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*Does the plan comply with national policy in its approach to the Green Belt?*

My answer to this is no. I say this because on the one hand without the proposed green belt development the plan would be just about perfect but on the other, as a result of the proposed green belt development the plan contains a fundamental flaw and as a consequence, the 'overall' plan is not consistent with sustainable development.

If instead the plan was more about developing green infrastructure and less about turning green infrastructure into grey infrastructure then I think we would have a plan that demonstrates the right balance between economic, social and environmental well-being for both present and future generations. This I will argue is not only a balance that is consistent with sustainable development here in Birmingham, but a balance that is also consistent with sustainable development in the UK, in the EU and globally.

In order for the plan to achieve an 'overall' consistency with sustainable development and so to become fully sound, I propose that rather than the existing green belt development strategies which effectively entails developing green belt housing estates and green belt warehouse factories, lets instead develop a Birmingham Green Belt Forest and as such endeavour to make Birmingham the most biophilic and green city in the world. This I will show will ensure that we can make demonstrable progress in ensuring that Birmingham can realise fully all the stated objectives in plan, including creating a more sustainable city that minimises its carbon footprint, encouraging better health and well-being through the provision of good quality green spaces, creating a prosperous, successful and enterprising economy with benefits felt by all, facilitating the much needed transition to a low carbon economy and promoting Birmingham's national and international role .

Let me now explain why I think a Birmingham Green Belt Forest as opposed to green belt housing estates and green belt warehouse factories will achieve the right balance within the 'overall' plan and so create a plan that is fully consistent with sustainable development. I'll do this by comparing the likely shifts in the economic, social and environmental sustainable development indicators for each of the different strategies starting with the Birmingham Green Belt Forest.

So starting with the economic, and then moving through the social and ending with the environmental, the likely shifts in the sustainable development indicators for the Birmingham Green Belt Forest would be:-

To increase low carbon activities and lifestyles through choice low impact dwellings and communities directly associated with low carbon enterprises

To increase food supply, namely fruit and nuts and vegetables where grown in low carbon agricultural enterprises situated in and around the forest and so overall, an increased level of food security for Birmingham

An opportunity to facilitate and develop low carbon sustainable enterprises in relation to forestry work, timber supply, coppicing work, craftwork , education and research work

An increase in natural resources and so a reduction in the cost of construction materials and so an increase in housing affordability

An increase in job satisfaction and fulfilment and increases in the diversity and creativity of skills within Birmingham's economy

An increase in the integrity and protection of the green belt and its essential role in preventing urban sprawl

An increase in the health benefits as a result of engaging with a multi-functional forested green space with associated benefits in well-being that are derived from being in natural places, leading to greater community cohesion, greater civic pride and a greater respect for Nature

Extensive increases in biodiversity enhancement both within human and non-human communities

A more efficient and low cost upstream flood management system

An increase in the oxygenisation of the air around Birmingham, an extensive carbon sink and so a reduction in Birmingham's CO2 emissions and so a reduction in Birmingham's carbon footprint

And finally an extensive pollution filtration system that not only mitigates the pollution created by the M6 but all other vehicles used in the area.

**Compare these positive economic, social and environmental sustainable development outcomes with those of the proposed green belt housing estates and green belt warehouse factories.**

A significant increase in high carbon activities and lifestyles through energy intensive construction work and maintenance

Reduced food security as a result of destroying active farmland

A reduction in natural resources and so increasing the cost of construction materials with the consequence of reducing housing affordability

A decrease in overall job satisfaction and fulfilment and the creation of low-skilled, low income robotic workers

More stress as a result of increased pressures on our health systems and transport systems with a downward pressure on the quality of our infrastructure as a result of decreased per capita tax revenues that has been facilitated by encouraging unsustainable levels of low-income economic migration

An upward pressure on prices and a downward pressure on wages resulting in decreased standards of living

A decrease in the integrity and protection of the green belt as a result of the precedent set by the proposed development and so encouraging urban sprawl

A decrease in the health benefits associated with green spaces as more of our green infrastructure is transformed into yet more grey infrastructure.

A reduction in overall community cohesion, a reduction in overall civic pride and less respect for Nature

Decreases in biodiversity both within human and non-human communities

A less efficient and more costly upstream flood management system

A decrease in the oxygenisation of the air in and around Birmingham, an increase in CO2 emissions and so an overall increase in Birmingham's carbon footprint

And finally last but not least, an increase in pollution and more importantly, increases in airborne diesel particulate matter which is known to be both mutagenic and toxic to human health

It can therefore be seen clearly that the sustainable development profiles of each of these green belt strategies are very much opposed with a Green Belt Forest producing only positive outcomes and green belt housing estates and warehouse factories only producing negative ones.

Therefore, when considering that the Birmingham Development Plan must demonstrate a bias in favour of sustainable development in order to be both sound and consistent with national policy and the extent to which the currently proposed green belt strategy will very likely result in considerable negative sustainable development outcomes, then the overall plan cannot be considered sound.

If, however, the plan was to incorporate a green belt strategy that sought to maximise positive sustainable development outcomes by developing a Birmingham Green Belt Forest, then the plan would not only excel in its duty towards sustainable development but also help to engender a civic pride that would result from Birmingham being the greenest city in the world.

In conclusion, I do wish to remind everyone that this plan, in order to be consistent with sustainable development, not only has to take into consideration present generations but also future generations

too. This means that this plan, for the period 2014-2031, is the foundation from which the next plan will be developed. Therefore a plan that contains inherently unsustainable strategies – as this one does - the consequences of unsound strategies is not only felt by present generations, but felt by future generations too who will have to remedy at expense to their own well-being any mistakes that we make today..

Thank-you for reading and thank-you all for helping to create a society that puts sustainable development at the heart of our social, economic and environmental interactions with one another