

Coventry Local Plan Review

Regulation 19

Proposed Submission (Publication) Stage Representation Form

(guidance note below)

Ref:

(For official use only)

Name of the Plan
to which this
representation
relates:

**Coventry Local Plan Review – Regulation 19 Proposed
Submission (Publication)**

Please return to Coventry City Council in writing or electronically by 23:59 03 March 2025 email to planningpolicy@coventry.gov.uk, via our consultation portal <https://coventrycitycouncil.inconsult.uk/system/home> or by post to Planning Policy Team, PO Box 7097, Coventry, CV6 9SL

Please refer to the following data protection/privacy notice:

www.coventry.gov.uk/planningpolicyprivacynotice

Please also note that that a copy of your representation(s) will be made available to the Planning Inspectorate and to the person appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination (i.e. the Inspector) and the Programme Officer. and that your representation(s) will be 'made available' in line with the Regulations (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulations 20, 22 and 35). This includes publication on Coventry City Councils website (personal details will be redacted in line with the Privacy Notice).

This form has two parts:

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s).

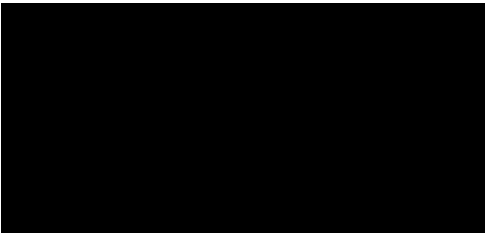
Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation (if applicable) boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title	<input type="text" value="Miss"/>	<input type="text" value="Miss"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Lisa"/>	<input type="text" value="Lisa"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Luong"/>	<input type="text" value="Luong"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Planner"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Tetlow King Planning on behalf of the West Midland Housing Association Planning Consortium"/>	<input type="text" value="Tetlow King Planning on behalf of the West Midlands Housing Association Planning Consortium"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Unit 2 Eclipse Office Park"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Staple Hill"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Bristol"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="BS16 5EL"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	
E-mail Address	<input type="text"/>	

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation: Tetlow King Planning on behalf of the West Midlands Housing Association Planning Consortium (WMHAPC).

3. To which part of the Local Plan Review does this representation relate?

Paragraph Policy

- Policy DS1: Overall Development Needs
- Policy DS2: The Duty to Co-operate and partnership working
- Policy GB1: Green Belt
- Policy H1: Housing Land Requirements
- Policy H3: Provision of New Housing
- Policy H4: Securing a Mix of Housing
- Policy H6: Affordable Housing
- Policy IM1: Developer Contributions for Infrastructure

4. Do you consider the Local Plan Review is:

(1) Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="text"/>
(2) Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="text"/>
(3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="text"/>

Please tick as appropriate.

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan Review is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the Duty to Co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan Review or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Policy DS1: Overall Development Needs

Draft Policy DS1 sets out that the Council will make provisions for an additional 29,100 dwellings over the 20-year Plan period between 2021 and 2041, equating to 1,455 dpa. It is understood that the Council will not be utilising the standard method to identify its Local Plan housing requirement, as explained at paragraphs 3.6 to 3.8 of the draft plan. The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out that this may be acceptable where the Council can justify an alternative approach¹. The Council must be prepared to robustly justify its proposed housing requirement methodology at the Local Plan Examination.

¹ Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 2a-003-20241212

We note that the proposed housing requirement figure of 1,455 dpa is 18% higher than the 1,230 dpa housing requirement figure in the current adopted plan, which is encouraging.

Notwithstanding, the WMHAPC notes the Council's approach to the proposed housing requirement, particularly the exclusion of the 35% urban uplift requirement of the NPPF (2023)² for major cities such as Coventry. The Council has opted to base its housing requirement on 2021 Census data rather than the 2014 population projections, citing concerns about the latter's validity. While we acknowledge the importance of using the latest data available, we note that the 2021 Census was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, which may also impact its reliability. A balanced, evidence-based approach is crucial, and at present, the robust justification for departing from the standard method remains unclear as it is solely reliant on the disagreement on population projections. As a result, Coventry's housing requirement drops to just 1,455 dpa (29,100 over the plan period). This is unreasonable, unjustified, and unsound.

