3). Planning permission was granted in 2026 for 177 affordable dwellings, and the site is currently under construction.

Kingshurst village Centre

738. Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of Kingshurst local centre and for the development of a new mixed-use local centre including up to 79 residential units.

739. The residential development on the site of the former public house has been completed, and it is expected that the next phase (community, heath and retail hub) will commence before the end of the year.

740. This site was previously allocated in Policy NS1 – Kingshurst Village Centre in the Draft 2020 Local Plan

Broad Locations[57]

NS2 - Land around Marston Green

741. NDMPs S5 (1)(h): Principle of development outside settlement and GB7 (1)(h): Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, now support development within reasonable walking distances of railway stations and as such development consistent with these national policies can be expected to come forward in this settlement. This will include development around Marston Green station and as such it is included as a broad location in this plan.

[57] See Policy SMBC/HO2: Broad Locations for the policy wording relating to these areas.

Solihull Town Centre & Mature Suburbs

The Area Now

742. Solihull Town Centre is a strong, vibrant and regionally important Centre containing a wide variety of shops, businesses and civic services. The 'mature suburbs' area that forms part of the urban area includes the largely residential suburbs of Elmdon, Hillfield, Lyndon, Monkspath, Olton, Shirley, and Solihull. These areas benefit from good schools and strong local centres.

743. The Mature Suburbs adjoin Birmingham to the west and north, with countryside that is part of the Meriden Gap and the M42 to the east, and Green Belt to the south.

744. The Mature Suburbs are characterised by Victorian and Edwardian development, the Grand Union canal and railway network, a tighter urban grain, extensive gardens and parks. There are also substantial recreational facilities, such as Olton, Robin Hood and Widney Manor golf clubs and Olton Mere. More modern housing estates are characterised by an open plan, cul-de-sac layout with on-plot parking and a predominance of detached and semi-detached properties. Shirley Town Centre provides for much of the needs of the west of the area, and has benefitted from significant investment at its heart, whilst there are district centres at Hobs Moat, Hatchford Brook, Shelly Farm and Olton. This area is home to a variety of employment opportunities located in the Solihull and Fore Business Parks and JLR, as well as in the established Cranmore and Monkspath area.

745. Solihull Town Centre is enriched by its attractive historic core of St. Alphege church, the Square and the High Street, and contains retail, commercial and cultural facilities. To the north and south of the Town Centre, the more modern retail developments of the 1960s precinct style Mell Square and the early 21st Century Touchwood development broaden its offer. To the south and east lie Malvern and Brueton Parks, which provide extensive areas of land for informal recreation within walking distance of the Town Centre. Tudor Grange Park to the south-west provides opportunities for more formal sport and recreation.

746. Both the 2006 UDP and 2013 SLP identified large scale development opportunities for Shirley town centre that made provision for significant new residential development to be provided. The Parkgate scheme opened in 2014, and redevelopment of the Powergen site is now complete.

747. There is an extensive educational campus to the south-west of Solihull Town Centre containing Alderbrook, St Peter's and Tudor Grange secondary schools, together with Solihull College. Immediately to the north of the Town Centre is Solihull School. On the edge of the Mature Suburbs to the south of the Town Centre is the Sixth Form College. These establishments are located within walking distance of Solihull Town Centre. The north of the area is catered for by Lode Heath and Lyndon schools, whilst Langley and Light Hall schools provide secondary education in the west and south. Many of the schools suffer from traffic congestion at opening and closing times.

748. Solihull has a transport interchange at the Western edge of the town centre which has a bus interchange and rail services to Birmingham, Leamington Spa and London, together with the Borough's main bus interchange. This rail line also serves Olton and Hillfield/Monkspath at Widney Manor. There is also a rail station west of Shirley with services to Birmingham and Stratford.

The Area in the Future

749. The Mature Suburbs are substantially developed with few opportunities for significant growth. Being mainly residential, there are relatively few brownfield land opportunities. The Town Centre, which has grown significantly for a generation, is likely to experience some restructuring with opportunities for a wider range of uses including residential.

What is Required for the Area in the Future?

750. There are limited opportunities for growth in the Mature Suburbs reflecting the built-up nature of the area, and the importance of maintaining the attractive open spaces that are so important to the Borough's character and well-being.

751. **Restructuring of Solihull Town Centre** – The 2020 Solihull Town Centre Master plan highlighted opportunities for alternative uses whilst ensuring that sufficient land is retained for retail and commercial uses. The masterplan highlights the potential for the identified opportunity sites to accommodate significant levels of residential development, and there are likely to be other windfall sites that come forward as the town centre evolves.

