

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:	
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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:	<input type="text"/>	Policy:	<input type="text"/>	Site:	<input type="text"/>	Policies Map:	<input type="text"/>
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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.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

**Response of the Strettons Civic Society to the
Regulation 19 Pre-submission draft of the Shropshire Local Plan**

1. Introduction

This response of the Church Stretton Civic Society is to the Church Stretton Plan Area of the draft Shropshire Local Plan (S5.1). The Society welcomes the decision of Shropshire Council to delete Land at Snatchfields Farm (CSTO21) as an allocated site for 70 houses, given its location within the Shropshire Hills AONB and the need, expressed within the NPPF, to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist for such major development within the AONB.

2. Objection

Our objection is that the Residential Development Guideline for Church Stretton has been retained at 200 dwellings by re-allocating 70 from the Local Plan Allocation to create a windfall total of 121, increased from 51 at the Regulation 18 Informal consultation (see Appendix 5). Shropshire Council argues that new residential development “- - - *will be delivered through - - - appropriate small-scale windfall residential development within the Church Stretton development boundary - - -; and appropriate cross-subsidy and exception development where it is consistent with relevant policies of the Local Plan*” (S5.1, paragraph 3). No justification is given for the increase in estimated windfall and there is no published evidence to support this change.

We consider that the higher windfall estimate of 121 is not achievable or not achievable without breaching NPPF guidance on the development limitations within an AONB. Therefore the plan is **UN SOUND** because it is not deliverable and not consistent with national policy.

Our objections are set out in more detail below.

3. Practice and Precedent

The decision to re-allocate the 70 dwellings from the Snatchfield site allocation to windfall is contrary to previous practice and precedent when the numbers of houses for sites that have been de-allocated or removed have been deleted from the overall target for Church Stretton. The guideline for housing in Church Stretton was reduced from 250 in the 2018 preferred sites consultation to 200 in the Regulation 18 draft plan partly because of the deletion of the Gaerstone site (CSTO20) from the draft version of the local plan and partly because the school housing site (CSTRO18) in the current SAMDev Local Plan was de-allocated when the developer withdrew the planning applications.

4. Challenge to the Overall Target of 200 Dwellings

a) The residential development guidelines for each settlement given in Appendix 5 of the plan are in effect targets. That these are individual targets is clear from the terms of policy SP7 because the aim is that the figure should be achieved but may be exceeded. SP7 (4) ascribes weight to a failure to meet the guideline and SP7 (3) confirms that the guideline is

“a significant policy consideration”. Because the figure of 200 for Church Stretton is a target it should be fully justified by proportionate evidence and capable of delivery without breaching national policy. **These essential tests of soundness are not met.**

b) The Windfall section of the target, 121 dwellings, is undeliverable because it exceeds a reasonable expectation from small scale Brownfield development within the residential boundary. Recent completions, planning permissions granted since 2019 and current applications expected to be granted total 22. We have also considered the future opportunities for Brownfield sites (30) and garden infill (10); we consider this estimate of 40 dwellings optimistic. Most will be small or individual plots so are unlikely to make a significant contribution to the need for affordable homes. Our total estimate for Brownfield is 62 (22+40) which is well short of the target of 121.

c) Shropshire Council’s estimate of windfall has shown signs of volatility in recent planning documents, e.g.

March 2012 SAMDev preferred options 2011-26	57
July 2013 SAMDev revised preferred options 2013-26	56
November 2018 Preferred sites consultation 2017-36	21
August 2020 Regulation 18 consultation 2019-38	51
November 2021 Regulation 19 consultation 2019-38	121

The increase from 51 to 121 in the pre-submission draft is unsupported by any new evidence and very substantially higher than a succession of previous estimates.

d) In effect the target relies on possible exception sites under policies DP4 and DP7, Affordable Housing Exception and Cross-subsidy schemes, none of which are identified. Such sites are likely to require major development within the AONB.

Paragraph S10.4 (5.145) of the draft plan notes that:

“In the AONB, major development requires the evidence of exceptional circumstances and this necessitates the provision of planned development in the Local Plan to meet the needs of these local communities.” The quotation is from the Clee Hill Community Hub in the Ludlow Place Plan area, but it is equally applicable to Church Stretton. This emphasis on planned development should be followed throughout the plan, subject to first having evidence of need. There should not be reliance on unknown and unplanned opportunity sites which the Council cannot identify. A guideline or target within an AONB is unsatisfactory if it implicitly requires major development; Shropshire Council is using the NPPF definition of major development, i.e. 10 homes or 0.5ha.

e) Policy S5.1 states that the 200 dwellings will enable Church Stretton to contribute towards strategic growth objectives in the south of the County. As a town in the AONB this is inconsistent with the general thrust of NPPF, paragraphs 11 and 172 with their emphasis on the preservation and enhancement of natural beauty within an AONB. These principles are reiterated in National Planning Practice Guidance as follows:

“The NPPF makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty. Its policies for protecting these areas may mean it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for development in full through the plan making process, and they are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining (non-designated) areas“ (Paragraph 041 Reference ID:8-041-20190721).

Contributing towards strategic growth is not a need originating in the AONB and is plainly inconsistent with this guidance, so that it is essential to re-write S5.1, paragraph 2.

5. Proposed Revised version of S5.1, paragraph 2.

The role of Church Stretton as a Key Centre will be maintained by providing 130 dwellings and around 2ha of employment development. New housing and employment development should respond to identified local needs within the AONB and conserve and enhance local landscape and settlement character.

6. Evidence Provided by Shropshire Council

The evidence provided by the Council in this consultation and for the previous Regulation 18 consultation shows that there is no calculation of local need to support a case for 200 dwellings in Church Stretton (or any other number). There are superficial references to the role of Church Stretton as a Key Centre and its role in providing services but no explanation of the contribution any identified quantity of new residential or employment development will make. A target for new residential development unsubstantiated by local need implies that growth in Church Stretton is intended to meet the needs of other parts of Shropshire or contribute to the Council’s strategic growth objectives. **This is contrary to National Guidance.**

7. Housing Needs Survey

There is a general assumption that there is a need in Church Stretton for more affordable homes, but there has been no assessment of the need for and supply of affordable housing. In paragraph 4b) we explain why we think Brownfield sites are unlikely to make a significant contribution towards affordable housing so the potential for exception sites should be considered. An assessment of local affordable housing need in accordance with the principles of Planning Practice Guidance should be carried out and prospective sites sought. (DP 4.1c) The reduction in the settlement guideline which we seek would not inhibit this calculated need being met because this possibility is identified in S5.1 (3) and such settlement specific considerations are recognised in SP7(4). This needs survey could be carried out by Shropshire Council and Church Stretton Town Council.

20 February 2021

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.

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 Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan 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 continue on a separate sheet 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 he or she identifies for examination.

Q6. If your representation is seeking a modification to the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination 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.

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:

(Please continue on a separate sheet 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.*

Signature:

Date:

Office Use Only

Part A Reference:

Part B Reference: