

## **EXAMINATION OF THE SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN – INSPECTORS INITIAL QUESTIONS**

This statement has been prepared as a response to matter (b) from the Inspectors’ initial request for information/clarification via their letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

**Matter (b) related to sites UK1 and UK2 and sought “clarification on the scale and type of development envisaged at each site in terms of land area, floor space and dwellings where applicable.”**

### **SITE UK1 – HS2 INTERCHANGE & ARDEN CROSS**

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#### **Background to site UK1**

1. Site UK1 is a national infrastructure led allocation brought forward as part of the wider UK Central Hub proposals, and is principally driven by the location of the new HS2 station within the site. The proposals are a unique opportunity to maximise the substantial economic benefits resulting from the delivery of the HS2 major infrastructure project and the development of the proposed HS2 Interchange station within the Borough (the first station on the line outside of London).
2. Alongside the delivery of HS2, the Hub proposals bring together the growth aspirations of the key economic assets of Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham Business Park and the proposals for Site UK1 known as the Arden Cross. It represents the principal growth area within the Borough.
3. The UK1 site is currently in the Green Belt and forms a triangle bounded by the A45, A452 and M42 which encompasses the HS2 interchange station and its associated infrastructure. The site is in a strategic location in terms of national road and rail infrastructure, which is to be improved through HS2 to facilitate the wider development of the UK Central Hub.
4. To deliver the full benefits of the UK Central Hub, it is necessary to remove site UK1 from the Green Belt. The Council consider there are exceptional circumstances to justify the release of this land in order to maximise the economic benefits of the substantial national infrastructure investment at this location through the HS2 rail link and interchange station (these are set out at paragraph 94 of the plan). This investment will act as a stimulus to bring local socio-economic benefits, to accommodate growth for the wider Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and West Midlands and to bring investment of national significance to the area.
5. To recognise the opportunities presented through the delivery of HS2 within the Borough, SMBC established the UK Central Urban Growth Company to act as a delivery vehicle to guide development of the Hub proposals. The UGC has brought together key stakeholders to produce a Hub Framework Plan (2018) and The Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan (2019) to set out the key development principles for the Hub Area. These documents, together with the Masterplans for the individual components in the area, including the NEC, Birmingham Airport and the UK1 site (known as Arden Cross) have all informed the Submission Draft Local Plan.
6. The Council are working in partnership with the Urban Growth Company and with key stakeholders to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document to guide development and the delivery of infrastructure across the Hub Area. Avison Young have been commissioned to undertake this work and have commenced its preparation starting with baseline work and scoping. It is anticipated that the Scope of the SPD will be shared as part of the Examination to demonstrate how the policies in the plan will be implemented.