The adopted Local Plan already acknowledges concerns about census data reliability. However, previous assessments including the Coventry & Warwickshire Joint SHMA (2013) accounted for these concerns while maintaining a robust housing need calculation. IcenI, the Council's own consultants, support a deviation from the 2014 projections but still apply the standard method framework, including the urban uplift. This is consistent with their approach in other cities, such as Birmingham and Leicester, where unmet housing needs were planned for in surrounding areas. If Coventry cannot meet all of its housing needs within its boundaries, it must identify and accommodate this unmet need in collaboration with neighbouring authorities.

It is noted that under the standard method calculation of the latest NPPF (2024), the housing requirement for Coventry would be 1,527 dpa. If the Council wishes to continue with the Local Plan preparation under the transitional arrangements, it must apply the full standard method calculations of the NPPF (2024).

However, if the Council intends on continuing with the standard method of the NPPF (2023), then it must apply the uplift which would equate to 1,964 dpa as acknowledged in paragraph 3.26 of the IcenI report titled Review of Coventry's Local Housing Need (June 2024) which states that "*With the further 35% urban uplift then applied, the overall need shown was for 1,964 dwellings per annum.*"

The approach taken in this Plan by not including the urban uplift does not reflect the proactive planning required to meet Coventry's needs, nor does it align with the vision of the adopted Local Plan, which committed to planning for unmet housing needs in cooperation with neighbouring authorities. This decision reduces the supply of new homes by 437 dpa, equivalent to 8,740 homes over the Plan period, making it harder for people to find affordable housing. With fewer homes available, house prices and rents could rise, putting more pressure on local families and key workers.

Given these concerns, the WMHAPC encourages the Council to reconsider its approach and apply the full urban uplift. This would help ensure that Coventry meets its housing needs, supports economic growth, and provides enough affordable homes for local residents.

² Paragraph 62

Policy DS2: The Duty to Co-operate and partnership working

The WMHAPC welcomes the Council's plans to work in collaboration with neighbouring authorities to ensure affordable housing needs are met, sharing responsibilities amongst the authorities within Warwickshire. The NPPF requires local authorities to maintain effective cooperation, setting out at paragraph 24 that *"Local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) continue to be under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries."*

Policy GB1: Green Belt

The WMHAPC is disappointed that the Council has chosen not to include a separate Rural Exception Site Policy in the Regulation 19 Plan. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight that Paragraph 82 of the NPPF (2024) explains that *"Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this."*

Such sites are specifically recognised as exceptions to inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Paragraph 154(f) of the NPPF (2024) sets out the limited circumstances in which new buildings may be permitted in the Green Belt, including:

"A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites);"* (Our emphasis).

Despite this clear national guidance, we note that the Council has not only declined to include a Rural Exception Site Policy but has also opted to remove reference to infill development within the Green Belt. As we previously raised during the Issues and Options consultation, the Council has not introduced policies that would support the delivery of affordable housing in rural communities within the authority area. Coventry's latest Annual Monitoring Report (AMR December 2024) highlights a consistent under-delivery of affordable homes across the city. Furthermore, the Council's latest AMR also indicates that Coventry holds 2.59 years of supply. Introducing a dedicated Rural Exception Site Policy could help address this issue by facilitating much-needed housing in rural areas where land would not normally be considered suitable for development.

Given the pressing need for affordable housing across Coventry as well as neighbouring authorities in Warwickshire, particularly in rural areas, we strongly urge the Council to reconsider its approach. Implementing policies that enable the delivery of rural affordable housing would align with national policy and help ensure that the housing needs of all communities, including those in rural areas, are met.

Policy H1: Housing Land Requirements

As noted previously, the Council's AMR (December, 2024) states that Coventry currently hold 2.59 years of supply, well below the required minimum of five years supply. This raises significant concerns about the city's ability to meet housing demand.

Criterion 3 of draft Policy H1 states that *"Housing land will be released in order to maintain a continuous 5 year supply of housing land in order to support a varied and flexible land supply to support housing delivery and sustainable development. This will be monitored through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report."* While this commitment is noted, the Council has not provided a clear strategy for how land will be released across the city to ensure sustainable housing delivery throughout the plan period. Given the current shortfall in housing land supply, the WMHAPC seeks clarity on the specific mechanisms and strategy the Council intends to implement to address this issue. Without a well-defined approach, there is a risk that housing delivery will continue to fall short, exacerbating affordability challenges and limiting access to homes for residents in Coventry.

