



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

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Dear Councillor Clancy

Birmingham Development Plan 2031

On 29 April 2016 we received a request to call in the Birmingham Development Plan 2031 ("the Plan") from Rt Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP for Sutton Coldfield. The request set out concerns about a proposal for 6,000 new homes on Green Belt land in Sutton Coldfield known as the Langley Sustainable Urban Extension and other matters related to the Plan.

Plans are the primary basis for identifying what development is needed in an area and for deciding where it should go. In the preparation of a Plan, we recognise there are key considerations that should be addressed.

In order to ensure the efficient and appropriate use of land when planning to meet housing need, Local Plans should seek densities that will make best use of each development site, while taking in to consideration local circumstances.

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that Green Belt should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. Where it is necessary to consider revision of the Green Belt, this review should be robust in its justification for any alteration.

Where it is expected that neighbouring authorities will be required to help meet the housing need of a local planning authority area, the duty to cooperate has an important role to play. The duty is intended to assist local planning authorities to produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters.

On 26 May 2016, in exercise of the powers under section 21A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (inserted by section 145(5) of the Housing and Planning Act 2016), we directed Birmingham City Council ("the Council") not to take any step in connection with the adoption of the Plan ("the Holding Direction").

We have now considered the concerns set out in the letter of Rt Hon. Andrew Mitchell MP and the report of the Inspector appointed to examine the Plan.

The Inspector set out in his report that the vast majority of sites proposed in the Plan are on brownfield land and the Plan has a density policy that 'seeks to maximise the yield from each development site'. We agree with the Inspector's conclusion that even when taking consideration of this approach, the scale of potentially unmet need in the city is "exceptional and possibly unique".

We further note the Inspector's findings that though the Plan does not accommodate provision for all of Birmingham's housing need within the city, the Council has taken steps with regard to the duty to cooperate to address the issue and persuade other Local Planning Authorities to act if this becomes necessary to address the shortfall.

Taking in to account the factors above, we see no ground to differ from the conclusions the Inspector appointed to examine the Plan has reached. We are satisfied that Birmingham has taken a robust approach that is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.

After careful consideration of the concerns raised, we are satisfied that Birmingham City Council should be able to take further steps in connection with the adoption of the Plan and the Holding Direction is hereby withdrawn.

*Yours sincerely
Gavin*

GAVIN BARWELL MP