## Development proposals

7. The site is included in the Submission Plan with an overall area of 140 hectares. The site encompasses the HS2 interchange station and will be connected to the adjacent assets within the UK Central Hub Area of Birmingham Airport, the NEC Campus and Birmingham International Station via an Automated People Mover (APM) provided as part of the HS2 project. Necessary approvals under the HS2 Act have been granted for the station building, the APM and surface level car parking provision with additional supporting infrastructure within the site. Initial work on the HS2 line has commenced on the site. These components constitute 57 hectares of land.
8. Arden Cross Ltd has been formed to act on behalf of the consortium of landowners with interest in the UK1 site. A Masterplan was published for consultation in September 2020 and a revised and updated version published on the Arden Cross website in April 2021. This seeks to guide development, setting out key development principles for the site and providing details on the type and scale of development including high level indicative zoning/phasing. This built on the growth aspirations for the wider UK Central Hub Area set out in the Hub Framework and Infrastructure Plan, which will both need updating in the proposed SPD. The Masterplan has informed the revised wording in the Submission Draft Local Plan. It should be noted that the development at UK1 is expected to take place over a 20 year time period, with a proportion of the development occurring beyond the plan period.
9. The Masterplan sets out a series of urban quarters through which the following key components will be delivered:
  - Residential Community - The creation of a new residential community delivering up to 3,000 new homes incorporating a mix of tenure, type and density
  - Innovation district - incorporating research and development facilities and high value manufacturing as well as opportunities for a higher education campus
  - Transportation Hub Plaza – incorporating Station square access to the interchange station, leisure, retail and cultural at ground floor and commercial offices/hotels and residential above
  - Central Avenue – a thoroughfare to enable movement between the Interchange Station and the wider UK Central area which will feature a high quality street scape with retail and leisure frontages.
  - Car free gateways and a Sustainable Transport Network
  - Parkland – network of interlinked landscaped areas with the 10ha Hollywell Brook nature corridor at the centre.
10. The Masterplan identifies four zones which broadly reflect the anticipated phasing of development, starting with the area to the north-west of Zone 1 which will be released first from 2023. Zones 2 and 4 to the south could come forward independently from 2025 and the balance of Zone 1 from 2027. Part of Zone 1 and Zone 3 around the Station is likely to be the last to be released from 2030.
11. The key components of each zone are:
  - Zone 1
    - Development plots around the HS2 interchange to establish a plaza and gateway to and from the HS2 station
    - Delivery of key utilities infrastructure

- Upgraded East Way to facilitate future development
- Multi storey car parking for HS2 and the wider Arden Cross development
- Mix of uses to establish commercial and living hub, including research and development, retail and leisure, residential, hotels, education facilities and advanced manufacturing

#### Zone 2

- Development plots to the south east of the HS2 station.
- Key uses research and development and residential
- Key infrastructure, multi storey car parking for HS2 and wider development

#### Zone 3

- Development plots to the east of the HS2 station
- Bridge connection to zone 2 and multi storey car parking
- Key uses include residential, further retail for the station and wider development and advanced manufacturing

#### Zone 4

- Development plots to the south west of the HS2 station as the last phase.
- Key infrastructure includes bridge connection to Zone 1 across Hollywell Brook
- Second largest phase in delivery of the development
- Significant residential development

12. Arden Cross Ltd have submitted representations<sup>1</sup> in respect of the Submission Draft Local Plan and it is their intention to be in a position to submit to the Examination a Statement of Common Ground with the Borough Council.

13. Further minor modifications have been put forward to revise policy wording in Policy P1 and UK1 at the time of submitting the Local Plan for examination to reflect certain points made in these representations. In particular, to reflect updated development principles set out in the Masterplan and to reflect that the inclusion of passenger facilities to support a second runway at Birmingham Airport no longer feature in the Birmingham Airport Masterplan.

### **Type of uses**

14. The scheme is a mixed-use urban scale development, with the predominant uses being residential and employment with supporting retail, leisure, and hotel floor space particularly at ground floor. Other uses could include higher education. The residential component is expected to deliver up to 3,000 dwellings.

15. In line with wider objectives of the UK Central proposals, it is expected that the employment component will focus on high end research and development facilities (B1a/b) and high value advanced manufacturing (B1c/B2) of regional and national significance. The site will also provide employment floorspace to meet local needs and this is recognised in the HEDNA (2020). The proposals feature opportunities for the co-location of higher education facilities to support the research and development proposals as part of an Innovation District.

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<sup>1</sup> The pdf of the submission is recorded under representor no. 6991.

## Scale of development

16. In progressing work on the UK Central proposals, the UGC has been working with key stakeholders across the Hub Area to understand its growth potential. The most up to date information for Site UK1 is provided through the revised Arden Cross Masterplan (2021). This has been prepared on behalf of the landowner consortium by leading international architects, technical and property advisors, after many years of dialogue with HS2 Ltd and other stakeholders, as well as public consultation in September 2020. It is a reasonable basis for determining the development capacity of the site within the plan period and beyond.
17. The developable area across the site is anticipated to be 59.90 hectares (assuming that the eventual solution for providing car parking for HS2 users is to develop multi-storey and not the currently approved surface parking). The Council, UGC and Arden Cross Ltd are all committed to delivering this as the best outcome for the site and the wider UK Central Hub area.
18. The masterplan shows that the site can accommodate a total of 892,337 sq m (GEA) of development (in addition to the station) including up to 3,000 residential units. The table below shows floor space by use. This information is provided from the Arden Cross Masterplan.