752. Large scale redevelopment proposals at Mell Square have now got the benefit of planning permission and the development to be known as Holbeche Place is expected to commence before the end of the year.



753. **Improving accessibility to and around Solihull Town Centre** - A key challenge will be to manage the anticipated increase in traffic in the area, especially around Solihull Town Centre and the major road corridors. The Council is undertaking studies looking at key junctions within and close to the Town Centre. However, encouraging more people to use public transport, cycling and walking, rather than the private car for journeys to the Town Centre will

be essential. Improving routes to/from the Town Centre and links to the adjacent parks for cyclists and pedestrians would help to make these alternative modes of travel more attractive.

754. **Development Opportunities in Shirley Town Centre** – Following completion of the Parkgate development and redevelopment of the Powergen site, there are limited opportunities for further large-scale developments, and therefore any further residential dwellings are likely to arise from windfall developments.

755. **Re-use of Land allocated for Business/Retail Purposes** – There are areas of older industrial estates that may be recycled for new uses, such as at Cranmore to the west and Lode Lane to the north. Most of the available land for business use has been developed, and some business areas may be available for alternative uses.

756. **Sports and Recreation** - It has been identified that a sports hub to serve the new development in and around Solihull should be provided. This is set out under policy SMBC/D2.

757. **Health provision** – The Council is working with the BSOL ICB to establish the impact of new development on local GPs and other services, and how this can be addressed.

758. **Community Infrastructure Levy** – Presently in areas like the Mature Suburbs and Solihull Town Centre which are not covered by a town or parish council,15% of the collected funds will be spent in the area. The Local Authority will engage with the local community and agree with them how best to spend the funding. This can include simple relatively low cost actions through to more substantial projects. Site SO1 is dealt with in this chapter, as it functions as an extension of the urban area, but as noted elsewhere, the area is located within Hampton in Arden parish and therefore the Parish Council will directly receive a proportion of CIL from the site.

759. **Provision of affordable housing** – This will be challenging given the lack of significant opportunities for new housing in the Mature Suburbs. However, opportunities for housing will be identified through the refreshed Town Centre Master plan and the urban extension to the east, which will provide a proportion of affordable housing.

Proposed Approach

760. Whilst significant retail or commercial growth in the Town Centre is unlikely, retaining the existing Town Centre boundary will provide opportunities for a broader range of uses. Given that the Town Centre is the most accessible location in the Borough, it will be important that uses that attract significant numbers of visitors will be able to find sites there. However, there are likely to be opportunities for significant residential or mixed residential and commercial uses. Higher densities can be accommodated as owning a car in this highly accessible location will not be essential.

761. A mix of market and affordable housing, as well as smaller market homes for young people wishing to remain in the area, and specialist housing to meet the needs of older people will be provided in the settlement. This will seek to align the types and sizes of homes to be made available and the needs of the community. However, there will need to be a careful balance struck between making the most efficient use of land and respecting the character of the local area.

762. Some of the sites, in particular site SO1 (East of Solihull), have multiple and potential complex land assembly issues. It is important that sites such as this are considered in a comprehensive manner to avoid piecemeal developments occurring. This needn't necessarily preclude a

phased approach where one parcel of land or part of a site may be available for development in advance of another, but this should be in accordance with an approach agreed by the Council and all relevant landowners/development promoters. This will include joint responsibility for the provision of infrastructure, and this latter point will also be relevant to other sites around the village which also need to ensure they contribute towards the provision of the required infrastructure.

Proposed Allocations

Policy SMBC/SO1: East of Solihull

1. The site is allocated for 770 dwellings.

2. Development of this site should be broadly consistent with the **following** principles**:**

   A Preserving the setting of the Grade II listed Field Farm and 239 Lugtrout Lane. Development should be set back from the immediate locality to avoid harm. Only if harm cannot be avoided should mitigation be considered, and then it should be fully justified and demonstrated to be successful in reducing harm;

   B Provision of public open space and a range of play areas for children and young people in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and future revisions. Any formal play features will need to be sympathetic to the historic setting of Field Farm and 239 Lugtrout Lane;

   C Retention of existing sports pitch.

   D On site accommodation for older people in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO5

   E 5% of open market dwellings to be provided in the form of Self and Custom Build Plots in accordance with Policy SMBC/HO4.

3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:

   A Financial contribution to education provision as required by the Local Education Authority;

   B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).

   C Highway improvements as required including speed reduction measures and access improvements along Damson Parkway and Lugtrout Lane

   D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Solihull Town Centre and Elmdon.

   E Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

Justification

763. This allocation takes the form of an urban extension close to Solihull Town Centre. It will be located on land to the rear of the ribbon development that fronts the northern side of Hampton Lane. As a revision to the site put forward in the previous plan, the northern boundary of the site is now intended to be formed by the Grand Union canal. This will enable the land between Lugtrout Lane and the canal to come forward for development, reflective of a recent planning consent granted for 50 dwellings in 2026[58]. The eastern boundary of the site will be formed by Field Lane.

764. The allocation lies within the Green Belt, and it is immediately adjacent to the built-up area of the settlement and would represent a continuation of the existing developed area. The site lies within a parcel of moderately performing Green Belt and is influenced by built development either within the site, or in the immediate vicinity to the site. The site is relatively well-contained, and a defensible Green Belt boundary could be provided using the Grand Union Canal and Field Lane.

765. The site performs well in terms of accessibility to all key services and facilities, as well as public transport and the scale of any proposed development could see public transport improvements secured.

766. The Landscape Assessment (2016) states that the area on the fringe of Solihull has medium landscape value and medium overall sensitivity to new development. Careful mitigation of Heritage assets is required for the site, including the Grade II Listed Field Farm and 239 Lugtrout Lane. Development will need to consider these assets in the design of any future scheme.

767. Playing pitches on the site are currently occupied by Coldlands Colts Boys FC and will need to be retained.

768. This site appears in the Solihull chapter as it functions as an extension to the urban area, but it should be noted that it falls within the parish of Hampton in Arden.

Policy SMBC/SO2: Moat Lane Depot

1. The site is allocated for 99 dwellings.

2. Development of this site should be broadly consistent with the following principles:

   A Provision of public open space and a range of play areas for children and young people in accordance with the Open Space Assessment and future revisions.

   B An integrated drainage, landscape and ecological strategy should be developed for the site, which seeks to remedy the drainage is issues on the site as an opportunity to enhance place-making

3. Likely infrastructure requirements will include:

   A Financial contribution to education provision as required by the Local Education Authority;

[58] PL/2024/00037/PPOL – approved July 2026

B Developer contributions to primary and secondary care health services in conjunction with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB).

C Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity towards Solihull Town Centre

D On site doorstep play facilities

E Surface water flood mitigation including an integrated drainage, landscape and ecological strategy, seeking to support place-making on the site.

F Financial contribution to provision of new playing pitches and contributions to enhancement of existing recreational facilities, to accord with the requirements identified in the Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy.

Justification

769. This brownfield site is located in the urban area and is formed from the existing Council depot and industrial estate, which are expected to become available during the Plan period. The site performs well in terms of accessibility to all key services and facilities, as well as public transport.

Broad Locations[59]

SO3 - Land around Widney Manor Station

770. NDMPs S5 (1)(h): Principle of development outside settlement and GB7 (1)(h) Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, now support development within reasonable walking distances of railway stations and as such development consistent with these national policies can be expected to come forward in this settlement. This will include development around Widney Manor station and as such it is included as a broad location in this plan.

[59] See Policy SMBC/HO2: Broad Locations for the policy wording relating to these areas.

UK Central Solihull

The Area Now

771. The area known as the UK Central Hub is a significant contributor to the wider West Midlands economy and a transport hub for the Midlands Engine. The Hub is focussed on the main economic assets located around junction 6 of the M42. The principal elements are as follows:

- Arden Cross Land including the site of the HS2 interchange
- Birmingham Airport
- The NEC
- Jaguar Land Rover
- Birmingham Business Park

772. The Hub forms part of the wider UK Central Solihull concept which comprises of four interconnected economic opportunity zones. Together with the UK Central Hub which makes up Zone 1 the UK Central also includes: Zone 2 – North Solihull, Zone 3 – Solihull Town Centre and Zone 4 – Blythe Valley Business Park

HS2 Interchange – Arden Cross

773. The triangular shaped site that is to accommodate the HS2 Interchange station is currently a largely open parcel of land bounded by the M42, A45 and A452.

774. Construction of HS2 has commenced in the Borough and the HS2 Interchange station will be in the heart of the UK Central Hub on land adjacent to the NEC. It is forecast that the first trains to run on the route will be between 2036 and 2039, at which point the journey time from London to Interchange at the UK Central Hub will be 38 minutes.



775. The WMCA Investment Prospectus 2020 and HS2 Connectivity Package recognise the opportunity that the HS2 rail link offers to drive economic growth and prosperity, and the significance of UK Central, particularly the Hub Area around the Interchange station. The area is identified as regionally significant in the WMCA Futures Green Paper (2024) and in the West Midlands Strategic Growth Plan (2025) the UK Central Gateway is identified as a key corridor for economic growth connecting East Birmingham to the UK Central Hub as discussed in the economy chapter of this Plan.

