

---

# Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future in Balsall Common

---

Scope, Issues and  
Options Consultation

---

Balsall Parish Council

---

## **What will this level of growth mean?**

**15. Based on the emerging evidence, do you believe that it is appropriate to plan for a housing requirement of 13,500 dwellings over the plan period, If not why not?**

We are concerned of a future challenge to the housing requirement because of a potentially flawed process.

1. Solihull Central Library was closed from 2 Jan to 18 Jan 2016 so consultation documents not available to the public for a third of the consultation period.

2. At the Public Meeting in Balsall Common on 11 January, Gary Palmer, the Solihull lead officer, stated that of the 7 options being reviewed 6 are those used in the original Local Plan process (UK City is the new option)

i. These options have already been critiqued and, in whole or part, either been incorporated or rejected in the adopted plan. Where rejected the grounds have not changed and they would not comply with a range of policies that Solihull are not proposing to review. By using them now Solihull appear to be opening the whole question of sites already approved in the adopted plan – isn't this akin to the problem they had with the Tidbury Green sites? If so it appears they have not learnt lessons.

ii. For Solihull to use them again in reviewing the adopted Local Plan is at best disingenuous at worst a fallacious basis for the review and could leave Solihull Council open to challenge for running a flawed consultation process.

3. In reviewing the adopted plan the starting point should have been:

i. Identify the sites approved in the plan:

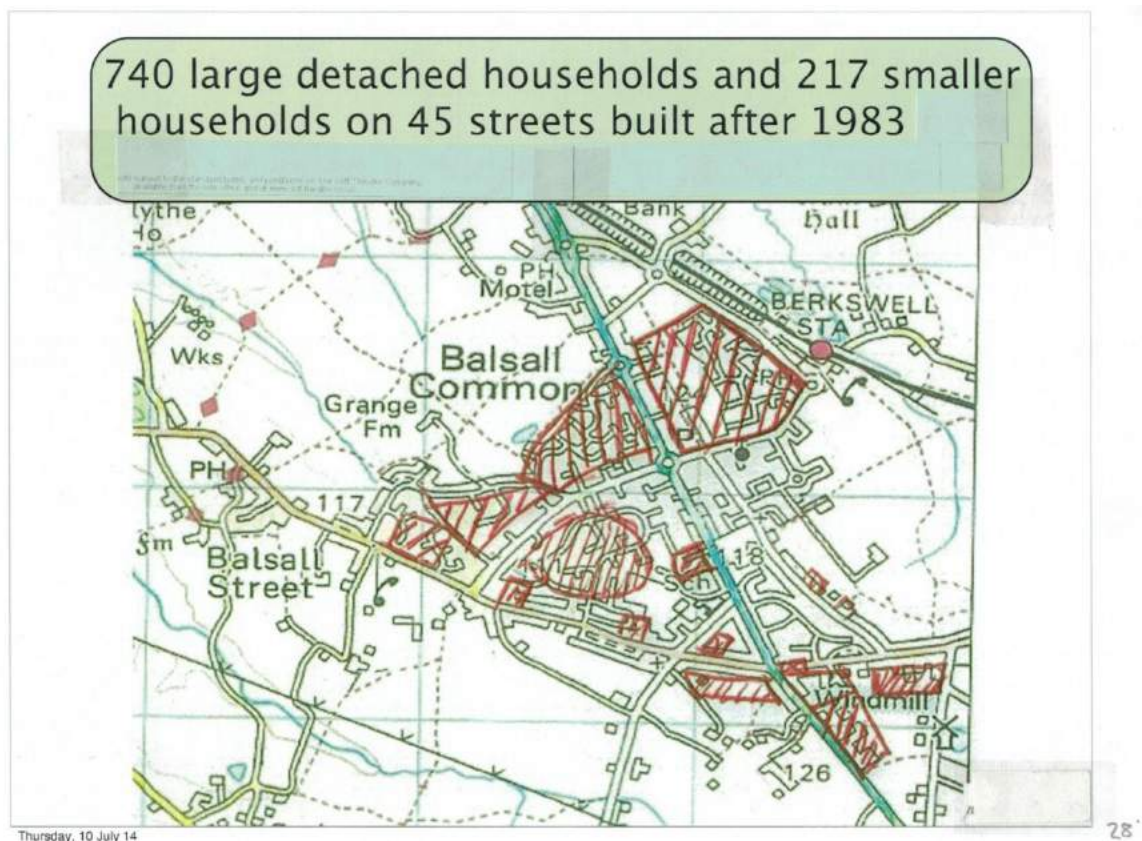
ii. Provide an update on which sites have been developed already, which sites developers have brought forward from the agreed phasing and got planning permission for with an estimate of when they will be constructed