Policy H3: Provision of New Housing

The WMHAPC previously raised concerns about the blanket application of Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) for all new residential developments. There are concerns that the blanket application of the NDSS across all residential development, including affordable tenures, will undermine the viability of many development schemes. This will potentially result in fewer affordable homes being delivered as optional technical standards have implications for build costs and sales values, with implications in turn for development viability.

We highlight that the PPG requires local authorities to justify the need for NDSS through considering:

- ***"need*** – *evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impacts of adopting space standards can be properly assessed, for example, to consider any potential impact on meeting demand for starter homes.*
- ***viability*** – *the impact of adopting the space standard should be considered as part of a plan's viability assessment with account taken of the impact of potentially larger dwellings on land supply. Local planning authorities will also need to consider impacts on affordability where a space standard is to be adopted.*
- ***timing*** – *there may need to be a reasonable transitional period following adoption of a new policy on space standards to enable developers to factor the cost of space standards into future land acquisitions."*

(Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 56-020-20150327)

In light of the above, it is not clear that the Council has provided evidence demonstrating the need for NDSS across all new developments in Coventry. If the Council continues to seek the NDSS requirement, then it must do so in line with the PPG to ensure the policy is justified and found sound at examination. It is noted that the NDSS is not a building regulation and remains solely within the planning system as a form of technical planning standard. It is not essential for all dwellings to achieve these standards in order to provide good quality living.

It is also relevant that Homes England only requires affordable homes to meet 85% of the NDSS to receive funding. For affordable housing in particular, there may be instances where achieving NDSS is impractical and unnecessary, as it may result in for example,

higher rental and heating costs. Homes delivered in the current market by housebuilders are often lower than the 85% requirement. As such, the WMHAPC recommends that other quality standards should be used to determine housing quality, unless the Council can properly evidence the need for NDSS.

On sites that deliver 100% affordable housing, NDSS presents issues in that it increases the risk of financial impairment. The WMHAPC members raise that if a property costs more than it is worth, which is often the case on design and build sites that are 100% affordable and in a low value area such as Coventry, then it can cause a financial impairment, or in some cases, a loss. It is therefore imperative that schemes are able to continue to provide good quality housing but at 85% NDSS (which is the accepted position from Homes England) on sites that are delivering 100% affordable housing due to build costs. The below example has been provided by Aspire Housing Association in relation to a current scheme they have in Coventry, which shows the financial implications of delivering 100% NDSS on 100% affordable housing schemes.

85% NDSS

Open Market Value per unit average £210k.

Build Cost at 85% NDSS per unit plus acquisition and fees, less grant £196,503.

Headroom per unit of £13,497

100% NDSS

Open Market Value per unit average £210k.

Build Cost at 100% NDSS per unit plus acquisition and fees, less grant £213,352.

Headroom per unit of £3,352.

As can be seen, NDSS can have substantial impacts on viability. If there is an increased risk of impairment, developers will be more unlikely to deliver new affordable housing.

The WMHAPC would like to raise concerns with the draft Policy H3 which requires all new market and affordable housing developments to be built to meet Building Regulations M4(2) standard ('accessible and adaptable dwellings') and for all major residential schemes, 10% should meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3) standard ('wheelchair user dwellings'). The WMHAPC accepts that there is a growing need for accessible and adaptable homes, however, there is concern that the 10% requirement for M4(3) dwellings could have considerable implications on viability and overall affordable housing delivery in Coventry. Some sites and/or schemes do not lend themselves to the statutory provision of M4(3) units. In light of this, the WMHAPC requests that the Council exercises an element of discretion when considering proposals.

Policy H4: Securing a Mix of Housing

The WMHAPC welcomes Coventry's approach at criterion 2 which sets out various circumstances where it may not be appropriate to follow the housing mix as set out in the including viability constraints, physical constraints associated with smaller sites, locational issues etc. which would allow the opportunity for the delivery of more affordable housing in the authority area. This shows that the Council has taken a flexible approach to ensuring development is being delivered on a case-by-case basis.