776. Alongside the economic benefits the development of the hub is an opportunity as part of the wider UK Central proposals to improve links with the surrounding area in particular North Solihull with the prospect for improved access to employment.

Birmingham Airport

777. Birmingham Airport is the principal international gateway into the Region and has a major role in the national airport infrastructure. It is a key economic growth driver, particularly regarding the knowledge economy, high value-added sectors and overseas inward investment and international trade. The development of new long-haul routes enabled by the main runway extension, completed in 2014, enhance the Airport's capacity to contribute to local and regional economic growth as a key component of UKC. The HS2 Station will improve the accessibility and attractiveness of the Airport from further afield, particularly London and the South-East.

National Exhibition Centre (NEC)

778. The continued success of the NEC is important to the local and regional economy and is the UK's largest exhibition centre. The role of the NEC has evolved from its early exhibition centre beginnings in the 1970's to become a major events, tourism and leisure venue, serving both business and leisure markets and contributing significantly to Solihull's and the Region's visitor economy. The opening of Resorts World (a £150 million mixed use leisure development) in 2015 demonstrated the evolving role that the NEC plays.

779. The NEC have set out evolving proposals for future employment-led economic growth at the site. The Local Plan provides a framework to allow the NEC to take advantage of future opportunities and continue to evolve.

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)

780. Jaguar Land Rover is one of the West Midlands', and UK's, most important businesses, as an advanced manufacturing firm developing leading technologies including in low emissions vehicles.

781. Part of the area beyond the northeast of the existing plant has been developed to provide a 14ha vehicle despatch area which opened in 2015. The Council considered that there were very special circumstances for allowing this development in the Green Belt. This was to support the operational needs of this internationally significant company that needs to remain competitive in the global vehicles market in order to continue to support significant numbers of jobs in the Region that rely on the success of JLR. In 2021 a large scale (over 90,000 sqm) development for JLR was opened. It is a major logistics and warehousing facility used to support vehicle production.

Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks

782. Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks have successfully attracted new investment to Solihull and the Region in accordance with their original role of helping to modernise and diversify the Region's economy by attracting knowledge-based employment and combatting decline in the Region's manufacturing base. Birmingham Business Park is well placed near Birmingham Airport and the NEC to encourage new growth and investment. Blythe Valley Business Park is competitive with the south-east and M40 corridor and is capable of developing new facilities to promote and support innovation and entrepreneurism.

783. These two high quality, managed business parks have a key role in Solihull's success in attracting business investment in high value-added sectors including ICT, business and professional services, creative industries, construction and engineering. It is important that these high-quality sites continue to attract knowledge economy investment to Solihull and the Region, thereby underpinning economic recovery and growth. This includes further realising the potential of Blythe Valley Business Park as a location for innovation uses and new enterprise. There is also potential for Birmingham Business Park to play a greater role in linking investment and employment opportunities to the North Solihull area.

To reinvigorate these sites, the range of acceptable uses on them was broadened under the 2013 Solihull Local Plan in response to changed market conditions. There is growing competition from town and city centre locations as occupiers realise the benefits to employees of access to a range of facilities and to public transport. Better facilities will be needed if they are to continue to secure appropriate investment.

The Area in the Future

784. It is anticipated that the UK Central Hub Area will make a significant contribution towards the delivery of homes and economic development in the Borough during the plan period and beyond. The extension of high-speed rail to the West Midlands will be significant, reducing journey times to London to 38 minutes and enhancing existing connectivity provided via Birmingham Airport and via the region's extensive road and motorway network. As the site of the first high speed station outside London, the Hub Area is uniquely placed to capture these benefits.

785. The Hub Area is therefore a unique site with the potential to deliver major growth on a nationally significant scale both to meet the economic growth aims of the Borough as well as the wider growth aspirations of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

786. It is clear that co-ordinating the development ambitions of all stakeholders and delivering a range of growth opportunities will provide multiple benefits for the Borough and wider area including:

- The delivery of a significant amount of jobs
- A greater range and choice of new homes for The Hub, Solihull and the wider Housing Market Area
- New and unique forms of high-quality development
- The creation of healthy neighbourhoods
- Joined up green infrastructure

- The delivery of strategic infrastructure

What is required for the settlement in the future

787. **Coordinated approach** - The delivery of the Hub area is complex and a coordinated approach by all stakeholders is necessary. The Council have therefore been working closely with all key stakeholders including: Birmingham City Council, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Arden Cross Limited, the NEC, Birmingham Airport, Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham Business Park, Highways England, relevant utilities companies and HS2 Ltd.

