



KDBH Neighbourhood Forum

Solihull Local Plan Examination

PROGRESS UPDATE: POSITION AS AT 28 SEPTEMBER 2021

The examination of the Solihull Local Plan (SLP) started on Monday 27 September 2021. Over the first two weeks, five “matters” are being considered, all at face-to-face (not virtual) sessions. Three of these matters are of relevance to the NF: Procedural / Legal Requirements (Matter 1); The housing requirement / overall housing provision (Matter 3); and The Spatial Strategy (Matter 4).

Two points of relevance were discussed (on 27 September) under Matter 1. The first was the relationship of the SLP to existing plans, including Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) - and, in particular, whether policies in the SLP would take precedence over the NPs. Given that there are (deliberate) differences (in our case eg. regarding affordable housing, housing mix and density), we wanted the SLP to identify which NP policies would continue to hold sway.

The Council argued that the SLP is clear enough (there is mention of the role of NP policies). That was how it was left. It will be for the Inspectors to make a decision in due course.

The second point was about the status and role of concept masterplans. There was a general feeling (accepted by the Council) that the SLP was lacking in clarity on this point. However, rather than modifying the masterplans and bringing them clearly within the ambit of the SLP, the Inspectors thought that they should be considered as illustrative, albeit key provisions would be contained in the allocation policies (such as KN1 and KN2).

The Inspectors’ action note on this point is awaited; but there may be an effect on our evidence - for example, a need to strengthen the safeguards written into the SLP, rather than look for modifications of the draft masterplan documents themselves.

Matters 3 will be debated on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, with matter 4 following on Thursday. We have not submitted statements on these matters. Essentially, we need to keep a watching brief on anything that might affect KDBH. Having said that, for Matter 3, there are points that we can make regarding the Council’s capacity-based approach; the basis of the housing requirements for designated Neighbourhood Areas; and the status of the requirements and relationship with NPs.

Amongst other things, the Council’s thinking on the suitability of the various rural settlements will be discussed on Thursday 7 October.

Looking forward to the second group of meetings, key sessions include: Matter 6g, Housing Site Allocations - Knowle (on Thursday 18 November); and Matter 7, Providing Homes for All (on Tuesday 30 November).

Once the first group of sessions is concluded, we will update and issue the Forum statement on Matter 6g and supporting documents, strengthened where necessary with required changes to policy given that the Concept Masterplans are to be deemed purely illustrative.