



# Community and Social Value Strategy

Document number - 100420117MM07002

Revision	Date	Originator	Checker	Approver	Description
a	January 2021	GS SS	Kelly Worthington	Tim Fawcett	Draft to client
b	May 2021	GS SS	Liz Hurst	Tim Fawcett	Final

Information class: Standard

This document is issued for the party which commissioned it and for specific purposes connected with the above-captioned project only. It should not be relied upon by any other party or used for any other purpose.

We accept no responsibility for the consequences of this document being relied upon by any other party, or being used for any other purpose, or containing any error or omission which is due to an error or omission in data supplied to us by other parties.

This document contains confidential information and proprietary intellectual property. It should not be shown to other parties without consent from us and from the party which commissioned it.

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Community and Social Value at Arden Cross	4
1.2	Local context	5
1.3	Future trends and aspirations	6
1.3.1	Future Trends	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Adaptation and Resilience</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Priorities for community and social value	7
2.2	Interventions	7
2.2.1	Provision of suitable housing for all	7
2.2.2	Provision of employment and education	8
<b>3</b>	<b>Nature-led</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1	Priorities for community and social value	9
3.2	Interventions	9
3.2.1	Community green spaces	9
3.2.2	Connecting urban with rural	9
3.2.3	Green infrastructure	9
<b>4</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1	Priorities for community and social value	10
4.2	Interventions	10
4.2.1	Spaces	10
4.2.2	Transport	11
<b>5</b>	<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1	Priorities for community and social value	12
5.2	Interventions	12
5.2.1	Promoting health and sustainable transport options	12
5.2.2	Fostering good physical and mental health	12
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusion and next steps</b>	<b>13</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Community and Social Value at Arden Cross

Located at the confluence of road, air and rail travel marks Arden Cross as a development capable of reaching local, national and even global markets. Arden Cross will provide an affordable, safe and accessible place for residents and visitors alike.

Drawing on its strategic location, world class design and its multipurpose function, Arden Cross will be built for now and also for the future. Indoor and outdoor spaces will provide places where families, friends and colleagues can come together to work, socialise and celebrate their community.

Arden Cross will be grounded in equality, inclusion, affordability and accessibility. People will be at the centre of its design, its decision making and its development. Arden Cross will work closely with stakeholders to identify current needs and requirements, explore socio-economic trends in the local area and provide potential solutions to challenges faced by residents and businesses in the borough of Solihull.

Building trust early on will ensure the developers and stakeholders will work collaboratively to ensure that Arden Cross is integrated into the local area, helping to meet the aims and objectives set out in the Solihull Local Plan 2011- 2028<sup>1</sup>

In addition to drawing on the benefits of its location, Arden Cross will include infrastructure for future transport modes, prioritise green and active travel, and ensure the travel networks within the development provide connections with other communities, green spaces and areas of employment and education. This will benefit the physical and mental health of both residents and visitors, a key factor in creating positive associations with Arden Cross.

Providing housing, employment, education and leisure opportunities for people from all backgrounds, and to suit the needs of people across all life stages, will cement Arden Cross as a development that centralised equality, promotes inclusion and epitomises a diverse and connected community.

<sup>1</sup> The Solihull Local Plan 2011-2028 is currently being reviewed following consultation during the Regulation 19 representation period. Further updates on the Local Plan can be found at the following link: [Solihull Local Plan Review](#)

## 1.2 Local context

Arden Cross will be located in the borough of Solihull, approximately 6 miles northeast of the county town, and 10 miles to the east of Birmingham city centre. This strategic location will prove beneficial to both residents of, and visitors to, Arden Cross.

Solihull is close to Birmingham, Coventry and Warwick and lies at the heart of the West Midlands motorway network with excellent transport connections via Birmingham International Railway Station and Birmingham Airport. Around 85,000 workers are employed across Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition complex, Jaguar Land Rover car plant, Birmingham & Blyth Valley Business Parks and Solihull town centre, making it an area of significant economic activity.

