

Statement of Consultation

Solihull Local Plan: Draft Submission Plan

Introduction

This Statement has been prepared to support the publication of the Solihull Local Plan Review, in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The statement sets out how Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) has involved the community and stakeholders in preparing the Solihull Local Plan: Draft Submission Plan October 2026 and how this meets the requirements set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (as approved in 2025) and national Regulations.

The Statement is a statutory requirement for a Local Planning Authority currently in the process of publishing and submitting a Local Plan to the Secretary of State. It outlines how the Council has complied with government requirements, in line with Regulations 17 and 19.

The Statement provides information on the following:

- An overview of the Council's engagement activities, across all individuals, groups and stakeholders during each stage of the Local Plan making process, including which bodies and persons were invited to make representations under regulation 18,
- Which engagement activities were used during each stage of the Local Plan making process (both informal and formal).
- How individuals, groups and stakeholders were invited to make representations to inform the Local Plan process.
- A summary of the main issues raised by representations received through the engagement activities.
- How those main issues have been addressed in the Local Plan.

Background

The October 2026 Draft Submission Plan builds on the extensive work undertaken through the previous Local Plan Review, which commenced in 2015 and culminated in the submission of the 2020 Draft Submission Plan for examination in May 2021.

This Plan progressed through a substantial part of the examination process, including examination hearings held between September 2021 and July 2022. Through that process, the Inspectors concluded that the Council had complied with the duty to cooperate (as required at the time), that the overall spatial strategy was appropriate and that the proposed housing allocations were, in principle, appropriate.

Although the Plan was subsequently withdrawn from examination because outstanding issues relating to housing land supply could not be resolved, this also occurred within the context of significant changes in national planning policy. Nevertheless, considerable work had been undertaken in preparing and examining the 2020 Plan. The Council therefore considered that this work should not be aborted and that the 2020 Plan provided a sound foundation for progressing the new Plan, reflecting the extensive consultation undertaken since 2015, the supporting evidence base and the Inspectors' comments.

The October 2026 Draft Submission Plan is not therefore a plan which has been prepared in isolation or wholly afresh. It builds on a strategy, policies and site proposals that have evolved through consultation and engagement for over a decade. It is therefore appropriate that this Statement

acknowledges the consultation undertaken throughout the earlier Local Plan Review, alongside the further engagement and consultation undertaken in preparing the 2026 Plan.

The key consultation milestones are outlined in the table below:

Date	Consultation Stage
Nov 2015	Scope, Issues and Options Consultation (Reg 18) (for the 2020 withdrawn Draft Local Plan)
Dec 2016	Draft Local Plan Consultation (Reg 18) (for the 2020 withdrawn Draft Local Plan)
Jan 2019	Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (Reg 18) (for the withdrawn Draft Local Plan)
Oct 2020	Regulation 19 Draft Submission Plan (for the withdrawn Draft Local Plan)
Jan 2026	Issues and Options Consultation Local Plan Review 2026 -43

Consultation Methodology

The Council is committed to ongoing community and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of Solihull's Draft Local Plan. Throughout the previous and current plan-making process, a range of consultation and engagement methods have been used in accordance with the relevant adopted SCI that was in place at the time. The most recent SCI for Solihull was approved in October 2025.

The Council has a comprehensive consultation database containing over 2000 consultees, including residents' associations, parish councils, elected representatives, community and voluntary groups, developers and businesses, infrastructure providers, government agencies and individuals.

Cross boundary consultation has also been carried out with adjoining local authorities and parish councils.

Persons or organisations wishing to be included on the Council's Local Plan consultation database can sign up via the Council's website and are able to update their details. They can also request to be added by post or email. At each stage of the consultation outlined in the table above, stakeholders and the local community have been informed by email or in writing of opportunities to get involved in plan making, and given a variety of options for responding, including in writing, email and on-line questionnaires.

A range of different approaches has been undertaken throughout the process of preparing the previously withdrawn 2020 Draft Local Plan and the current Draft Local Plan, including the following methods:

- Stakeholder meetings and briefings
- Seminars and presentations
- Conferences and workshops
- Drop in sessions
- Exhibitions at libraries
- Questionnaires
- Direct mailing
- Leaflets and posters
- Press releases, media interviews and newspaper articles
- Email alerts using the Council's Stay Connected facility
- Website and on-line responses
- Webinar Q&A sessions

Scope, Issues and Options Consultation - November 2015 (*withdrawn 2020 Draft Local Plan*)

The previously withdrawn Local Plan Review commenced in July 2015 with consideration of the key issues and options for accommodating growth. These included housing needs, the opportunities associated with HS2 and the Interchange Station, and the implications of growth for the Green Belt.

