

## Representation Form

Please complete a separate **Part B Representation Form** (this part) for each representation that you would like to make. One **Part A Representation Form** must be enclosed with your **Part B Representation Form(s)**.

We have also published a separate **Guidance Note** to explain the terms used and to assist in making effective representations.

### Part B: Representation

Name and Organisation:	Clive Roberts - Kembertons
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#### Q1. To which document does this representation relate?

- Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan
- Sustainability Appraisal of the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan
- Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan
- (Please tick one box)

#### Q2. To which part of the document does this representation relate?

Paragraph:  Policy:  Site:  Policies Map:

#### Q3. Do you consider the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan is:

- A. Legally compliant Yes:  No:
- B. Sound Yes:  No:
- C. Compliant with the Duty to Co-operate Yes:  No:

(Please tick as appropriate).

#### Q4. Please give details of why you consider the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

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Policy SP8 indicates that Community Hubs are considered significant rural service centres which will be the focus for development in the rural area.

Policy SP8.3 refers to the list of Community Hubs contained in Schedule SP2.2 which follows Policy SP2.

Explanatory para 3.54 says that the Community Hubs have been identified through a Settlement Hierarchy Assessment, which took into account:

- The population and number of households within a settlement, and
- The extent to which the settlement provides services and facilities, high speed broadband, employment opportunities and public transport links.

The process of identifying the Community Hubs is described in the document "Hierarchy of Settlements" which was produced mid-way through the Local Plan Review process, but updated later on, with the final version published in August 2020.

Because the identification was based on a points scoring system, and the scoring was rechecked at various points within the process, it reacted to minor changes to the provision of local services and facilities very quickly. In many cases this made little difference, but in some it made the difference between being classified as a Community Hub or a Community Cluster. This difference is very significant in terms of ability to grow and support local services.

An example of this is Cockshutt.

Cockshutt was identified in the North Shropshire District Local Plan 2000 – 2011, adopted in December 2005 (North Shropshire District Council being the Planning Authority at the time) as a Main Service Village, and was permitted an unspecified amount of new development which included an allocated site for 30 houses.

The current Shropshire Core Strategy 2006 – 2026 adopted in February 2011, established a system of identifying Community Hubs and Community Clusters as the basis for focussing private and public investment in the rural area. This was intended to,

- i. assist rural communities to become more sustainable,
- ii. assist in the rebalance of rural communities,
- iii. ensure that development was of a scale and design that was sympathetic to the settlement.

Community Hubs and Clusters were to be identified in the Site Allocations and Management of Development Document (SAMDev) which was to be prepared after the adoption of the Core Strategy.

The SAMDev Plan 2006 – 2026, was adopted in December 2015. In this Plan a series of Settlement Policies were prepared, and Cockshutt was identified as a Community Hub, where sites could be allocated for development.

The SAMDev Plan was said, by the Council, to be based on the principles outlined in the Localism Act 2011. The selection of Community Hub and Cluster settlements was based primarily on the aspirations of the relevant Parish Council and having regard to the evidence base and views from land promoters, residents and other stakeholders. For Cockshutt this meant that the village was recognised as a Community Hub and the level of development considered desirable by the Parish Council amounted to 50 houses. However, that level of development was to include 18 of the 30 dwellings allocated in the North Shropshire Local Plan which had not been completed, and a number of small sites of up to a maximum of 5 dwellings. In all, only 20 new plots were allocated, and a number of these are yet to be delivered.

The experiment with Parish Councils controlling the villages that might or might not be allowed development, and the number of dwellings, along with the size, siting and type of dwelling to be permitted in both Community Hubs and Clusters appears to have failed to satisfy the aims set out in the SAMDev. It clearly did not produce housing in the right quantity, in the right locations and of the right type. The aim of rural re-balance was not achieved.

The current scoring system is an attempt to redress the situation, and to objectify the means by which settlements are designated Community Hubs. Those settlements that have a population exceeding 100 that do not reach the appropriate level of points, based on availability of services and facilities, to be regarded as a Community Hub are designated a Community Cluster. The Parish Council concerned will again be able to determine what level of development it feels is appropriate in a Community Cluster, including, it is assumed, no development at all.