Solihull is a broadly affluent Borough in both regional and national contexts, characterised by above-average levels of income and home ownership. However, there is a significant prosperity gap in the north of the borough where approximately half of the Borough's socially rented housing is found. Social inequality in the north of the borough is determined by less green space per head, relatively higher population density and below average income levels. The impact of this is felt across

a broad range of outcomes, including educational attainment, employment, crime and health.<sup>2</sup> There is little deprivation in Solihull in respect of access to housing and services and the living environment. Historic records show that the gap in some areas of deprivation primarily grew between 2007 and 2015.<sup>3</sup>

Solihull is less ethnically diverse than neighbouring Birmingham and Coventry where the proportion of Black and Asian Minority (BAME) populations are 42% and 25% respectively, although the size of the BAME community has more than doubled to 11% since 2011. Most BAME populations in Solihull are found to the northwest of Solihull town, towards the southern suburbs of Birmingham.<sup>4</sup>

Data going back to 1998/99 shows that in most years more people move to Solihull from elsewhere in the UK than leave the borough for other Local Authority areas.<sup>5</sup> Arden Cross will be located in an area of significant economic activity. Over 61% of the labour workforce commutes in to the borough from other areas, playing a vital role in the regional economy and labour market.<sup>6</sup> Given the strategic road network, with both the M42 and M6 running through the area, as well as the trainline, it provides a convenient location for people to access.

Just over 50% of the population of Solihull Borough is employed in professional occupations, which is much higher than the national average of 20%, while just under 30% of the population are employed in elementary occupations (such as social care and sales), compared with 10% nationally.<sup>7</sup>

On average Solihull residents in employment earn 7% more than the UK average and 13% more than that for the West Midlands. Wages for Solihull residents working full-time are significantly above the national average (15%), whereas those for part-time workers are in line with the UK.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Solihull Community Housing Organisation (2019): EDI Annual Report 2019

<sup>3</sup> Solihull.gov.uk (2021)

<sup>4</sup> Solihull Community Housing Organisation (2019): EDI Annual Report 2019

<sup>5</sup> Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (2019): Solihull People and Place

<sup>6</sup> Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (2020), 'Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan', Available at: Solihull.gov.uk,

<sup>7</sup> Solihull Council, (2020), 'The Solihull economy, employment and skills', Available at: Solihull.gov.uk; GOV.UK, (2020), 'Employment by occupation', Available at: [GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-figures)

<sup>8</sup> Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (2019): Solihull People and Place

## 1.3 Future trends and aspirations

### 1.3.1 Future Trends

The way communities live and experience their private homes, the surrounding area, green spaces and transport infrastructure has dramatically changed in the past year and will continue to do so. Infrastructure and services in Arden Cross will need to be flexible enough to respond to some of the social challenges that the future might hold, including:

- Considerable changes in weather / extreme climate events.
- Changes in the distribution of the urban and rural population i.e. a less clear distinction between the two but more land becoming semi-urbanised.
- Strong propensity for a 'healthier' and 'greener' lifestyle, impacting food, transport and energy choices.
- Increased social disparity in wealth, education and opportunities, leading to political instability and social unrest.
- An increasingly ageing population, determining an increase in the number of people with long-term limiting conditions.

This strategy will need to respond to the needs of both local residents, as well as visitors and neighbouring communities. The document has been developed alongside consideration of these future trends so that Arden Cross will be characterised as a development that is adaptable and resilient, nature-led, accessible, and healthy as discussed in the next chapters.

## 2. Adaptable and Resilient

### 2.1 Priorities for community and social value

Arden Cross will be designed and developed in a way that it is able to adapt to, and be resilient to, social, economic and environmental changes. Careful consideration of the services and infrastructure that is provided by Arden Cross will provide opportunities for futureproofing the development, ensuring it works for users now, and in the future. Futureproofing the development will ensure that Arden Cross is able to respond to shifts in technology, climate and surrounding land use, while ensuring that it meets the needs of those who live in and use the spaces and services provided. The phasing of the development over a 20 year period will ensure that the design reflects the needs and requirements of potential users as time progresses.

### 2.2 Interventions

#### 2.2.1 Provision of suitable housing for all

The Arden Cross development will provide a wide choice of housing to meet the needs of the whole community in terms of tenures and price ranges. This will include affordable housing, both social rented and intermediate. A mix of housing will ensure that Arden Cross caters for a diverse community, recognising different household compositions, income and

requirements. Providing affordable, high quality housing will act as a pull factor for Arden Cross, ensuring that its housing offerings are in line with local and national government legislation.

Where in the borough there is a shortage of affordable housing, particularly for rent and first time buyers, Arden Cross will work with Solihull Borough Council to help meet the local area's housing needs without adversely affecting the quality of its environment and its attractiveness for businesses and residents. The area wants to prioritise developments that will best contribute to building sustainable, linked, mixed use and balanced communities.

Providing a diverse range of housing options at Arden Cross will make the development resilient to future housing trends and needs.

Energy efficiency and affordability will be maximised in all new housing that will be built in Arden Cross. This will deliver better health for residents and visitors to the area and create a sustainable place to live, work and socialise.



Middle Bickenhill repurposed as a dedicated pedestrian/cycle and mass transit corridor



### 2.2.2 Provision of employment and education

Arden Cross will serve the local population, identifying skills and providing employment for the local workforce. A variety of skilled and unskilled jobs will be made available to promote diversity in the workforce. Ensuring that these jobs are accessible in terms of working hours and affordable and easy transport to attend will ensure that a range of people will benefit from the employment opportunities at Arden Cross. Arden Cross will have a leisure economy attracting both local people and those from further afield. This provides opportunities for employment and provides economic growth for the area. Using the local labour force and building infrastructure that makes jobs accessible for people from outside of the area, will work to embed Arden Cross as an economic hub within the West Midlands that people travel to for work and leisure. Investing in employment for local people will result in economic growth, better wellbeing of residents and a sense of identity.

Providing enough school spaces for new and existing young people in the area is key to having a successfully integrated community. When local children attend school with people who are more settled in the community it will encourage them, and potentially their families, to build social networks with one another. High quality educational facilities will be provided, alongside affordable and flexible nursery care.





## 3. Accessible

### 3.1 Priorities for community and social value

Arden Cross will be developed in such a way that is sympathetic to its surroundings. The development will allow residents and visitors to access the surrounding countryside and the resources it has to offer. Arden Cross will be built in a sustainable way that utilises existing resources on the site and nearby. Sustainable solutions that enhance and restore nature can have a beneficial impact on residents and visitors to Arden Cross. One key element of this will be ensuring that Arden Cross works collaboratively with other schemes nearby (such as HS2) to explore potential cumulative effects of multiple developments in the area. Ensuring that land required during construction is restored to usable green space will show that Arden Cross is recognising how important green spaces and nature is for the local area.

### 3.2 Interventions

#### 3.2.1 Community green spaces

The ability to access and use green spaces is important and can help people to be active members of society. Accessible and inclusive green spaces throughout Arden Cross will create significant benefits for those that use it, including improved health and wellbeing and foster social cohesion.

Community green spaces will use native or other appropriate plant species to ensure Arden Cross is in keeping with its surroundings and does not risk damaging the local ecosystem. Hollywell Brook that runs through the site will be retained to provide a natural and attractive water feature that runs across Arden Cross and can be enjoyed by residents and visitors. The landscaped areas that utilise existing natural features will allow residents and visitors of Arden Cross to experience nature within their local area.

Arden Cross will provide green spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds, connecting the communities that are living and working in the area.

Importantly, consideration will be given to whether spaces can adapt with the changing demographic profile of local residents and respond to changing demand and technology.



#### 3.2.2 Connecting urban with rural

Within the site there will be a network of footpaths and cycle ways to encourage active travel amongst the community, where possible, this network of paths will tie in with the existing network of footpaths and cycle ways in the area. This will not only increase the health and wellbeing of prospects of users, but also support the borough's motto of 'Urbs in rure' and the character of 'town in nature'. Furthermore, community spaces will reflect that character and heritage of the area, enhancing the more rural elements of the borough, and helping residents to feel a sense of belonging.

Consultation with stakeholders including local land owners will help to determine how Arden Cross can best assimilate into the countryside around it, ensuring sustainable options are considered for how residents and visitors can access their local natural landscapes.



## 4. Accessibility

### 4.1 Priorities for community and social value

The provision of physical spaces that cater for everyone in society will be key to successfully delivering the Arden Cross Masterplan. This will include shared spaces such as roads and green spaces as well as transport infrastructure and facilities. Taking an inclusive approach in the development of spaces and amenities will be essential in creating a fair Arden Cross, that will help to demonstrate its commitment to accessibility, and thus inclusivity, for all that will be living in and visiting in the area.

### 4.2 Interventions

#### 4.2.1 Spaces

New infrastructure that is developed will follow the standards, guidance and principles of inclusive design<sup>9</sup> from the outset. This will include provisions such as ensuring that areas that are shared between different users such as Central Avenue and Parkland are designed to accommodate a range of preferences, physical and intellectual abilities by minimising hazards and ensuring that appropriate space and infrastructure is provided regardless of users' body size, posture or mobility.

Spaces within the Arden Cross development will increase footfall and overall movement of people in the area. The design will give considerations to how everyone will be able to move easily, safely and comfortably between different areas of the masterplan while giving equal priority to pedestrians, cyclists and users of active travel over cars and motored vehicles by introducing 'car free' areas. Particular care will be given to shared surfaces, including around the Transportation Hub Plaza and Central Avenue, to ensure that such environments don't pose challenges for those with visual impairments by providing tactile paving and introducing appropriate mitigations in the absence of kerbs.



<sup>9</sup> Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2006), 'The Principles of inclusive design'.



