

**Statement of Common Ground and Cooperation
for the Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire (CSW) Sub-Region**

September 2012

This agreement is between:

Coventry City Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Warwick District Council
Stratford District Council
Rugby Borough Council
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
North Warwickshire Borough Council
Warwickshire County Council

1. Context

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 (the Act), accompanying regulations, and National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) have introduced and described the 'Duty to Cooperate' (DtC). This ostensibly replaces the Regional (Spatial) Strategy (RS), which at the time of writing remains legally in force as part of the development plan.
- 1.2 This statement sets out:
- a) how the Councils within the sub-region have been and intend to cooperate on common issues
 - b) our joint position with regard to the key common issues facing the sub-region
- 1.3 We have discussed the possibility of preparing a joint Core Strategy (CS) / Local Plan (LP) and have concluded that this is not practical because we are at different stages of plan preparation and with Rugby Borough Council having an adopted Core Strategy (June 2011).
- 1.4 Notwithstanding the impracticalities of preparing a joint plan, this statement comprises agreement that has been reached between the parties listed above, for the purposes of guiding strategic decisions and to set out clearly any issues that may require further work towards individual (bilateral) agreements.

2 How will we discharge the Duty to Cooperate

- 2.1 The Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Sub-Region (CSW) has a proven track record of working constructively together to set out and deliver a shared vision for the area. In the past, this has resulted in the strategy promoted by CSW being used to deliver a brief period of substantial housing growth in Coventry, by holding a moratorium on windfall housing developments in the south of the county (Warwick and Stratford Districts), thereby directing delivery of new housing to the city of Coventry.

- 2.2 Notwithstanding the Duty to Cooperate as described by the Localism Act 2011, CSW will continue to work together to find new ways of delivering our shared ambitions, wherever possible in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 4.3 of this statement.
- 2.3 In the event that there is broad agreement that a strategic issue affects some but not all of the CSW member authorities, specific discussions will be held to reach consensus. These meetings will be scheduled in a timely manner. In the event that agreement cannot be reached, a common statement will be published to identify the precise area/s of dispute, and each party's position with respect to each outstanding issue.
- 2.4 It is acknowledged that a situation with each party finding themselves in an entrenched position is likely to result in formal objections being made. This is the last resort. To avoid this as far as possible, we each commit to discuss concerns openly, at the earliest opportunity, in an effort to reach formal agreement. This can take the form of a specific bilateral or multilateral agreement, a statement of common ground, or any other appropriate format.

3 Overall development strategy

- 3.1 The general CSW approach is to pursue a jobs-led growth strategy . This means striking a balance between employment-generating development and its associated housing needs. This remains a key corner stone for the sub-region.
- 3.2 A key element of this will be to ensure that each Core Strategy/Local Plan contains an infrastructure delivery plan, which can inform strategic infrastructure planning and funding at the same time as ensuring development across all parts of the sub region remains viable.

4 Level of housing provision

- 4.1 Although there is no sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), there is broad consistency between methodologies and assumptions used by individual SHMA's. They however do not all consider the same timescales which means that specific housing targets cannot be set out in a consistent way across the area.
- 4.2 There is agreement between CSW member authorities that the current interpretation of evidence shows that all CSW member authorities are capable of meeting their housing requirements within their borders. This means that there is no requirement from any local authority to seek to meet any part of their housing requirements within another area.
- 4.3 The CSW member authorities will, as a matter of course, continue to plan to accommodate their own needs. However in the event of:
- a) any Council needing to increase its housing requirement
and
 - b) there is strong evidence that the constraints set out in footnote 9 of paragraph 14 of the NPPF make it impractical to provide for the required level of housing growth within its borders
- then (and only then), the shortfall in the requirement should be addressed through discussion with the other sub regional authorities and/or with neighbouring sub regions.

5 Distribution of housing provision

- 5.1** In the spirit of Localism, the distribution of housing is a matter for each Council to address to best suit local circumstances. Where the distribution of housing has potential cross-border impacts then bi-lateral discussions will take place between the Councils concerned.

6 Employment Land Provision

- 6.1** Local targets for the amount of employment land (B-class) to be available will be set with the intention that local needs will be met, by providing an appropriate range and choice of sites that are attractive to the market.
- 6.2** As part of the jobs led strategy we will seek to support large scale inward investment in to the sub region by ensuring, through our Core Strategies/Local Plans, there is good provision of a variety of inward investment sites.
- 6.3** We recognise the proposals for the Coventry and Warwickshire Gateway are of particular significance and will have a sub-regional impact. We will work together across the sub region to identify how best to address that impact.

7 Other Sub-regional issues

- 7.1** In addition to the issues identified above, there are a number of other issues that need to be addressed at a sub-regional level. The mechanisms described in section 2 above will be used to address these issues.
- 7.2** Other issues include:
- a) The amount and distribution of new office and retail space
 - b) Housing mix and types, including gypsies and travellers and accommodating an ageing population
 - c) Transport strategy
 - d) Sub-regional health inequalities
 - e) Strategic Infrastructure Planning – including Community Infrastructure Levy schemes
 - f) Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape
 - g) Minerals safeguarding, winning, working and reinstatement of land; and
 - h) Strategic waste management

8 Cross-boundary planning

- 8.1** The Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire sub-region will seek to work across the boundary of the sub-region to work with neighbouring sub-regions on a range of planning and environmental matters.
- 8.2** Where individual local authorities border neighbours who are outside this sub-region, it will be important to ensure that cooperation is undertaken with those neighbours. Examples include Rugby working with Daventry, Stratford-on-Avon working with Redditch and Bromsgrove, Solihull and Coventry working with the other metropolitan authorities in the West Midlands and North Warwickshire working with Tamworth and Lichfield. A Strategic agreement is has been prepared for the West Midlands Metropolitan Councils and an agreement is in place between North Warwickshire, Tamworth and Lichfield, relating to Tamworth's housing need being

partly provided for in North Warwickshire and Lichfield. These agreements will impact on our sub-region and need to be taken in to account in the work we do.

- 8.3 On transport matters Warwickshire County Council will continue to work beyond the sub-regional boundaries with Coventry City Council Northamptonshire CC, Gloucestershire CC, Leicestershire CC and a Staffordshire on Highway and Solihull, Centro, Network Rail and the Highways Agency on transport matters.
- 8.4 Warwickshire County Council, as the Waste Planning Authority, is working collaboratively with the other Waste Planning Authorities across the West Midlands through the Resources Technical Advisory Body (RTAB).
- 8.5 Warwickshire County Council, as the Minerals Planning Authority, has a duty to ensure that there is sufficient supply of aggregates to meet the demands of the construction industry, therefore, to meet the demands for growth. The County Council is working with other Mineral Planning Authorities and industry to collect data on supply and demand for aggregates (Aggregates Working Party). The information indicates land-banks for aggregates, supply in the sub-region and flows in and out of the sub-region for aggregates.