Consultation on the Scope, Issues and Options took place between November 2015 and January 2016. Stakeholders were notified directly, with documents available at libraries and Council offices, alongside exhibitions, briefings, workshops and wider publicity.

More than 170 representations were received. Key issues raised included housing need, the wider housing market area shortfall, the spatial strategy, the evidence base and the preferred approach to growth. In response, the Council recognised the need to update its evidence, continue joint working on wider housing needs and develop a new spatial strategy drawing on the growth options considered.

Draft Local Plan Consultation - December 2016 (*withdrawn 2020 Draft Local Plan*)

Following the Scope, Issues and Options consultation, the Draft Local Plan was informed by further evidence, stakeholder engagement and development of the Plan's vision, spatial strategy and potential site allocations.

Consultation on the Draft Local Plan took place between December 2016 and February 2017. Letters and emails were sent to stakeholders on the consultation database, including those who had submitted sites and landowners within or adjoining proposed allocations. Documents were available at libraries and Council offices, eight drop-in sessions/exhibitions were held across the Borough, and briefings were provided for Parish Councils and Residents Associations, supported by online, social media and press publicity.

The consultation attracted 1,750 respondents who made 6,320 representations, including 1,150 in support and 5,165 objections. The main issues concerned the overall amount and distribution of housing, impacts on the Green Belt, the need to explore more brownfield opportunities, the reliance on larger sites, infrastructure and accessibility concerns, and issues around individual site proposals.

In response, the Council undertook further work on housing needs and the distribution of growth, investigated opportunities outside the Green Belt and on previously developed land, reviewed the balance and geographical spread of sites, and considered infrastructure requirements and further opportunities for housing growth.

Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation - January 2019 (*withdrawn 2020 Draft Local Plan*)

Following the 2016 consultation, the Council reviewed housing numbers and site allocations, worked with housing market area partners on the housing shortfall, and considered the 2018 Strategic Growth Study.

Member workshops, stakeholder meetings and concept masterplanning work helped to inform changes to the proposals and address infrastructure concerns. A number of previously identified draft allocations were also removed and others were added, including some on previously developed land.

A further Supplementary Consultation on the Draft Local Plan then took place between January and March 2019. The consultation included emerging work on draft concept master plans and sought views on 'amber' sites (sites not considered to be appropriate for allocation, but which performed better in the site assessments than others). Letters and emails were sent to all stakeholders on the Local Plan consultation database. As before, documents were available at libraries and Council offices, and six drop-in events around the Borough were held. Briefings were held for Parish Councils

and Residents Associations and publicity included use of the Council's email subscription service 'Stay Connected', social media channels, and press releases.

The consultation received 3,807 representations from 1,092 respondents, including 415 in support and 2,233 objections, mainly on the location and number of new homes and infrastructure requirements. Other concerns included environmental and sustainability impacts and site selection methodology.

In response, the Council looked further at what was required on the Borough's local housing need; considered the recommendations of Strategic Growth Study; reviewed the Sustainability Appraisal and environmental evidence; reviewed the site selection methodology, gave further consideration to infrastructure requirements and reassessed some of the proposed site allocations.

Draft Submission Plan – October 2020 (Reg 19) (*withdrawn 2020 Draft Local Plan*)

Following consideration of representations on the Supplementary Consultation, work continued on the Draft Submission Plan. This involved using the standard methodology to assess the local housing need for the Borough and undertaking further work through the Sustainability Appraisal to assess the recommendations in the Strategic Growth Study.

The site selection methodology was reviewed and the site assessment process updated to ensure that environmental concerns were adequately referenced. Several of the proposed site allocations underwent further consideration, resulting in changes to some site boundaries and it was concluded that the 'amber' sites were not appropriate for allocation at that time.

Consultation on the Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan took place from 30 October to 14 December 2020. Representations were invited on the Plan's legal compliance and soundness, alongside the draft Concept Masterplans and Proposed Policies Map. The Council produced and published a standard representation form, guidance on how to make representations including the use of the online consultation system and a frequently asked questions paper. Letters and emails were sent to stakeholders on the consultation database, site notices were displayed at or near proposed allocation sites and neighbouring occupiers were contacted. The consultation was also promoted through parish council briefings, the Council's Stay Connected alerts, social media and press releases.

The COVID-19 pandemic restricted some traditional methods, including drop-in events, exhibitions and access to physical copies in libraries. The Council therefore provided online videos, live-streamed question-and-answer sessions and established a dedicated telephone line to the Planning Policy team, together with arrangements to supply hard copies to anyone unable to access the documents online. By 15 December 2020, the online videos and webinar sessions had generated more than 1,900 interactions.