<i>Land use</i>	<i>SQ M</i>
Office	415,553
Industrial	71,060
Residential	301,752
Retail / leisure	28,864
Hotel	19,272
Education	55,836
<b>Total</b>	<b>892,337</b>

19. The Council recognises that development is expected to occur at UK1 over a long period of time, including beyond the plan period. Over this period, market conditions and circumstance will be subject to fluctuation and change. Bearing in mind this time period, the Council is keen to ensure that the policy around the nature and scale of development provides an enabling function that retains sufficient flexibility to facilitate development rather than be prescriptive or unduly restrictive.

## Development trajectory

20. It is understood that commencement of the scheme and phasing of development is dependent on the release of land following the delivery of HS2 and construction of the HS2 interchange station<sup>2</sup>. It is anticipated that development on the site will be delivered over a 20 year period and that this is likely to cover the period 2026 to 2046.
21. Arden Cross Ltd is currently seeking a development partner and anticipates being in a position to submit an outline planning application for the whole site as soon as the plan is adopted, so that early development could commence from no later than 2026. HS2 is expected to be fully operational by 2031, and therefore Arden Cross can potentially contribute to the

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<sup>2</sup> The latest HS2 land release information shows the first land being returned from 2023.

development trajectory in two of the three five-year cohorts covered by this plan. Inevitably, a proportion of development at the site will be delivered beyond the plan period.

22. The assumption in the Draft Submission Plan is that in the region of 500 dwellings will be provided at UK1 within the plan period, principally in the last 5 years up to 2036. This constitutes one sixth of the maximum 3,000 dwellings allowed for in the Masterplan and the representation from ACL considers this to be achievable. Recent work shows that potentially double this number could be delivered by 2036 and therefore Arden Cross Ltd is confident in supporting the Council’s position.
23. This will contribute to the overall 2,740 dwellings attributed to the UK Central Hub area during the plan period with the remainder being provided at the NEC.
24. It is assumed that the UKC Hub Area will be being developed at densities comparable to the Town Centre between 40dph and 150dph. The Submission Draft representation agrees with this indicating that Arden Cross Ltd intends to maximise the efficient use of Arden Cross given it will be well served by public transport
25. In terms of the delivery of other uses on the site, the early phases of the scheme will include advanced manufacturing and research and development uses, followed by retail and leisure, hotels, and education facilities as part of delivery of the Innovation Quarter and Central Plaza. It is reasonable to expect a proportion of these uses to come forward within the plan period from 2026.

### **Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2020 (HEDNA)**

26. Work undertaken in connection with the HEDNA sought to identify floorspace assumptions at UK Central. This work was a ‘snapshot’ at the time the study evidence was being collated, it should be noted that subsequent work by site promoters will result in updated figures. Nevertheless, for completeness the relevant extract from the HEDNA is provided below.

12.50 GL Hearn has revisited floorspace and employment assumptions with the lead stakeholders for the developments and set out potential employment requirements. UKC will provide a significant element of B Class floorspace within the plan period and beyond (NB: BHX is not planning direct provision of B Class uses). This is summarised below

**Table 104: B Class floorspace, UK Central Growth Hub**

Use	Location	2020-25	2025-30	2030-36	2020-36
<b>B1a/b</b>	JLR	4,000	0	0	4,000
	NEC	16,429	41,071	49,286	106,786
	Arden Cross	0	0	90,816	90,816
	Total	20,429	41,071	140,102	201,602
<b>B1c / B2</b>	JLR	19,764	38,209	42,906	100,878
	Arden Cross	0	30,536	0	30,536
	Total	19,764	68,745	42,906	131,414
<b>B8</b>	JLR	92,900	0	0	92,900
<b>Total B Class</b>		133,093	109,816	183,008	425,916

Source: GLH Analysis of UK Central Hub Stakeholder Data

27. Arden Cross Ltd have confirmed that they are confident of meeting or exceeding the total for B1c/B2 in the initial phase of development and there is potential for exceeding the figure for B1a/b by 2036.