iii. Assess the implications of these on the current and future 5 year land supplies to assess the implications i.e. what shortage will there be in future years and what effect will that have on total numbers of houses needed – risk is that this will mean more than the 4,000 minimum quoted by SMBC

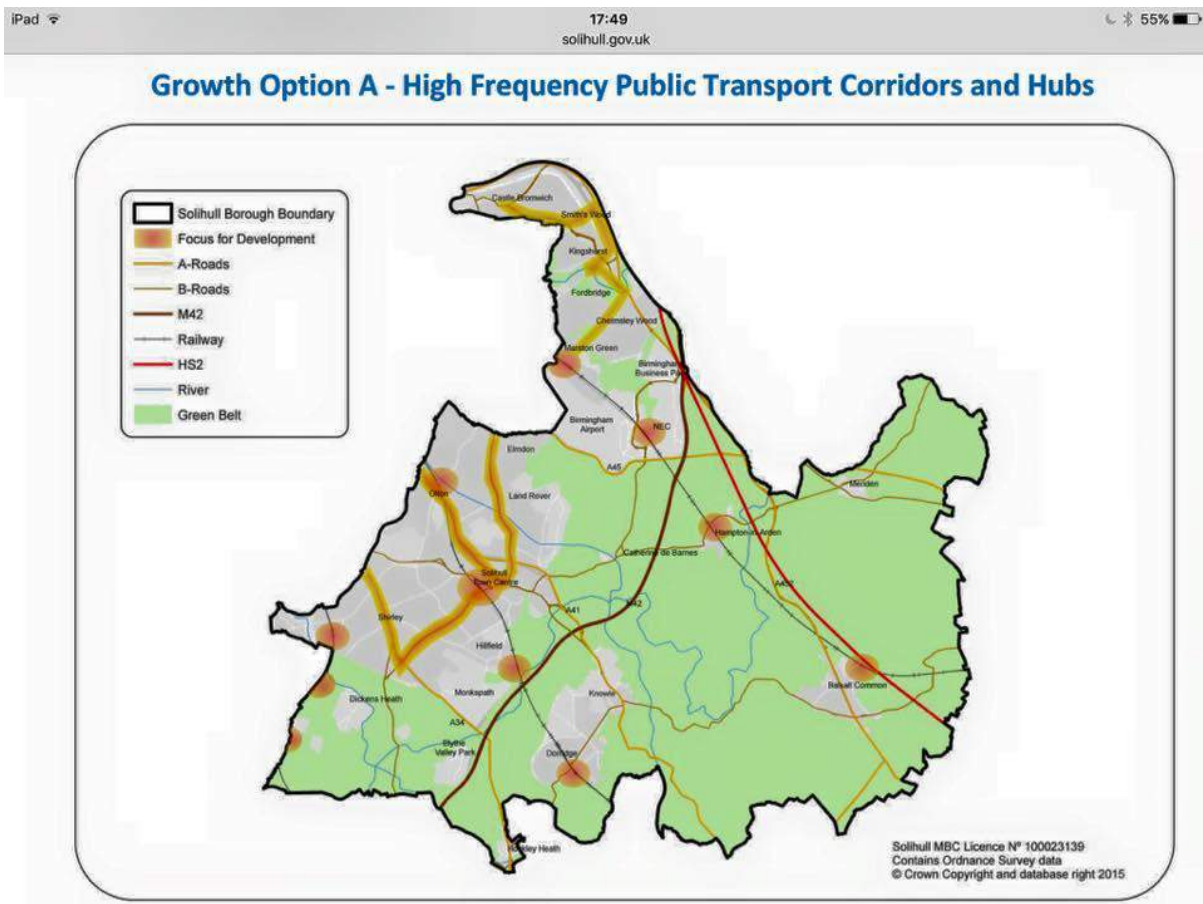
iv. Identify options to fill the gap identified, for sustainability link housing to employment locations and access to the Solihull Connected (& WM Transport Strategy) Solihull mass transit network proposals (rail/metro/sprint bus routes) “able to carry large numbers of people quickly, reliably, and comfortably (p33) and an attractive frequency (p36) – this would rule out most of the Rural East.

