

Shropshire Local Plan Review

Consultation on Strategic Sites: Response Summary

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Shropshire Local Plan Review – Strategic Sites

Contents

Introduction	2
Clive Barracks, Tern Hill	2
Former Ironbridge Power Station	3
RAF Cosford	4
Land North of Junction 3	5
Further Comments.....	6
Appendix 1: Respondent Statistics.....	7

Introduction

Following approval from Cabinet on the 12th June 2019, consultation documents for this fourth stage of the Local Plan Review were published on 1st July 2019 for a period of ten weeks.

This stage of consultation sought views on preferred strategic sites and a further potential strategic site to inform the ongoing review of the Shropshire Local Plan. The consultation:

1. Identified a series of preferred strategic sites, specifically:
 - a) Clive Barracks, Tern Hill;
 - b) Former Ironbridge Power Station; and
 - c) RAF Cosford
2. Identified a further potential strategic site at land north of Junction 3 of the M54, which was subject to consideration but is not currently a preferred strategic site.

During this Strategic Sites consultation, a total of 2,367 unique respondents commented. Respondents included individuals; businesses; landowners; Town and Parish Councils; representatives of the development industry; organisations; neighbouring Authorities; and statutory consultees. These responses will be used to inform the preparation of the further development of the Local Plan Review which will focus on site allocations and detailed planning policies.

This document summarises the key issues raised by respondents to the consultation.

Clive Barracks, Tern Hill

Questions 3-5 sought views on the identification of Clive Barracks, Tern Hill as a preferred strategic site. In seeking views the Council provided information on proposed initial site guidelines as well as an indicative masterplan produced by the MOD. Reflecting on responses to these questions:

The key points raised in support of Clive Barracks being a strategic site, initial site guidelines and the indicative masterplan produced by the MOD included:

- Much of the site has already been development and is considered brownfield land.
- Re-development of the site would involve less greenfield land compared to development of other potential sites.
- As much of the site is already developed, the amount of enabling works required are reduced.
- Re-development of this site will ensure that it does not become a derelict site.
- The site is well located, benefiting from good road connectivity (A41 and A53) and proximity to a Principal Centre (Market Drayton).
- Development of this site promotes growth in on other strategic corridors, rather than concentrating it all in the M54 corridor.

The key points raised in opposition of Clive Barracks being a strategic site, initial site guidelines and the indicative masterplan produced by the MOD included:

- The timescales for its re-development were considered too ambitious. As such, assumptions regarding the proportion of development that will occur in the plan period need to be amended. As a result, alternative sites may be required to support the housing land supply.

- The scale of development would undermine the existing Principal Centre (Market Drayton). Development should be focused within the existing settlement.
- Infrastructure improvements and mitigation may be required (for instance capacity of the sewage network).
- The scale of development may require a more substantial buffer to the ancient woodland.
- There is little/no justification for this site being selected over other potential strategic sites.
- Concern was raised over the sports pitch provision.

Other comments raised included:

- The overall housing guideline of 28,750 and 305ha of employment land must take into account the figures associated with the Clive Barracks site.
- This is an opportunity to maximise the environmental credentials of any development on the site. For instance, use of electric vehicle charging points, ensuring fabric-first energy efficiency of buildings, use of other appropriate design features and on-site renewable energy generation.
- A positive strategy should be taken for historic assets in and around the site.
- Walking and cycling routes and connectivity should be encouraged and consideration of public transport links is needed.
- Necessary supporting infrastructure must be provided. For instance, sports facilities, medical facilities and education provision.

Former Ironbridge Power Station

Questions 6-8 sought views on the identification of the Former Ironbridge Power Station as a preferred strategic site. In seeking views the Council provided information on proposed initial site guidelines as well as an indicative masterplan proposed by The Harworth Group. Reflecting on responses to these questions:

The key points raised in support of the Ironbridge Power Station being a strategic site, initial site guidelines and the indicative masterplan produced by The Harworth Group included:

- A key element of the site is considered brownfield land.
- Re-development would allow for the remediation of the site.
- This site would benefit from re-development to ensure that it does not become a derelict site.
- Opportunity to provide positive links to the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.
- The site is well located with links to a number of nearby centres.
- There is an opportunity to create new high-quality development.