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	Part B Reference:

When the current Local Plan Review was commenced the first assessment of population and service provision, assessed Cockshutt as a Community Hub. It was, then, in line for an allocation for further residential development.

During the preparation of the Local Plan the scoring for Cockshutt was recalculated. In that time the village lost its shop, and although it has been replaced by a bakery with obvious employment implications, the points now scored by Cockshutt dipped below the threshold for recognition as a Community Hub set out by the Council. Cockshutt is now to be regarded as a Community Cluster.

The system adopted is not sufficiently sensitive to community needs (which are not necessarily the same as the community desires as expressed by Parish Councils). One of the results of fairly tight restrictions on development over the past 15 years is that local services and employment opportunities have reduced. The need to travel elsewhere for employment has increased, residents cannot buy day-to-day goods in the village anymore, the choice of public houses has disappeared, the local filling station has gone and local employment disappeared. The result of the policies adopted by the Council is that Cockshutt has become less sustainable than it was.

Cockshutt has a population estimate of 859 people and 350 houses according to Table 9 of para A2.7 of the Hierarchy of Settlements, December 2020, document. Some 42 settlements have been designated Community Hubs, but only 18 have a population larger than Cockshutt, and some considerably less – Chirbury, for instance, has a population of just 213 people and 92 houses and yet has an allocation as a Community Hub of 45 new houses. So, 57% of the 42 villages that have been designated Community Hubs have lower population levels than Cockshutt.

It is appreciated that the concept is intended to focus on the provision of services as an indication of the role that a village might perform. However, it appears that the scoring system is being treated in too rigid a fashion, and there is no flexibility in assessing the true role of a particular village. Flexibility is required as short term changes to services should not dictate permanent consequences. Cockshutt has been regarded as a ‘focus’ village for the provision of services for itself and a number of nearby small villages and hamlets for many years. It has only begun to decline in that role since planning policies began to react to local wishes rather than careful analysis of the issues that the village faces and serious and objective consideration given to the manner in which these problems might be addressed.

It is noticeable that there is a ‘hole’ in the distribution map at para 5.37 in the Hierarchy of Settlements, to the south and south-east of Ellesmere, where Cockshutt has, traditionally, been the village looked to for local provision of services. The system can clearly react to a changing circumstance very quickly, but does not appear capable of assessing whether a particular change is permanent or temporary. All change is not permanent, and whilst the purpose of the policy is to embrace change, the rigidity of the implementation of the policy does not allow it.

In terms of the scoring system itself, it appears that it has not, in any event, been accurately applied in Cockshutt. In the 2020 version of the Hierarchy of Settlements calculation of ‘points’, Cockshutt has been awarded ‘0’ points for the availability of ‘amenity green space’. 4 points may, in the adopted scoring system, be awarded for “amenity green space”. In fact, land adjacent to the village’s Millennium Hall (Community Hall) was gifted to the village in 2012 for use as amenity green space, and planning permission to change the use of that land (now known as Jubilee Field) from agriculture to amenity land was granted on 30 May 2017. The land has been taken over and is available for amenity use by the community, though it has not yet been laid out completely as was proposed in the planning application. That should have resulted in a recalculation of the ‘score’ for Cockshutt, which failed to meet the score target for a Community Hub by just 2 points. With such relocation, even given the recent loss of the village shop, Cockshutt should have scored sufficient points to justify selection as a Community Hub.

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The problem with the scoring system is that it requires judgement and an assessment of why the score has been calculated as it has, and a consideration, then, of what can be done to make the settlement concerned a more sustainable community. It is actually being used solely for a basis on which to distribute housing and not to assess whether additional development would justify or support more or better services in a particular village. This is especially important in a situation where a settlement that has, traditionally, been a centre (a 'hub') for an extended local community, as Cockshutt has, and yet is suddenly calculated as not being appropriate for future support. The assessment should be aimed at increasing sustainability not helping to lessen it, which will be the result of the Local Plan as far as Cockshutt is concerned.

Cockshutt should be designated a Community Hub, and be provided with a development boundary which should envelope the land identified on the attached plan, either in part or whole.

The identified site has been ready and available for development for over 20 years, but has been prevented from being developed only by planning policy. Its allocation would allow further development in Cockshutt without adverse effect on any existing property. Drainage facilities run through the site.

The site is located to the eastern side of Shrewsbury Road (the main road that runs through the village and which connects Shrewsbury with Ellesmere) and so people wishing to access the village Church, the village school, and what was (and might be in the future) the village shop, could do so without having to cross Shrewsbury Road. Nevertheless, due to the proposed (and approved by the Highway Authority) access arrangements designed for the site, the traffic passing through the village would have to slow down considerably on the southern approach to the village, which would be a major improvement to the highway situation.

It has been proposed that the development might include uses such as a new shop, a couple of small lock-up workshops, land for a doctor's surgery and recreational space, all to the east of Shrewsbury Road, in addition to open market and affordable houses. All these are proposals that would assist Cockshutt to become more unsustainable than has been the case over the past twenty years, and to set it up for a more sustainable future.

*(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*

**Q5. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at Q4 above.**

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Cockshutt should be re-evaluated and designated a Community Hub, with a development boundary that should include the land (in whole or in part) shown on the attached plan. There should be a guide settlement strategy for the village, and the identified land (in whole or in part) should be allocated for mixed development including open market and affordable housing.

The manner in which the scoring system that is used to select Community Hubs and Clusters should be re-evaluated, and the relevant policies should provide for a reassessment to be carried out at least once a year in order to react to changes in provision of local services.

*(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*

Office Use Only	Part A Reference:
	Part B Reference:

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

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

(Please tick one box)

**Q7. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:**

The long term sustainability of Cockshutt does not appear to have been taken into account in the selection of the Community Hubs and Community Clusters; the short term assessment of existing services is an inadequate basis for such important decisions. It is unlikely that the Parish Council will have suggested that more development is needed to support local services in the future. Views of landowners in the village do not appear to have been taken into account. Participation in the hearing sessions will allow these considerations to be discussed.

(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

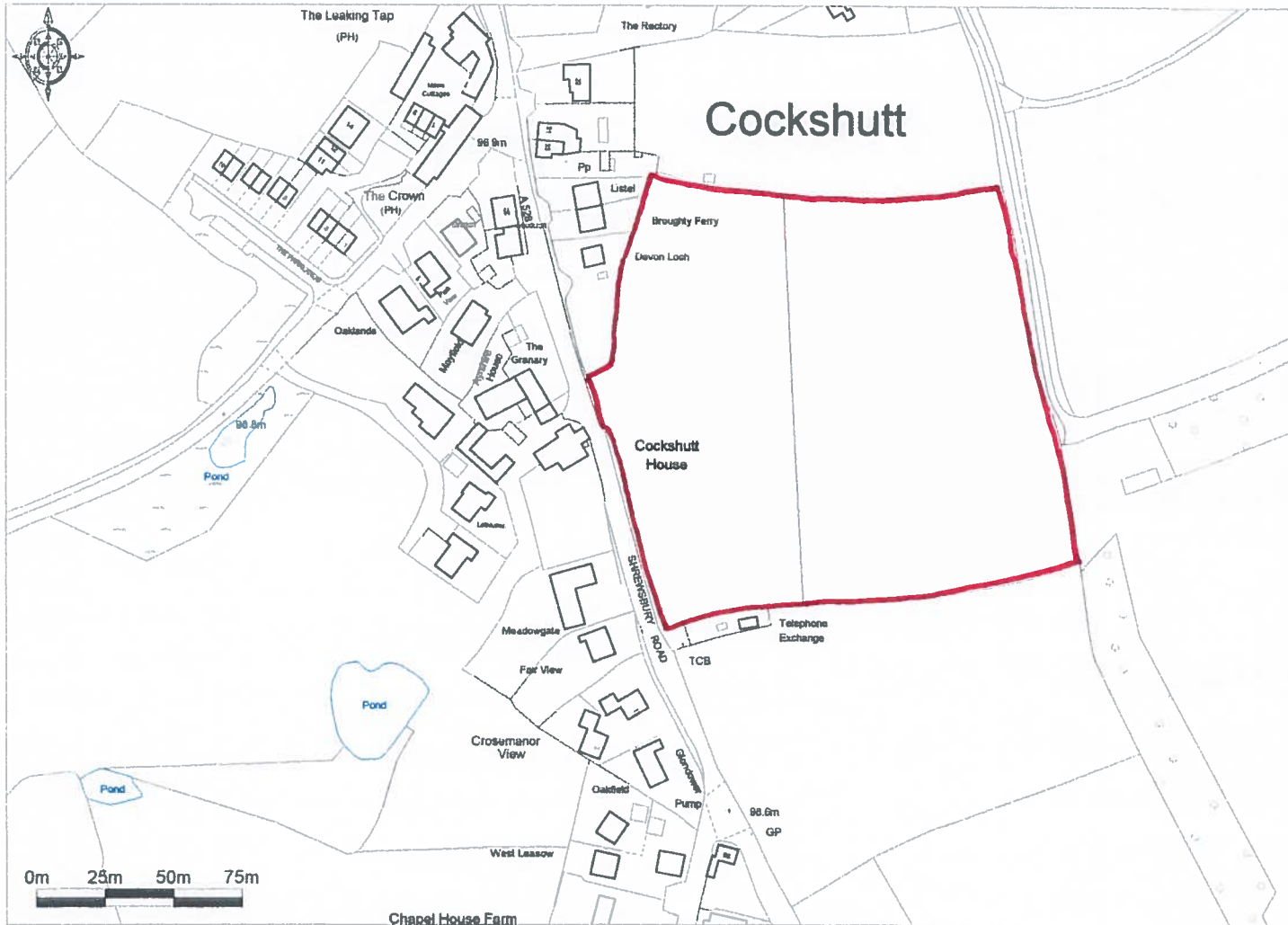
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Signature:

Date:

Office Use Only	Part A Reference:
	Part B Reference:

# Kembertons



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Land off Shrewsbury Road, Cockshutt, Shrewsbury



## Representation Form

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### Part B: Representation

Name and Organisation:	Clive Roberts - Kembertons
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#### Q1. To which document does this representation relate?

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- (Please tick one box)

#### Q2. To which part of the document does this representation relate?

Paragraph:	<input type="text"/>	Policy:	<input type="text" value="SP2"/>	Site:	<input type="text"/>	Policies Map:	<input type="text" value="Cockshutt"/>
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#### Q3. Do you consider the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan is:

- |                                          |                               |                                         |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| A. Legally compliant                     | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> | No: <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| B. Sound                                 | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> | No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Compliant with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> | No: <input type="checkbox"/>            |

(Please tick as appropriate).

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Policy SP2 sets out the manner in which the Council intends to distribute new development across the County. New housing development is intended to achieve the delivery of 30,800 dwellings in the Plan period (2016 – 2038) with some 27.5% of those properties being assigned to the rural area of the County – that is, located outside of Shrewsbury Strategic Centres, and the Principal and Key Centres. This means that around 8,470 dwellings, at a rate of 385 dwellings per annum, will need to be constructed in the rural area in the plan period.

To distribute this development Policy SP2 indicates that new development in the rural area will be focussed on Community Hubs (identified in Schedule SP2.2) which are considered to be significant rural service centres and, to a lesser extent, Community Clusters (identified in Schedule SP2.3). Policy SP2.7 indicates that additional Community Clusters can be identified through the production of Neighbourhood Plans. The purpose of the focus on Community Hubs and Clusters is said to be to ensure the long-term sustainability of rural communities.

The principal behind this policy and the ambition to ensure greater long-term sustainability for rural settlements, is supported, but the manner in which the villages have been assigned as either Community Hubs or Community Clusters is not. In the representor's view, the assignment is not going to produce development that will ensure the long-term sustainability of rural settlements and, in some cases, will have the effect of making them less sustainable.

