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Your Ref:

Our Ref: MJB/sw/21214

Date: 21 February 2014

Dear Sir

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation on the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) pre-submission document.

Telford & Wrekin Council recognises the pressures facing Birmingham in planning for future development needs up to 2031, as highlighted in the BDP. It is clearly of strategic significance to the rest of the [previous] regional grouping of authorities that Birmingham cannot accommodate its future development needs within its own boundary. It is therefore only right and proper that Birmingham seeks to establish a clear dialogue with those authorities with a strategic relationship to Birmingham in accordance with the duty to cooperate legislation, and Telford & Wrekin supports the broad approach advocated at this stage in the BDP.

Whilst it is acknowledged that separate processes are underway to address the duty to cooperate requirements in support of the BDP, and that Telford & Wrekin Council is involved in that process, it would be helpful to refer in the BDP itself to ongoing discussions with authorities not necessarily contiguous, but with an association with Birmingham such as Telford & Wrekin. This would ensure that for consistencies sake at least both Birmingham and Telford & Wrekin acknowledge each other as parties engaged in the respective plan preparation processes. At present, a conclusion that could be drawn from reading the consultation material is that only authorities in adjoining areas have been involved up to this point. The issues identified in the BDP are clearly different to those facing Telford & Wrekin, particularly in terms of land supply for both housing and employment development. It is on this basis that discussions have taken place to date between the authorities, as well as any future engagement in accordance with duty to cooperate requirements.

Yours sincerely

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Birmingham Development Plan – Duty to Co-operate

Action Notes of Meeting held:

1400, Thursday 20 February 2014, Telford and Wrekin Council Offices, Wellington

Present:

Michael Barker – Telford & Wrekin Council

Darren Oakley - Telford & Wrekin Council

David Carter – Birmingham City Council

Discussion

The discussion focussed around three issues, the GBSLEP Strategic Housing Study, the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and the Birmingham Development Plan.

Strategic Housing Study

DC explained to current position on the GBSLEP Strategic Housing Study and the inclusion of the Black Country in the work which would lead to two reports with a lot of common content. DC also explained that three other Districts had been identified as being part of the Birmingham and Black Country HMAs and these were North Warwickshire, Stratford and South Staffordshire.

DC indicated that the outcome of stages 1 and 2 of the study should be available by mid-April and that Stage 3 was particularly important because this would examine spatial options for the distribution of unmet growth and that the potential role of Telford needed to be examined as part of this process. It was agreed that DC would request that PBA should speak to Telford as part of this process since it was important that any assumptions in relation to Telford would need to be robust. The timescale PBA were working to envisaged completion of the Study in mid-May.

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

NB noted that the City Council had responded on the most recent consultation. The next step would be a further consultation on site allocations in April/May 2014 working towards a draft plan in June 2015. The SHMA was currently being updated although this has yet to be published.

The level of housing growth MB emphasised that the desire was to grow the town to the scale originally envisaged so the issue was more a question of the timescale in which this could be achieved. At the low end of the range growth over the plan period (2011 to 2031) the scale required to meet local needs was currently estimated in the region of 10.5K dwellings. At the upper end of the range MB stressed that a view had to be taken on what might be realistically achieved and this was likely to be around 26K dwellings. This position clearly raised scope for the inclusion of capacity in Telford as part of strategic housing options. Close working would be necessary to ensure the options were realistic and in principle more growth would have to be supported by necessary infrastructure and employment. Close liaison would be needed to ensure the options were agreed with Telford & Wrekin.