788. A UK Central Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan (January 2018) and Framework Plan (February 2018) was prepared to align the growth aspirations of all these key stakeholders and provide an overall view of how development and infrastructure can be delivered across the Local Plan period. A primary focus of this is to ensure that constraints to development such as crucial infrastructure requirements are addressed in the early stages to ensure the high economic growth aspirations of the site can be delivered.

789. In terms of delivering the vision and objectives for the site and address the key challenges the Hub framework is based on five key place making principles. These have been designed to guide a common approach to development across the site:

- Improve accessibility
- Establish a high quality green and blue network
- Create sustainable, high-quality communities
- Leverage land with temporary uses
- Generate a clear sense of place

790. **Development Principles** - It is important that there is an overall place making vision for the Hub based on a clear set of development principles to support the creation of a sustainable high-quality environment and to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place to deliver and support growth aspirations for the site.

791. The Arden Cross Masterplan (2020) set out a comprehensive set of principles for delivering the vision and development of the Arden Cross site. These will be key in supporting the development of the Hub Area. Muse Ltd have been appointed as the development partner for Arden Cross and are undertaking further work to develop the vision and masterplan for the site.

792. **Transport Infrastructure** - A significant amount of transport infrastructure will be required to assist in the delivery of the site. Primary road infrastructure upgrades are already being pursued including changes to Junction 4 of the M6, Junction 6 and the opening of a new Junction 5A of the M42, providing links to the site in preparation for the implementation of HS2. As an example of collaborate planning and delivery, the Roundabout-over-the-Trace, which provides the main access into Arden Cross and the HS2 Interchange Station, has already been designed and constructed to accommodate development at Arden Cross beyond what would be required to service HS2 only. Led by the Council, in partnership with HS2 and DfT, West Midlands Combined Authority funded the creation of this critical additional capacity.

793. HS2 will be providing an Automated People Mover (APM) connecting the interchange station with the NEC, Birmingham International Station and Birmingham Airport. A Metro tram route is proposed from Birmingham City Centre through East Birmingham and North Solihull to the UK Central Hub.

794. **Social and community infrastructure** – It is important that the full range of facilities necessary to support the creation of a high-quality sustainable community at The Hub are provided. These include healthcare and education facilities to serve residents of The Hub but also the potential to capture the wider benefits of the scheme by enhancements to infrastructure serving the wider community. This also includes improving access to jobs and working towards improving the skills base. During the plan period it is expected that a new primary school will be required to serve the new community. It is recognised that growth will continue beyond the plan period and additional social and community infrastructure will be needed, which could include a new secondary school depending on the scale (and composition) of residential development in the long term.

795. **Green and blue infrastructure** – It is proposed that a network of green and blue infrastructure will be integrated throughout the development with the intention to provide a high-quality sense of place. The provision of Green Infrastructure is a particularly important element as it will allow existing features to not only be retained but enhanced as part of an integrated approach.

Proposed approach

796. The Green Belt boundary will need to be amended to accommodate the land at Arden Cross (140 hectares) and in order to deliver wider development at The Hub. This will facilitate the delivery of the site alongside development at the NEC which is already outside the Green Belt.

797. The UK Central Hub proposals are site specific as they are dependent on the delivery of HS2 and the Interchange station and will assist in delivering the needs of key economic assets supporting the local and regional economy. The land is bounded by main roads that provide strong defensible Green Belt boundaries. The exceptional circumstances set out in Policy SMBC/UK1 for releasing the Arden Cross Land from the Green Belt are therefore justified.

798. The delivery of The Hub site is complex, and the Local Plan may also need to take forward other relevant elements of the wider proposals being developed by key stakeholders to realise development. Land at Damson Parkway will also need to be released from the Green Belt in order to allow development to meet local and strategic employment need and potential ancillary development to meet the future expansion of Birmingham Airport or JLR.

799. It is anticipated that HS2 will be operational between Birmingham and London between 2036 to 2039. It is expected that land around the HS2 interchange station will be available from 2030 therefore detailed planning and delivery preparation can be undertaken ahead of this on the first phase of the development. Given the timescales it will be necessary for the Local Plan to retain a degree of flexibility in dealing with the site to take account of the emerging plans.

800. The site will have wide implications in terms of economic growth serving a large geographical area across the Borough's administrative boundaries. The Council will continue to engage with neighbouring authorities as well as other local authorities across the region as the proposals go forward to understand the impact. Given the nature of the proposal, it is important that this is maintained as a fluid process and reflects the importance of ongoing engagement and

collaborative working as part of the Duty to Cooperate. The Council is engaging with WMCA and neighbouring authorities on the preparation of the SDS.

801. In bringing forward development at The Hub regard will also be given to proposals affecting the wider site noted in the following paragraphs.