## Where should the growth take place?

There has been significant development of housing extending and infilling the village in the last thirty years WITHOUT a corresponding provision of supporting infrastructure and services. Since 2010 Balsall Common has been subject to over 10% of the total Borough residential planning approvals yet the village only has 3.4% of the Borough population. There is an oversupply of larger detached houses and there is an under-supply of small one and two bedroom dwellings to meet the needs of older people downsizing and to provide starter homes for younger people with a connection to Balsall Common. The public transport links are particularly poor and there is a reliance on private cars.



17. Do you believe that focussing development around public transport hubs and corridors is an appropriate option, if not why not? Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?

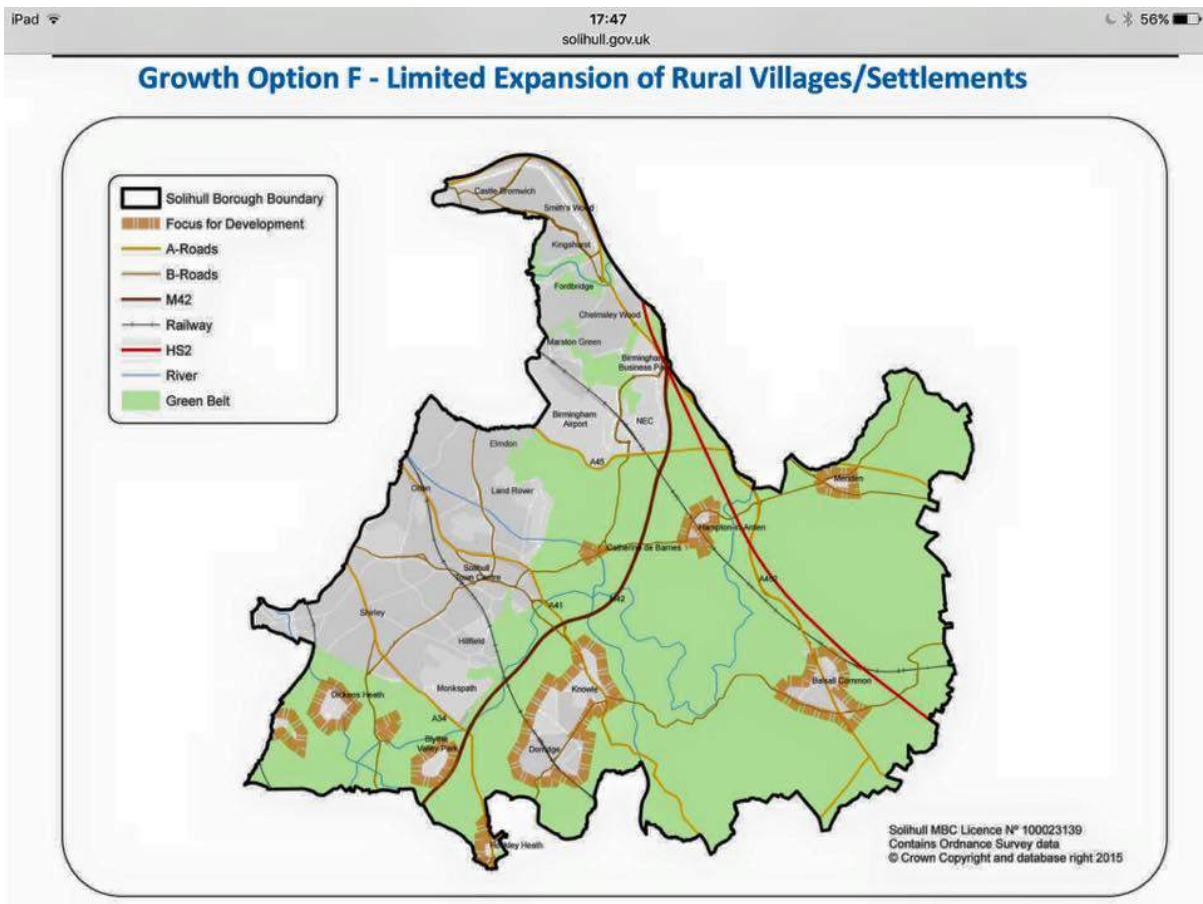


In response to a focus of development in Balsall Common around the railway station:

- This option could NOT be considered for housing development in Balsall Common until AFTER the construction of HS2 is completed in 2026 and would require an upgrading of the train service to Berkswell station to 4 trains per hour and/or the introduction of bus services to meet the plan definition of High Frequency Public Transport corridor.
- This option has the potential to contribute to the delivery of sustainable growth that the Borough needs to ensure a prosperous future.
- This option has the potential to provide affordable housing to meet the needs of local people with a local connection to Balsall Common.

- This option has the potential for housing to meet the Borough needs of single person households (older/disabled/young) with access to public transport. The location around Berkswell station has the potential for the development of high density single person households and small family dwellings such as those at Tile Hill Station.
- This option has the potential to focus on meeting the new market housing needs of newly forming and downsizing households in Balsall Common.
- This option has the potential to meet the requirement to deal with the severe shortage of affordable housing for an increasing aging population and for people with disabilities because of location of the Balsall Common Health Centre and the Berkswell Railway Station.
- This option has the potential to support the long term goal of the Solihull Local Plan to separate economic growth from increased car use and does encourage a shift to sustainable forms of travel.
- This option has the potential to address the acute shortage of affordable housing across the borough for those people on average and lower incomes.
- This option has the potential to meet the needs of the local transport plan by improving access to jobs if there are improved local train services from Berkswell Station to Birmingham, Coventry and public transport within the M42 gateway.
- This option has the potential to provide housing post 2026 with good connectivity to the 36,000 potential jobs within the key investment location of the M42 gateway.
- This option has an existing site (Site 19 Solihull Local Plan Dec 2013) with a plan for 65 houses in 2018.

**23. Do you believe that focussing development based on a limited expansion of rural settlements is an appropriate option, if not why not? Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?**



