

Hearing Statement – Matter F: Tamworth Borough Council

Robert Mitchell

Director (Communities, Planning & Partnerships)

Please ask for: Matthew Bowers

Direct dial: 01827 709 279 Fax: 01827 709 310

E-mail: matthew-bowers@tamworth.gov.uk

Ian Kemp

Programme Officer for the Birmingham Development Plan

49 All Saints Place

Bromsgrove

Worcestershire

B61 0AX

15 September 2014

RE: BIRMINGHAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN – MAIN MATTERS RESPONSE AND EXAMINATION HEARINGS

Thank you for your e-mail dated 4 September, which set out the Inspector's request for Tamworth Borough Council to be represented at the examination hearings for the Birmingham Development Plan, specifically Matter F: The duty to co-operate in respect of strategic matters. I can confirm that Alex Roberts – Development Plan Manager and myself will be attending the sessions for that Matter. We also both wish to attend Matter E: Green Belt policy, the Langley SUE and Peddimore employment allocation.

The representations to the pre-submission consultation and options consultation set out this Council's position on Matter E and F. As the Inspector will be aware both Council's have signed a Duty to Co-operate statement.

All the Green Belt options which were assessed would impact on Tamworth, but in particular the preferred option C would have strategic implications for Tamworth. The impact upon strategic and local highways, access to retail, leisure and employment sites in Tamworth from the proposed housing needs to be assessed, also of great importance is the impact that large scale residential development would have on the deliverability of new housing development in Tamworth. These proposed new homes dwarf the level of growth in Tamworth and may have an impact on the viability of Tamworth's Local Plan and impact on the viability of specific sites. All of these strategic impacts need to be fully considered and assessed.

The proposed new employment area at Peddimore could meet some of Tamworth's unmet employment needs over the Plan period given that Tamworth is within Birmingham's travel to work area. However, there are concerns regarding the implications of a large new employment site in this location which has close links to the A38/A453 and M42. We would want to ensure that the proposed employment sites in Birmingham would not affect the deliverability of employment sites in Tamworth. This is particularly taking into account the links between living and working that the delivery of employment land in Tamworth will support the delivery of the housing requirement. Without new employment uses within Tamworth there may be more out commuting as well as having the obvious adverse impact on the local economy.

Policy TP40 includes support towards proposals for rail schemes with links to Tamworth. Paragraph 6.5.8 of the Green Belt Assessment looking at the employment area to be created states that "the possibility of new stations on the Tamworth line should be investigated". Has

exploratory work on this been carried out and if so what are the future proposals? What impacts will this have on Tamworth? Have these impacts been considered in allocating the sites?

There is no dedicated local service between Birmingham and Tamworth and the overcrowding on through services is a disincentive to travel by train. A reduction in journey time is therefore not desired as it would not necessarily provide any benefit to the existing situation. However, more regular services and more passenger capacity are needed in order to improve rail links between Birmingham and Tamworth. We would wish for these aspirations to be taken into account in any work carried out with the rail companies in improving the rail links in the area.

The Sustainability Appraisal identifies that the proposal to provide 30,000 houses of the recognised need for Birmingham within surrounding authorities involves a number of uncertainties due to an absence of detail which, when produced, could provide conclusions that could either support or involve major modification of the aspirations of the BDP. We would be concerned about how any changes could impact on Tamworth (taking into account that Tamworth is also unable to meet its own needs) and also ensure that surrounding authorities linked with Birmingham and Tamworth would work with both authorities to meet both deficits.

Tamworth Borough Council is unable to meet projected future housing and employment needs. There is concern that the GBSLEP spatial framework timescales are slipping and as such a solution to addressing the unmet needs for Tamworth (and for Birmingham) may take some time. We will continue to work with surrounding authorities towards a mutually agreeable solution.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Bowers
Head of Planning & Regeneration