The key points raised in opposition of the Ironbridge Power Station being a strategic site, initial site guidelines and the indicative masterplan produced by The Harworth Group included:

- The existing road networks will struggle to cope with the increase in vehicles created from this development, both within the immediate area around the site and beyond, affecting existing settlements, including Buildwas and Much Wenlock.
- The scale of development too high, particularly on the greenfield elements of the site.
- The greenfield areas of the site should not be developed.

- The timescales for development were considered too ambitious. As such, assumptions regarding the proportion of development that will occur in the plan period need to be amended. As a result, alternative sites may be required to support the housing land supply.
- Local services and facilities, including the doctor's surgeries, will struggle to with the increased demand resulting from the development.
- There was concern that the level of development will exceed that within the initial site guidelines.
- Negative impacts on the built and natural environment.
- There is little/no justification for this site being selected over other potential strategic sites.
- Concern was raised over the sports pitch provision.

Other comments raised included:

- The overall housing guideline of 28,750 and 305ha of employment land must take into account the figures associated with the Former Ironbridge Power Station site.
- There is little acknowledgement to its position in relation to the Shropshire Hills AONB. Appropriate screening/buffers will be needed.
- The railway line should be brought back into use.
- There is an opportunity for more cycle routes to and through the site. Provision and use of cycle routes to and through the site should be encouraged.
- Necessary supporting infrastructure must be provided. For instance, sports facilities, medical facilities and education provision.
- Existing playing fields should be enhanced, with other sporting provision included where necessary.
- This is an opportunity to maximise the environmental credentials of any development on the site. For instance, use of electric vehicle charging points, ensuring fabric-first energy efficiency of buildings, use of other appropriate design features and on-site renewable energy generation.

RAF Cosford

Questions 9-10 sought views on the identification of the RAF Cosford as a preferred strategic site. In seeking views the Council provided information on proposed initial site guidelines. Reflecting on responses to these questions:

The key points raised in support of RAF Cosford being a strategic site and initial site guidelines included:

- The sites location on the M54 Strategic Corridor and the associated road and rail infrastructure result in strong links to nearby settlements such as Telford and Wolverhampton.
- The site is in a suitable location where there is effective transport infrastructure - both road and rail.
- The site would create good opportunities for employment and training.
- The expansion of the site would generate economic benefits and support provision of high-skilled workers.
- This would represent a positive use of a predominantly brownfield site.

The key points raised in opposition of RAF Cosford being a strategic site and initial site guidelines included:

- Concern over the release of Green Belt land.
- This site if proceeded with alongside the site at Junction 3 of the M54 would undermine the purpose and function of the Green Belt.
- The site would increase pressure on existing services, including schools, hospitals, doctors, trains, traffic.
- This site would have negative impacts on the natural environment, including ancient woodland.
- It may have negative impacts on surrounding settlements, such as Albrighton.
- There are enough alternative sites elsewhere.

Other comments raised included:

- The maximum amount of Green Belt possible should be retained between the RAF Cosford site and Albrighton. This is a strategic gap and needs to be maintained.
- Walking and cycling routes and connectivity should be encouraged and consideration of public transport links is needed.
- The overall housing guideline of 28,750 and 305ha of employment land must take into account the figures associated with the RAF Cosford site.

Land North of Junction 3

Questions 11-14 sought views on the other potential strategic site at Land North of Junction 3 of the M54. Specifically, it sought views on whether the site should be identified as a preferred strategic site, the potential benefits of identifying the site as a preferred strategic site, potential issues and impacts associated with identifying the site as a preferred strategic site and how these issues and impact could be addressed. Reflecting on responses to these questions:

The key points raised in support of Junction 3 being a future proposed strategic site, potential associated benefits and positive mitigation opportunities included:

- The site is well located on the M54 strategic corridor with excellent transport links for businesses, residents and commuters.
- The site would form a sustainable community focused on an 'innovative' 50ha strategic employment site and supported by a skills hub and a series of residential neighbourhoods.
- The mix of housing and employment would provide an opportunity to live and work together.
- The site would provide significant employment opportunities as well as attract/accommodate skilled workers.
- The site would be attractive to high-quality businesses.
- The training hub would complement and increase opportunities for upskilling and as such support existing businesses.
- The site would generate significant benefit for the local economy.
- The site would complement the strategic site at RAF Cosford.
- Opportunity to consider zero carbon and biodiversity net gain.