#### 4.2.2 Transport

A key feature of Arden Cross will be its strategic location on the HS2 line and its proximity to Birmingham Airport. The principles of inclusive design will be extended to the accessibility and connectivity of the transport network. An inclusive transport network improves the experiences of all passengers and in turn fosters social inclusion by allowing people to access health, employment, education and recreational activities.

Different transport modes, such as facilities in proximity to the Automated People Mover and the Transport Hub Plaza linked to HS2 facilities will be well interconnected, to ensure successful completion of first to last mile journeys, which can be particularly challenging for those with physical or hidden impairments. This will be done by providing suitable resting and parking areas, integrated ticketing via the provision of MaaS and providing assistance for passengers who might require it.

Transport infrastructure will also be developed in line with accessibility requirements, which will include, but will not be limited to the provision of step-free access, accessible changing facilities and toilets, adjustments to lighting and colour contrast, and the provision of information in a range of accessible formats, including audio-visual.

The futureproofing of design will be of utmost importance to Arden Cross, acknowledging that the demographic distribution of the area will continue to change alongside changes in technology. Space and infrastructure will need to be designed in a way that can evolve and adapt alongside changes in society.



## 5. Health and wellbeing

### 5.1 Priorities for community and social value

The quality of the local environment and the availability of active travel options will have significant impact on the health and wellbeing of residents and users of Arden Cross. It will consider the quality of the urban and natural environment, ensuring it is maximised from the early stages of the development to promote health and wellbeing among residents and visitors.

### 5.2 Interventions

#### 5.2.1 Promoting health and sustainable transport options

Given the location of the HS2 station, Arden Cross will promote the use of public transport options, encouraging behavioural change away from private vehicle use to more sustainable offerings. The development will provide infrastructure for a range of transport options, such as buses, electric vehicles and micromobility options that will allow people to travel in the local area or further afield. In addition to transport modes, the development will provide a joined up and accessible network of pedestrian footpaths and cycle paths to encourage people to become more active and enjoy their surroundings. Tying in the cycle network within Arden Cross with wider regional cycling infrastructure, such as nearby

Birmingham Urban Explorer Cycle Route 5, allows people to cycle for both purpose and for leisure, making the most of the open spaces around Arden Cross.

#### 5.2.2 Fostering good physical and mental health

Arden Cross will be developed in a way that is sympathetic to the importance of good physical and mental health. Central to this is the provision of adequate and inclusive access to healthcare services, such as GP surgeries and pharmacies.

In addition, the provision of green spaces and active travel infrastructure will encourage residents and visitors to be more active, and community initiatives will be promoted by Arden Cross that further encourages active and social community participation. Community gardens and allotments will bring people together while also promote health eating and learning about nature for people of all ages and backgrounds. Initiative such as local farmers' markets, community gardens and shared green spaces will help to reduce feelings of isolation, benefitting the mental health of those who utilise services and facilities provided.

Social networks and interaction improve people's wellbeing, reduce isolation and make people feel part of the wider community. Belonging to strong social networks can in turn empower people to participate in their community. By designing and creating a place where people want to spend time, feelings of belonging and community identities will be built over time. Including sports facilities in the development will encourage people to come together to play team sports, or attend fitness classes, helping with both physical and mental health. For some people, having a local place of worship is integral to their wellbeing and social networks. Including such spaces in Arden Cross will help to foster a sense of belonging for people of faith, and promote wellbeing among the community.





## 6. Conclusion and next steps

The decisions that will be taken throughout the development and the delivery of the Arden Cross Masterplan will deliver social value and ensure equality of opportunity for all people both living and visiting the area.

The Arden Cross Strategy will help to ensure that all residents and visitors are treated fairly, with respect and are able to benefit from the masterplan. To do this, it is important that:

- Social diversity and inclusion are central in the physical design of the development.
- Views for what the future of Arden Cross should look like are gathered from a variety of stakeholders. This will need to include the local Council and investors, as well as local residents from a variety of backgrounds as well as businesses that might establish themselves in the area.
- Stakeholder feedback is embedded into the proposed design to ensure 'buy-in' from all.
- The 'light touch' forms of collaborative long-term thinking with stakeholders are undertaken throughout the Masterplan delivery not only in the design phase, as suggested by the Government Office for Science.
- The Masterplan continues to be developed with social diversity and inclusion in mind, especially when thinking about some of the future challenges that might need to be addressed, which have been discussed in earlier sections.
- Future strategies and the masterplan continue to align with local policies, such as the Solihull Local Plan 2011-2028 so that different actors can continue to work together towards delivering the shared vision for Arden Cross.