**In response to the limited expansion of Balsall Common:**

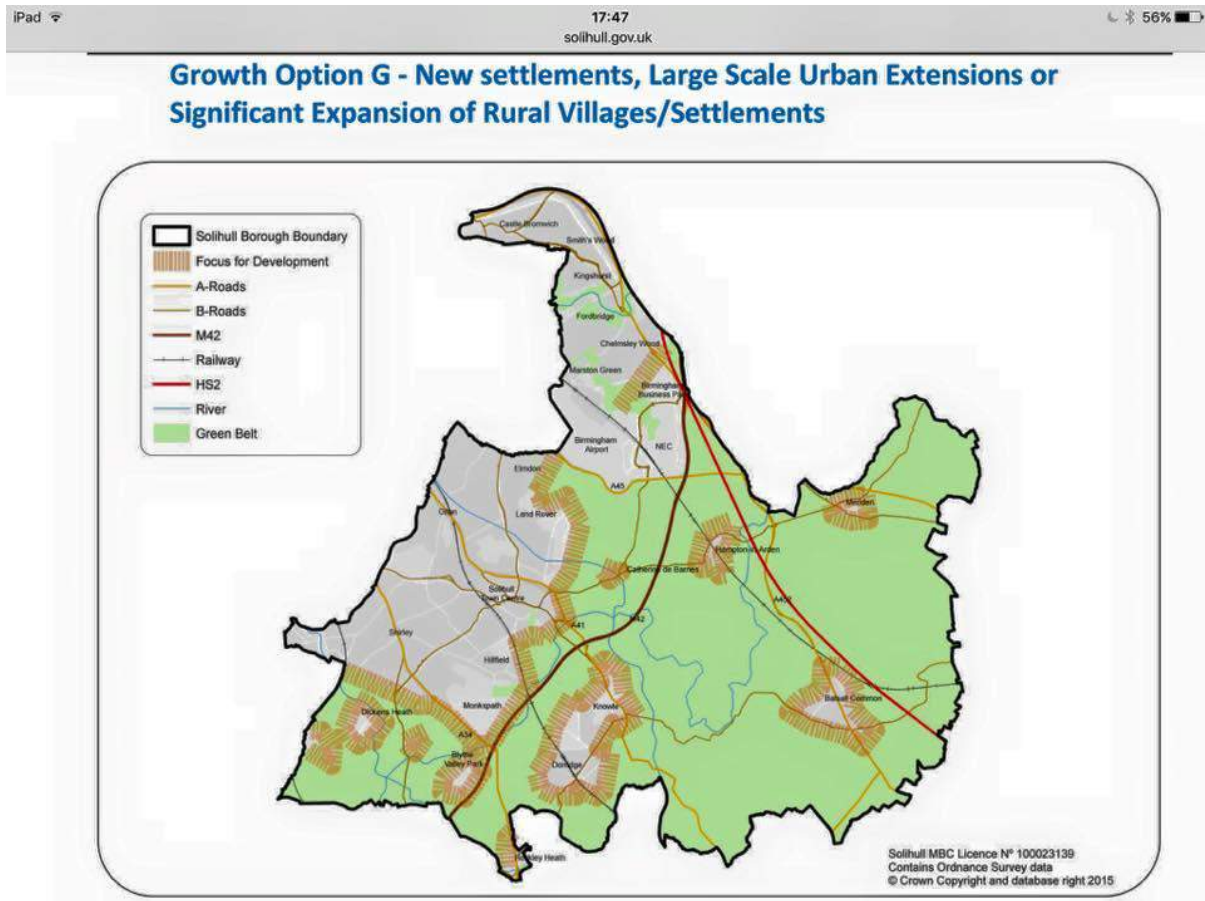
- This option could NOT be considered until AFTER the construction of HS2 is completed in 2026. The early development of the Kenilworth Road Sites (sites 22 and 23 Solihull Local Plan Dec 2013) will compromise an existing unsustainable infrastructure capacity and add to the adverse impact on Balsall Common of the construction of HS2.
- This option does NOT contribute to URBAN RENAISSANCE which is the emphasis of the Solihull Local Plan (adopted Dec 2013).
- This option does NOT meet the strategic aims of the Solihull Local Plan to CONSERVE and improve the character and quality of the environment.

- This option compromises the vital strategic gap between Birmingham/Solihull and Coventry known as the Meriden Gap and permits inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- This option does NOT develop housing close to the M42 economic gateway supported with the existing excellent transport connectivity but burdens a part of the rural area that suffers from relatively low levels of connectivity and accessibility, particularly by public transport.
- This option continues the POOR trend since the mid twentieth century that most residential development has occurred in rural settlements such as Balsall Common, which has almost doubled in size, without any significant appropriate corresponding investment into the infrastructure.
- This option does NOT provide housing close to the borough's employment opportunities from Jaguar Land Rover and TRW to business located in the Solihull Business parks, local centres and industrial estates.
- This option does NOT meet the requirement to deal with the severe shortage of affordable housing for an increasing aging population because of the lack of infrastructure and services required to support such development.
- This option is INAPPROPRIATE for housing to meet the Borough needs of single person households (older/disabled/young) with access to public transport.
- This option has an ADVERSE impact on existing residential amenity. This option destroys the rural area immediately around Balsall Common and destroys the distinctive landscape which is a very popular area for recreational walking with and without dogs and destroys a valuable network of public footpaths within the open countryside of the green belt.
- This option is ADVERSELY impacted with introduction of new flight paths bringing aircraft closer to the North, West and South of Balsall Common. New developments to the North West and South of Balsall Common would be under these new flight paths and would INCREASE the number of people affected by aircraft noise in the Borough.