## SITE UK2 – LAND AT DAMSON PARKWAY

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### **Background to site UK2**

28. Site UK2 occupies Green Belt land adjacent to the existing Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) plant and south of the A45 opposite Birmingham Airport. The site is in a strategic position in close proximity to (a) the national road network (M42 and M6) via Damson Parkway and (b) the wider UK Central Hub area.
29. The allocation was first included in the 2016 Draft Local Plan and was driven by the needs of JLR. This was in recognition of the important economic role that the operations of JLR have in the economy of the Borough as well as the wider regional and national economy. The allocation was to support the future growth aspirations of JLR in terms of the modernisation and expansion of the vehicle plant to enable its continued success in the global automotive industry. It was also intended to provide land for JLR related activities within the automotive and motorsport industries and has the potential to support the delivery of a wider range of employment activities to meet local needs. The existing plant is constrained in terms of expansion by its location on the edge of the residential area. It is therefore necessary to release adjacent Green Belt land to facilitate the future proposals of JLR. In doing so the parcel of land can also provide for other employment needs. SMBC have set out (at paragraph 106 of the Draft Submission Plan) the exceptional circumstances to release this land.
30. The site is included in the Submission Draft Plan as a development site with an overall area of 94 hectares. Within this wider site two parcels have already been granted planning permission to support JLR's activities; the despatch centre which is completed and has been operating since 2016, and the Logistics Operations Centre (LOC) which is currently under construction, but is now practically complete. These two significant developments along with the recently realigned Damson Parkway were pursued through individual planning applications that relied on demonstrating Very Special Circumstances to enable them to be approved despite being inappropriate developments within the Green Belt.
31. There are several constraints which reduce the net developable area of the site. Part of the site includes an area designated as a Local Wildlife Site; there are areas within flood risk zones 2 and 3; and features of biodiversity importance such as woodland and existing wildlife corridors. Furthermore Sports facilities at Solihull Moors Football Club and Birmingham Exiles RFC are currently located on parts of the site and alternative arrangements / facilities will need to be provided to facilitate development on these parts of the site.
32. The Council's Household Waste & Recycling Centre (HWRC) located off Coventry Road (some 3.5 km east of the site) is at capacity, and in its current format is not suitable for expansion. As part of an assessment of options to deal with these issues at the HWRC, alternative locations were considered, and it was identified that the UK2 site could accommodate a relocated HWRC. This was therefore included as an option in the Draft Submission Plan (Oct 2020). However, since then the Leader of the Council (in the context of the Council acting as operational/service provider of a HWRC) has given a commitment to Full Council that the relocation of the HWRC to this site would not be pursued. Further detail of this position provided within the ['Statement in Respect of Household Waste and Recycling Centre May 2021'](#) provided with the plan submission as document ref 472.
33. The Council are working in partnership with the Urban Growth Company and with key stakeholders to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document to guide development and the

delivery of infrastructure across the Hub Area. Avison Young have been commissioned to undertake this work and have commenced its preparation starting with baseline work and scoping. It is anticipated that the Scope of the SPD will be shared as part of the Examination to demonstrate how the policies in the plan will be implemented.