The consultation received responses from 852 respondents, comprising 2,223 separate representations. Public engagement on the plan continued as interested parties were also able to participate in the examination phase of the plan, prior to its withdrawal in October 2024.

Local Plan Review 2026 Issues and Options (Regulation 18) consultation – January 2026

Consultation on the Issues and Options for the new Solihull Local Plan took place between 30 January and 16 March 2026. Having regard to the previous withdrawn Local Plan, the consultation sought views on the key issues facing the Borough and the options available for addressing them. It included the approach to accommodating future development and ensuring that appropriate infrastructure was provided. It recognised the significant changes to national planning policy, including those relating to increased housing need and Green Belt policy.

The full Issues and Options document and a shorter summary version were made available on the Council's Emerging Local Plan webpage. The consultation was also publicised through the Council's

website, news and social media channels. Direct notification was also given to those on the consultation database where stakeholders were provided with details of the consultation along with links to the consultation material and information on opportunities to engage with officers.

Representations could be submitted through the Council's dedicated online consultation portal and consultees were also able to submit their comments by email or post if they were unable to use the portal.

Hard copies of the consultation material were also made available at Connect Centres in libraries across the Borough.

To supplement the consultation, the Council held five public drop-in sessions at locations across Solihull. These took place as follows:

Date/Time	Venue
Tuesday 10 February 2026 - 3:00PM - 6:30PM	Dickens Heath Library
Thursday 12 February 2026 - 3:00PM – 6:30PM	The Core Library
Tuesday 24 February 2026 - 3:00PM – 6:30PM	Knowle Village Hall
Tuesday 3 March 2026 - 3:00PM – 6:30PM	Balsall Common Library
Thursday 5 March 2026 - 3:00PM – 6:30PM	Chelmsley Wood Library

There were over 180 respondents to the consultation. Key issues raised included:

- The challenge of accommodating substantially increased housing needs while protecting the Green Belt.
- Maintaining settlement identity.
- Ensuring that growth is supported by adequate infrastructure.
- Whether there is a need to identify specific site allocations rather than relying on broad locations in years 6-15 of the Plan.
- Development around railways stations and the flexibility of walking distance thresholds.
- The need for the plan to be supported by an up-to-date evidence base.

In preparing the subsequent Regulation 19 Submission Draft Local Plan, the Council has:

- Carried forward the site allocations from the withdrawn 2020 Local Plan that remain as appropriate allocations and have not already received planning permission.
- Introduced a vulnerable gaps policy to prevent coalescence of rural settlements.
- Sought to ensure proposals for strategic and major development are brought forward via a comprehensive masterplanning approach which demonstrates coordinated delivery including appropriate contributions towards infrastructure and linked to the cumulative development of the wider area.
- Had regard to updated national planning policy including the new August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This introduced a policy approach to development around well-connected railway stations, allowing residential and mixed-use development in the Green Belt within reasonable walking distance of a station (subject to relevant policy criteria). The Council has identified potential broad locations for development based on this.
- Assessed the current evidence base, commissioned updated evidence and prepared new evidence where required. This has included the Green Belt Assessment, Green Belt Village Study, Housing and Employment Development Needs Assessment, Settlement Hierarchy and Sustainability Appraisal. A full list of evidence is available on the Council's website.

Conclusion

The Draft Submission Local Plan has been developed in a way that represents an evolution of the Local Plan that was withdrawn from Examination in October 2024. This included significant consultation which has helped to shape the current Draft plan and its contents. Therefore, it is appropriate that this Statement acknowledges the consultation undertaken throughout the earlier Local Plan Review, alongside the further engagement and consultation undertaken in preparing the 2026 Plan.

This Statement demonstrates the continuing and iterative process in which stakeholders and local communities have been informed, involved and able to influence the Plan as it has progressed since 2015. The Council is satisfied that it has complied with the requirements of Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012. It is also satisfied that it can demonstrate that consultation and involvement has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

The Council has used a comprehensive range of consultation techniques including web-based consultation and questionnaires, as well as using traditional methods such as direct mailing, press releases and articles, exhibitions and drop in sessions, meetings and briefings. A Fair Treatment Assessment of the Draft Submission Local Plan has been undertaken to demonstrate that consultation material remains accessible for those who may have specific needs.

Finally, the Council believes that the representations made by stakeholders and communities have influenced the October 2026 Submission Draft, particularly given the significant consultation undertaken for the previously withdrawn Local Plan which has helped to shape the current plan and its contents.

This Statement will be updated when the Local Plan is formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.