802. **National Exhibition Centre (NEC)** – Work undertaken by the NEC since the previous Local Plan Review examination has identified potential for employment led development including an Industrial and Logistics Hub utilising car parking and underused land to the North of the site. This is a shift away from the position in the 2020 plan that was seeking a residential led masterplan[60]. The Local Plan will need to be flexible to respond to future growth aspirations of the NEC.

803. **Jaguar Land Rover expansion** – Land at Damson Parkway is being removed from the Green Belt to accommodate employment development (see Policy SMBC/UK2). This also reflects the historic position whereby development to support the operational requirements of JLR have already taken place in the Green Belt through developments (for example the despatch area and Logistics Operation Centre) that were approved under very special circumstances. If further additional space is required, then this would be an appropriate use under Policy SMBC/UK2.

804. **Birmingham Business Park** – The Park already occupies an important role as a prime employment location. It is important that the wider proposal for The Hub builds upon this.

805. **Birmingham Airport Masterplan (2018)**– The masterplan (published pre-Covid 19) for the airport predicts growth in passenger numbers per year from 13 million in 2018 to 18 million in 2033 and considers the potential for and implications of higher growth levels to 24 million. It is framed in the context of the national policy to make best use of the existing extended runway. It sets out plans for £500 million of new investment to expand the terminal building, increase the number of aircraft stands, extend ancillary facilities and interconnect with HS2. It highlights a need for more land for ancillary facilities beyond the existing Airport area and identifies land near Elmdon and JLR, which includes land allocated for employment development at Damson Parkway. This is in the context of maximising the benefits of HS2 and the wider proposals for UK Central Solihull. The allocation of UK2 allows flexibility to respond to these potential needs in the future.

806. Work is being undertaken by the Airport to publish an updated Masterplan, this is expected to be published in 2026.

Policy SMBC/UK1: Arden Cross and HS2 Interchange

1. This site is allocated for mixed use development including the HS2 Interchange station and ancillary infrastructure, commercial, residential and associated retail and higher education facilities and a health education campus

2. Development of this site should be consistent with the place making principles set out in Policy SMBC/E1, and should be delivered through a comprehensive masterplan which should encompass the following principles:

   A Improve accessibility;

[60] This followed the publication of a masterplan in November 2018 and a refresh in November 2021.

B Establish a high quality green and blue network;

C Create sustainable, high-quality communities;

D Generate a clear sense of place.

3. A masterplan for the development of the site should accord with the following development principles to provide:

A A high density and active place providing a mix of cultural, commercial, leisure and retail activity around the main transport hub;

B Movement corridors linking the transport hub to innovation and employment districts, education facilities, mixed typology homes and natural greenspace with pedestrian permeability.

807. This land release is driven by the location of the HS2 Interchange station and the potential this gives to make efficient use of the land. The release of this c140ha site from the Green Belt to accommodate the HS2 Interchange and mixed-use development is not to simply serve local needs but is part of the contribution the Borough is making to the wider West Midlands area that will benefit economically from this important infrastructure provision. The ability to provide residential development as part of a mixed-use development remains an important component.

808. The first release of land is expected in 2030. Therefore, at this stage it is considered prudent to continue to acknowledge that the residential component of the development will not be completed within the plan period, and for land supply purposes a total of 1,600 is considered a reasonable expectation within the plan period, and this would be in the later years.

809. The site lies in a lower performing parcel in the Green Belt Assessment. Significant development is proposed for the HS2 rail interchange station and supporting infrastructure, which will substantially reduce the contribution of this land to Green Belt purposes. The site is in an area that has low capacity to accommodate change in the Landscape Character Assessment.

810. The Heritage Impact Assessment identifies the potential to cause significant harm to the setting of Park Farmhouse, and harm to the setting of Packington Hall and Park. To mitigate this planting should be used to enhance key views to and from Park Farmhouse, and the telecommunications mast should be located so that it does not impinge on the key view from the Pleasure Grounds in Packington Park towards Park Farmhouse. In addition, a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be undertaken to establish a formal views analysis between Packington Park and Site UK1, to inform final development proposals. A suitable use for Park Farmhouse should be identified, which could include interpretation of its interest and significance.

Policy SMBC/UK2: Damson Parkway

1. This site is allocated for employment development to meet local and strategic employment needs, and needs associated with the key economic assets in the UK Central Solihull Hub Area.