- This option does NOT provide easy access to services and facilities such as jobs, education and fresh food retailers and potentially damages the cohesion of a community already under stress.
- This option does NOT make Solihull Borough a desirable place in which to live, work and invest.
- This option does not support the long term goal of the Solihull Local Plan to separate economic growth from increased car use and does not encourage a shift to sustainable forms of travel.
- This option does NOT locate housing development within 800m walk distance from primary school, doctors surgery and food shops.
- This option does NOT locate housing development within 400m of a bus stop with daytime service frequency of 15 minutes for access to local regional employment and railway station.
- This option INCREASES demand to travel by car and does not ensure sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport)
- This option would NOT protect, enhance and restore the diverse landscape features around Balsall Common.
- This option compromises the quality of life of future generations and does not protect and enhance the physical and natural environment.
- This option degrades the Arden landscape and destroys characteristic habitats destroying local distinctiveness.
- This option does NOT encourage better air quality.
- This option does NOT protect the amenity of dark skies from light pollution of existing and proposed occupiers.

24. Do you believe that focussing development in a new settlement, through a large scale urban expansion or via a significant increase of rural settlement is an appropriate option, if not why not? Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?



In response to the significant expansion of Balsall Common:

- This option does NOT contribute to URBAN RENAISSANCE which is the emphasis of the Solihull Local Plan (adopted Dec 2013).
- This option does NOT meet the strategic aims of the Solihull Local Plan to CONSERVE and improve the character and quality of the environment.
- This option compromises the vital strategic gap between Birmingham/Solihull and Coventry known as the Meriden Gap and permits inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

- This option has an ADVERSE impact on existing residential amenity. This option destroys the rural area immediately around Balsall Common and destroys the distinctive landscape which is a very popular area for recreational walking with and without dogs and destroys a valuable network of public footpaths within the open countryside of the green belt.
- This option could NOT be considered until AFTER the construction of HS2 is completed in 2026. The early development of the Kenilworth Road Sites (sites 22 and 23 Solihull Local Plan Dec 2013) will compromise an existing unsustainable infrastructure capacity and add to the adverse impact on Balsall Common of the construction of HS2.
- This option is ADVERSELY impacted with introduction of new flight paths bringing aircraft closer to the North, West and South of Balsall Common. New developments to the North West and South of Balsall Common would be under these new flight paths and would INCREASE the number of people affected by aircraft noise in the Borough.
- This option does NOT develop housing close to the M42 economic gateway supported with the existing excellent transport connectivity but burdens a part of the rural area that suffers from relatively low levels of connectivity and accessibility, particularly by public transport.
- This option continues the POOR trend since the mid twentieth century that most residential development has occurred in rural settlements such as Balsall Common, which has almost doubled in size, without any significant appropriate corresponding investment into the infrastructure.
- This option does NOT provide housing close to the borough's employment opportunities from Jaguar Land Rover and TRW to business located in the Solihull Business parks, local centres and industrial estates.
- This option does NOT meet the requirement to deal with the severe shortage of affordable housing for an increasing aging population because of the lack of infrastructure and services required to support such development.

- This option is INAPPROPRIATE for housing to meet the Borough needs of single person households (older/disabled/young) with access to public transport.
- This option does NOT provide easy access to services and facilities such as jobs, education and fresh food retailers and potentially damages the cohesion of a community already under stress.
- This option does NOT make Solihull Borough a desirable place in which to live, work and invest.
- This option does not support the long term goal of the Solihull Local Plan to separate economic growth from increased car use and does not encourage a shift to sustainable forms of travel.
- This option does NOT locate housing development within 800m walk distance from primary school, doctors surgery and food shops.
- This option does NOT locate housing development within 400m of a bus stop with daytime service frequency of 15 minutes for access to local regional employment and railway station.
- This option INCREASES demand to travel by car and does not ensure sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public)
- This option would NOT protect, enhance and restore the diverse landscape features around Balsall Common.
- This option compromises the quality of life of future generations and does not protect and enhance the physical and natural environment.
- This option degrades the Arden landscape and destroys characteristic habitats destroying local distinctiveness.
- This option does NOT encourage better air quality.
- This option does NOT protect the amenity of dark skies from light pollution of existing and proposed occupiers.