Policy H6: Affordable Housing

Criterion 3 of Draft Policy H6 proposes 25% affordable housing on sites of 10 or more dwellings (gross) located within the area identified at Appendix 9(c) on individual sites,

or on 'major sites' of more than 1ha. However, this threshold does not align with the NPPF (2024), which defines at paragraph 65 that:

"Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer).." (Our emphasis).

The definition of 'major developments' is defined at Annex 2 of the NPPF which sets out that:

"Major development: For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015." (Our emphasis).

The above definition of major development as per the NPPF clearly indicates that major sites are defined as sites of 10 or more dwellings or those larger than 0.5ha. The proposed policy 1ha threshold is therefore inconsistent with national policy and would result in fewer sites contributing to affordable housing delivery, reducing overall provision. In light of the above, draft Policy H6 should be revised to align with the NPPF.

Another concern is that at Appendix 9(c) identifies a significant area of the inner city where affordable housing will not be sought. The WMHAPC has significant concerns with this approach as it could lead to a significant reduction in affordable housing delivery across Coventry, but particularly in areas where housing need is often most acute. The inner city often has limited housing supply, inflated rents, and the greatest need for affordable housing, making it essential that contributions are secured in these locations to create a mixed and balanced communities. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states that *"The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community."* The exemption of inner-city developments from affordable housing requirements directly conflicts with this principle, potentially leaving a significant portion of the local community without access to genuinely affordable homes and again would fail to create a mixed and balanced community.

Moreover, the Council should be taking proactive steps to meet the identified housing need as set out in the HEDNA, which identifies an annual requirement of 941 Social/Affordable Rental dwellings and 149 Affordable Home Ownership dwellings. Exempting a large part of the city from affordable housing obligations risks undermining these targets and exacerbating affordability issues.

It is also unclear whether the decision to exempt inner-city sites from affordable housing has been subject to robust viability testing. Given the high demand for affordable housing, the Council must provide clear evidence to justify this policy approach and ensure it does not negatively impact overall housing delivery.

The WMHAPC welcomes the inclusion of flexibility in affordable housing tenures within the draft policy. In particular, we support criterion 10, which recognises that while the HEDNA serves as a guide, a more evidence-based approach, incorporating engagement with the Council, Registered Providers, and the latest Homefinder data can better reflect local housing needs.

We support criterion 12 of draft Policy H6 which states that a reduction in the requirements of Policy EM11 (Energy Infrastructure) may be presented for assessment in order to maximise Affordable Housing delivery.

Our comments in response to draft Policy H3 also apply to criterion 14 of draft Policy H6.

Policy IM1: Developer Contributions for Infrastructure

The WMHAPC supports the Council's commitment to ensuring that developments contribute to necessary infrastructure, which is essential for creating sustainable and well-served communities. However, as currently drafted, the policy does not adequately consider the financial viability of 100% affordable housing schemes. These developments operate within tight financial constraints, often relying on public funding and subsidies to remain feasible. Without specific exemptions or reductions in infrastructure contributions, the policy may unintentionally hinder the delivery of much-needed affordable homes. To address this, the WMHAPC urges the Council to include a caveat clarifying that planning decision-makers should take viability constraints into account when applying the requirement: *"The Council will, where appropriate, seek to secure site-specific infrastructure investments and/or contributions, as well as off-site contributions and/or investments."*

While criterion 5 acknowledges that applicants facing viability concerns may submit a detailed Viability Assessment, this approach places an additional administrative and financial burden on affordable housing providers. To streamline the process and provide greater certainty, the WMHAPC recommends an explicit exemption for 100% affordable housing schemes from infrastructure contributions. Without this safeguard, there is a risk that such projects could become financially unviable, delaying or preventing their delivery.

Moreover, to ensure that necessary infrastructure is still provided alongside affordable housing developments, the Council should explore alternative funding mechanisms. This could include joint approaches such as pooling S106 contributions from neighbouring developments, leveraging government grants, or forming partnerships with housing associations and developers to secure funding from external sources. By adopting a more flexible and strategic approach, the Council can support the delivery of affordable homes while ensuring that essential infrastructure is not compromised.

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan Review legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the Duty to Co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan Review legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please refer to our responses to question 5.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note: In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues they identify for examination.

7. To which part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report does this representation relate?

Paragraph

n/a

Please add any further comments relating to the SA report in the box below

n/a

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

8. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

X

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

☐

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

9. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.