### **Scale of Development**

34. An initial development concept masterplan has been prepared on behalf of Prologis Ltd and Stoford Ltd, in collaboration with Solihull MBC Strategic Land and Property Resources Directorate. These represent the **main** landowner interests on the site. The concept masterplan was included within the Prologis/Stoford December 2020 Supporting Statement submitted in support of representations made to the Submission Draft Local Plan (under representor no. 7029<sup>3</sup>) and provides an indication of the scale and type of development proposals which could be accommodated on the site and anticipated phasing. Those representations also make the case that the UK2 site can also perform a role to meet strategic (regional) employment land needs.
35. The information in this section of this note reflects the details provided in the December 2020 supporting statement by the site promoters.
36. The concept plan identifies three delivery phases for the development of the site as follows:
- Phase 1 comprises the two parcels of land already granted planning permission. This is for (a) the despatch centre (an outdoor vehicle storage and loading area for new vehicles from the JLR plant) constituting around 14 hectares and now in use and (b) the logistics operations centre which is now practically complete, and is intended to provide 98,000sqm of floor space to provide logistics support (incoming components) to JLR. These two proposals make up 36.5 hectares of the allocation. As part of this first stage, infrastructure improvements have been completed in the form of an upgraded and realigned Damson Parkway to service both the Phase 1 development and the later stages of the allocation. To all intents and purposes, the allocation is seeking to provide an appropriate policy position for this element of the development which is already permitted and in use/under construction.
  - Phase 2 will involve land available once released from the Green Belt with a net developable area of approximately 25 hectares. The expected timescale for this phase is 2022 to 2026. This phase will include the provision of blue / green infrastructure.
  - Phase 3 involves the remaining parcels of land which would require requiring occupier relocations including alternative arrangements for Solihull Moors Football Club. The expected timescale is 2025 to 2030 and will constitute development of a net developable area of 14 ha.

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Net Area</i>	<i>Gross Area</i>	<i>Floorspace</i>
1	Up to 2021	27 ha	36.5 ha	98,000 sq m
2	2022-26	25 ha	42 ha	142,000 sq.m
3	2025-30	14 ha	15.5	60,000 sq.m
<b>Total</b>		<b>66 ha</b>	<b>94 ha</b>	<b>Max 300,000 sq m</b>

<sup>3</sup> The file name of the pdf is 7029\_UK2SupportingStatement

37. Thus on phases 2 and 3 (which are yet to be bought forward) there is 39ha of land available for development (which could deliver around 200,000 sq m of floorspace), 25ha of which is available now.

### **Type of development**

38. The allocation was driven by the need to support the expansion and operations of JLR but it was also in a position to contribute towards accommodating local employment needs. This would be particularly the case for those associated uses that could support key supply chain businesses.

39. With the effective completion of phase 1, the immediate needs of JLR appear to have largely been secured. There is scope within the site for remaining plots to come forward and be available for wider B class uses to meet a wider range of employment needs.

40. The location and scale of development could draw occupiers meeting local needs but also regional and national occupiers. The Prologis/Stoford submission sets out an overall vision to provide for high quality advanced manufacturing and logistics site to align with the wider objectives of the UK Central proposals that can perform the role of a regionally strategic employment site.

### **Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2020 (HEDNA)**

41. Work undertaken in connection with the HEDNA sought to identify floorspace assumptions at UK Central. This work was a 'snapshot' at the time the study evidence was being collated, it should be noted that subsequent work by site promoters will result in updated figures. Nevertheless, for completeness the relevant extract from the HEDNA is provided below.

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<b>B8</b>	JLR	92,900	0	0	92,900
<b>Total B Class</b>		<b>133,093</b>	<b>109,816</b>	<b>183,008</b>	<b>425,916</b>

Source: GLH Analysis of UK Central Hub Stakeholder Data

### **Representations by JLR and Birmingham Airport Limited (BAL)**

42. Both JLR and BAL have made representations on uses that could be accommodated on site UK2. Their representations on this policy are under references 13997 and 13773 respectively<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The representor numbers for JLR and BAL (where a full copy of their representations can be found) are 313 and 2471 respectively.