Attempting to identify those settlements that are to be considered as Community Hubs or Community Clusters in an objective fashion is to be applauded, but the method chosen by the Council, a scoring system based on the provision of services, is not sufficiently sensitive to recognise the roles that certain villages perform, and thus those villages can end up categorised as a Hub or Cluster which is inappropriate for its actual function. If a village should be wrongly categorised either by designating it a Community Hub when the function of the village is not that of a small centre to which others look, or if one is categorised as a Cluster when it has significant local services to support and thus is not permitted appropriate levels of housing to provide that support in future, it can lead to closure of services and increased use of private motor travel. The scoring system adopted needs to be carefully and flexibly applied if the stated aims of Policy SP2 are to be achieved.

As the Policy relating to the identification of Hubs and Clusters stands at present, the scoring system is too rigid, and will not be effective in achieving the aims of Policy SP2, and is in conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework as it is not responsive to local circumstances or reflective of local needs as required by NPPF para 77. Those Community Hubs that are identified in the Review will, in total and assuming that all the allocated sites are built out, produce some 5,932 dwellings. This means that development in the rural area will have to depend on bringing forward around 30% of the houses need through unidentified windfall development. In fact, to produce the number of houses required in the rural area – 8,470 – it will almost certainly need an additional 10 – 15% of planning permissions granted to be able to deliver the required number, thus making the reliance on windfall development even greater. The delivery required cannot be guaranteed by the Plan Review.

The Plan will not, therefore, promote sustainable development in rural areas and will not enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities as required by NPPF para 78.

*(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*

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The manner in which the scoring system that is used to select Community Hubs and Clusters should be re-evaluated, and the relevant policies should provide for a reassessment to be carried out at least once a year in order to react to changes in provision of local services.

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

*(Please tick one box)*

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**The long term sustainability of Cockshutt does not appear to have been taken into account in the selection of the Community Hubs and Community Clusters; the short term assessment of existing services is an inadequate basis for such important decisions. It is unlikely that the Parish Council will have suggested that more development is needed to support local services in the future. Views of landowners in the village do not appear to have been taken into account. Participation in the hearing sessions will allow these considerations to be discussed.**

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A Community Cluster is said to be, in Policy SP9.1, an individual or group of small rural settlements of varying function with aspirations to maintain or enhance their sustainability through modest levels of appropriate development.

When first devised, in the Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, the idea of a Community Cluster was that they would comprise two or more small settlements which, combined, offered a range of services contributing to a sustainable community. The present proposal loosens this description, such that it is no longer based on the provision of services and can be any amount of small settlements, including single settlements that do not have to have a relationship with others in terms of reliance on services.

Cockshutt does not rely on any other small or nearby village for any particular public or community service. In itself it acts, or has acted in the past, as a Hub to which other smaller settlements gravitated for services. Cockshutt, in turn, gravitated towards Ellesmere, designated a “Key Centre” in the Local Plan Review.

Cockshutt clearly has a different role from the other smaller villages in the locality.

In comparison with the other settlements named as being part of a community Cluster, none has a population higher than Cockshutt and only one Cluster, comprising six separate villages (Tilstock, Ash Magna, Ash Parva, Prees Heath, Ightfield and Calverhall) has a total population that exceeds Cockshutt.

It is noticeable that, although categorised as a Community Hub in the current SAMDev Plan, Cockshutt was allocated just 5 new development sites which, together, totalled just 20 houses. At the time of the commencement of the current Local Plan Review none of these had been delivered and so were all carried forward to the current plan. Some of these have now been delivered. There are no newly proposed allocations for development. None of the permitted schemes on the allocated sites from the SAMDev (now carried forward to the Local Plan Review) involved the provision of affordable units.

Cockshutt has become less sustainable as a result of planning policy over the past twenty years or so, and has not achieved a rebalance of the community. The current proposal to restrict development to infill plots only, in a settlement that is already tightly developed, leaves little opportunity for development, and will not create conditions where further community services and facilities can be provided and sustained. The village needs new and sustained growth if it is to regain its sustainability. The village should be reclassified as a Community Hub, and serious consideration should be given to the manner in which new services can be provided and sustained in the settlement.

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