2. Development of this site should be consistent with the principles of a Masterplan for this site, which is expected to include the following:

   A No development within any area of higher flood risk zones;

   B Relocation of the existing sports provision off Damson Parkway to a suitable site in the vicinity;

   C The existing sports provision off Damson Parkway will not be available for development until a suitable alternative site is provided and ready for use, within the vicinity of the existing sites;

   D The alternative site must be agreed with the governing bodies and Sport England;

3 Likely infrastructure requirements will include:

   A Flood alleviation to Damson Lane;

   B The Low Brook corridor into a high-quality linear attenuation and water quality improvement area for SuDS;

   C Highway improvements as required and access improvements along Damson Parkway and Damson Lane;

   D Appropriate measures to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle connectivity to surrounding residential areas;

811. This is an employment-led land release of 94ha which will provide additional employment land to meet local and strategic employment land needs. It already accommodates JLR (and JLR related) activities and ancillary development. It has the potential to provide an additional 57.5 ha (gross) (40 ha (net)) of space that could be used for local employment needs and/or any additional requirements that may be identified by Birmingham Airport and/or JLR.

812. The release of the site from the Green Belt will therefore meet local and strategic employment land demand and needs associated with the key economic assets within the UK Central Solihull Hub Area.

813. This allocation allows land for ancillary facilities if required to support the growth of Birmingham Airport. The Council would expect any proposals to demonstrate the most efficient and effective use of land and that these would support the economic growth of the Borough and wider region. The Airport is undertaking work on a new masterplan expected to be published in 2026, it is expected that any ancillary facilities would be identified and justified as part of this work.

814. The importance of this site is recognised in the Government's designation of Growth Zones (including both UK1 and UK2) which allows the Council to retain 100% of the growth in business rates for a period 25 years. Growth Zones have been designated specifically to

support economic growth by allowing areas to retain business rate growth that would otherwise be shared with central government.

815. The parcel to the east of Damson Parkway is considered to make a moderate contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and to the west a weak contribution. Both parcels could be potential grey belt whilst noting the existence of constraints including ancient woodland, SSSI and flood risk. Both parcels have been affected by development by JLR permitted under very special circumstances, so their contribution to Green Belt purposes is reduced. The site is in an area that has low capacity to accommodate change in the Landscape Character Assessment.

816. The removal of this area of land from the Green Belt is being pursued to reflect (a) the historic position to date that has allowed development in the Green Belt under very special circumstances (principally to benefit the operational requirements of JLR), (b) to allow for any additional requirements for either the airport or JLR and (c) to provide additional employment land to meet local employment needs.



817. The exceptional circumstances to justify this approach are thus as follows:

- The need for additional employment land to meet local and/or strategic needs as set out in the HEDNA 2026 and the lack of suitable alternatives outside the Green Belt;
- Jaguar Land Rover is a major international business and one of the largest employers in the West Midlands, whose continued growth and success are of vital importance to the local and regional economy. The Lode Lane plant is severely constrained by surrounding residential areas, Elmdon Park and local nature reserves, and the only realistic option for expansion and redevelopment is to the east on Green Belt land;

- The first phase of development at UK2 has been built, including 14.5ha for a JLR despatch facility, a 98,000 sqm logistics operations centre and infrastructure required to deliver UK2 including realignment to Damson Parkway. This was justified with very special circumstances;
- The land makes only a weak contribution overall to Green Belt purposes and could be considered as potential grey belt in the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2026).

818. The creation of a logical and defensible boundary to the Green Belt beyond Damson Parkway/Old Damson Lane that acknowledges the development that has taken place in the area and the area of land taken out of the Green Belt to accommodate the gypsy and traveller site.

819. Development on the site will need to take into account the Castle Hill Meadows Local Wildlife site and other constraints which will affect the developable area.

Initialisms/Abbreviations and Selected Glossary

Initialisms/Abbreviations

820. This is a list of common initialisms or abbreviations used either in this document or in other planning related documents.

Initialism	Term
5YHLS	Five-Year Housing Land Supply
AH	Affordable Housing
AMP	Automated People Mover
AMR	Authority Monitoring Report
ATM	Active Traffic Management
B2	General Industrial
B8	Storage and Distribution
BBP	Birmingham Business Park
BLR	Brownfield Land Register
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BTR	Build to Rent
BVP	Blythe Valley Park
CA	Conservation Area / Combined Authority (context dependent)
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CoU	Change of Use
DM	Development Management
DPA	Dwellings per annum
DPD	Development Plan Document
DtC	Duty to Cooperate
EA	Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIP	Examination in Public
ES	Environmental Statement
EV	Electric Vehicle
F1	Learning and Non-Residential Institutions Use Class
F2	Local Community Uses Use Class
FE	Form of Entry (schools)
FEMA	Functional Economic Market Area
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GBA	Green Belt Assessment
GI	Green Infrastructure
GTAA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
HDT	Housing Delivery Test
HE	Historic England
HEDNA	Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
HLS	Housing Land Supply
HMA	Housing Market Area