- Neighbourhoods will grow organically increasing sense of community.
- Infrastructure and a range of on-site facilities would be provided as part of the site.
- Significant amount of Open Space proposed.
- Both housing and employment provision would contribute to meeting cross-boundary need.
- Extensive supporting assessments have been undertaken. These provide detailed information on benefits, issues and mitigation measures.

The key points raised in opposition of Junction 3 being a future proposed strategic site and potential associated issues included:

- There are no benefits for Junction 3 being a strategic site.
- It would result in significant harm to the Green Belt, natural habitats and wildlife would and heritage assets.
- The Black Country has enough brownfield land to satisfy its own housing need.
- There would be insurmountable traffic and congestion problems from this development.
- There is a lack of infrastructure to support this development. Surrounding areas such as Albrighton and Shifnal would come under further pressure, particularly schools and medical centres/doctor's surgeries.
- There is insufficient evidence to justify this site.
- The scale of the site is too large
- There are potential flooding issues associated with the site.
- The site is detached from other settlements, resulting in a reliance in private cars and issues for non-drivers.
- Shropshire's guidelines are met with the other sites proposed. The other strategic sites are more suitable.

Other comments raised included:

- Services (shops, restaurants, medical centres, doctors etc.) would need to be included to mitigate demand on existing services.
- The masterplan is vague.
- Other areas bordering the Black Country have limited physical capacity to meet their need.

Further Comments

Within **Question 15**, respondents were provided an opportunity to make any further comments or to suggest alternative strategic sites. The key points, themes and concerns were:

- Other sites were promoted which the respondents felt represented more appropriate locations for a strategic site.
- Concerns with over-development in Shropshire as a whole were raised.
- The Green Belt should be the last resort and brownfield sites should be developed first.
- There is an opportunity to maximise the environmental credentials of any development.

- Opportunity to redirect development proposed in Principal and Key Centres to these sites.
- There is little benefit to existing residents.
- It is important to recognise the impact of development on infrastructure and ensure that appropriate infrastructure provision occurs.
- In addition, many respondents commented that organisations had significantly longer to respond to the consultation than the public, who were constrained to the 10-week consultation period.

Appendix 1: Respondent Statistics

Question 3 sought views on Clive Barracks' identification as a preferred strategic site.

Of the unique respondents that completed this question:

97.5% agreed with Clive Barracks' identification as a preferred strategic site.

0.8% disagreed with Clive Barracks' identification as a preferred strategic site.

1.7% did not know/had no opinion on Clive Barracks' identification as a preferred strategic site.

Question 6 sought views on the Former Ironbridge Power Station's identification as a preferred strategic site

Of the unique respondents that completed this question:

97.7% agreed with the Former Ironbridge Power Station's identification as a preferred strategic site.

1.3% disagreed with the Former Ironbridge Power Station's identification as a preferred strategic site.

1.0% did not know/had no opinion on the Former Ironbridge Power Station's identification as a preferred strategic site.

Question 9 sought views on RAF Cosford's identification as a preferred strategic site

Of the unique respondents that completed this question:

94.5% agreed with RAF Cosford's identification as a preferred strategic site

3.5% disagreed with RAF Cosford's identification as a preferred strategic site.

2.0% did not know/had no opinion on RAF Cosford's identification as a preferred strategic site.

Question 11 sought views on whether the land north of Junction 3 should be identified as a preferred strategic site.

Of the unique respondents that completed this question:

0.4% believed that land north of Junction 3 should be identified as a strategic site.

98.7% believed that land north of Junction 3 should not be identified as a strategic site.

0.9% did not know/had no opinion on whether the land north of Junction 3 should be identified as a strategic site.

Those who did not complete one or more of Questions 3, 6, 9 or 11 were not included as part of the relevant percentage calculated above.