Initialism	Term
HMO	Homes in Multiple Occupation
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HS2	High Speed 2 Rail Link
HWRC	Household Waste and Recycling Centre
IDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan
JLR	Jaguar Land Rover
KDBH	Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath
LB	Listed Building
LBC	Listed Building Consent
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LCWIP	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
LGS	Local Green Space
LHN	Local Housing Need
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
LP	Local Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LPR	Local Plan Review
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
MRN	Major Road Network
MSA	Motorway Service Area / Mineral Safeguarding Area
NCIL	Neighborhood Community Infrastructure Levy
NDSS	Nationally Described Space Standard
NE	Natural England
NEC	National Exhibition Centre
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
OAN	Objectively Assessed Need
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PA	Planning Application
PDL	Previously Developed Land (also known as brownfield land)
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
pLWS	Potential Local Wildlife Site
PP	Planning Permission
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PPTS	Planning Policy for Traveller Sites
PRoW	Public Right of Way
S106	Section 106 Agreement
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SDS	Spatial Development Strategy
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

Initialism	Term
SHELAA	Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
SLP	Solihull Local Plan (Dec 2013)
SoS	Secretary of State
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
sqm	Square metre
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
TA	Transport Assessment
TP	Travel Plan
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
TS	Transport Statement
UDP	Solihull Unitary Development Plan (Feb 2006)
UKC	UK Central
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority
WMS	Written Ministerial Statement

Selected Glossary

821. A fuller glossary is provided in annex B of the NPPF and so is not repeated here, but rather the opportunity has been taken to make reference to a few terms used that often give rise to questions as to what they mean.

Term	Description
Grey Belt	Grey Belt is a sub-category of Green Belt. Land that is still designated as Green Belt can also be considered as Grey Belt if the definition for the term is met (as set out below). Land in the Green Belt that does not fall within the definition of Grey Belt is sometimes referred to as 'Non-Grey Green Belt' or 'Green-Green Belt'. The formal definition of Grey Belt is in the NPPF as follows: *"For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development."*

	If a site or area is considered to fall within the definition of Grey Belt, this does not necessarily mean that the site/area is suitable for development. For instance, the site/area must be in a sustainable location. This is explained in more detail in paragraph 155 of the NPPF.
Washed over (Green Belt)	In the context of Green Belt policy in England, the term "washed over" refers to a settlement, village, or area that remains within the Green Belt boundary, rather than being excluded from it ("inset"). Imagine the Green Belt as a layer of policy covering the countryside. If a village is washed over by the Green Belt, the Green Belt designation extends across the entire village and its surroundings. Green Belt policies therefore apply within the village as well as around it.
Inset settlement	An inset settlement is a village, town, or built-up area that has been excluded from the Green Belt through a defined boundary. The Green Belt surrounds the settlement but does not cover the land inside the inset boundary.
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	PDL is often referred to as brownfield land and usually refers to sites with buildings on them, or sites that previously had buildings on them. However, there are some important caveats to this broad summary, and it is useful to set out the formal definition contained in the NPPF which is as follows: *"Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but*

	where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape."

822. It is worth noting that brownfield sites occur in both urban and rural areas, and if they do occur in the rural area (and are therefore in the Green Belt) it does not necessarily mean that they fall within the definition of Grey Belt. A site would need to pass both tests if it is to be considered as a brownfield site in the Grey Belt.

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129	SMBC/BL1: West of Dickens Heath
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135	SMBC/HA1: Meriden Road, Hampton in Arden
146	SMBC/KN1A: Land North of Hampton Road, Knowle
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Policies Map

Policies Map - Solihull Regulation 19 Draft Submission Plan

Key

Proposed Housing Sites
- BC1
- BC3
- BC5
- BC6
- BL1 S
- BL2 - Part
- BL3
- HA1
- KN1 N
- KN1 S
- KN2 - Part
- ME1 - Part
- SO1 - South
- SO2
- BC7 - Riddings Hill
- BC8 - HS2 Depot
- Proposed Mixed Use Site
- Proposed Employment Site
- UKC Hub
- Birmingham Airport
- NEC
- Jaguar Land Rover
- Major Business Parks (UKC)
- Railway 1km broad location
- Gypsy & Traveller Site Allocations (2014)
- Gypsy & Traveller Safeguarded Sites (2014)
- Town Centres
- Mineral Safeguarding Area
- Preferred Area Minerals Sites
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Sites 2026
- RIGS
- Registered Parks & Gardens
- Conservation Areas
- Proposed Arden Academy Land
- Sites w/ consent to be removed from Green Belt
- Green Belt 2026
- Solihull Borough Boundary

N

0 0.8 1.5 3 Km

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