

# Statement of Common Ground between Shropshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council

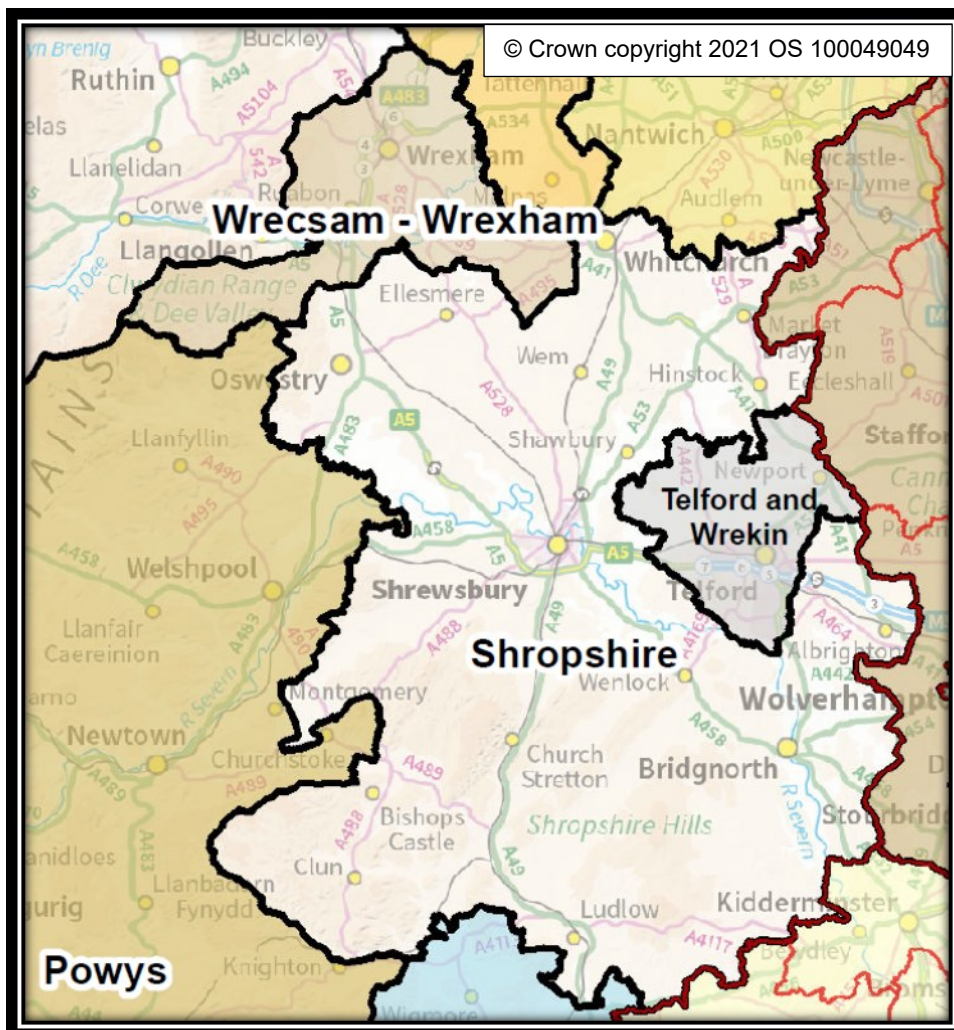
Date: May 2021

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been produced to support Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review. It sets out how Shropshire Council has engaged with Wrexham County Borough Council in order to fulfil its Duty to Cooperate requirements.

## 2. Relevant Local Authorities and Geography

- 2.1. The relevant Local Authorities to this SoCG are Shropshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 2.2. Shropshire Council's administrative area is located in the West Midlands of England. It adjoins Wrexham County Borough Council's administrative area, which is located in north-east Wales, along its north-western boundary.
- 2.3. As Wrexham County Borough Council is a neighbouring Planning Authority, it is important that effective duty to cooperate discussions are undertaken with them, regarding strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries, during the Shropshire Local Plan Review.
- 2.4. The map below illustrates the location of Shropshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council administrative areas:



### **3. Duty to Cooperate**

#### ***Shropshire Council Local Plan Review***

- 3.1. The Shropshire Local Plan currently comprises the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (adopted 2015), together with adopted formal Neighbourhood Plans. On completion of the Local Plan Review process, the Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan documents will be replaced by the 'Shropshire Local Plan' (2016-2038) document (with the exception of any saved policies), supported by any adopted formal Neighbourhood Plans.
- 3.2. The Shropshire Local Plan document will include strategic and detailed policies, together with site allocations for a Plan period 2016 to 2038.
- 3.3. There has been ongoing and active engagement between Shropshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council throughout the Shropshire Council Local Plan Review. Specifically:
  - Duty to Cooperate discussions have occurred at appropriate times during the Local Plan Review process.
  - Wrexham County Borough Council have been consulted during the various 'Regulation 18' Consultations undertaken to inform the Shropshire Local Plan Review. The Local Plan Review consultation periods thus far are as follows:
    - Issues and Strategic Options Consultation – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
    - Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development Consultation – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2017.
    - Preferred Sites Consultation – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
    - Strategic Sites Consultation – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
    - Regulation 18: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan – 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
  - Wrexham County Borough Council have been consulted as part of the 'Regulation 19' Consultation being undertaken to inform the Shropshire Local Plan Review.
  - Duty to Cooperate discussions will continue at appropriate times as the Local Plan Review progresses.

### **4. Key Strategic Matters**

#### **Housing Market Area**

- 4.1. The Shropshire Council area is considered to represent a self-contained housing market area (HMA). Similarly, the Wrexham Council Borough area is also considered to represent a self-contained HMA.
- 4.2. However, it is acknowledged that the duty to cooperate is not restricted to just Planning Authorities within the same HMA. As such, Shropshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council have liaised closely during the Shropshire Local Plan Review, in accordance with the duty to cooperate.

#### **Housing Need and Requirement**

- 4.3. Using Government's standard methodology, in 2020, Shropshire Council calculated a Local Housing Need (LHN) which applies to both the Local Planning Authority area and the Shropshire Council housing market area of some 1,177 dwellings per annum (equating to 25,894 dwellings over the 22 year plan period from 2016-2038). The

assessment of need will be kept under review. Shropshire Council is proposing to meet the entirety of its LHN.

- 4.4. Wrexham County Borough Council have submitted the Deposit Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 to the Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate for examination. The Deposit Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 proposes to meet the entirety of the housing need arising within the Wrexham County Borough Council area. Following the Examination in Public the next stage is to publically consult on the Matter Arising Changes (MACs) and the Inspectors will then issue their final report to the Council.

### **Green Belt: Shropshire Council**

- 4.5. In order to achieve a sustainable pattern of development, Shropshire Council is proposing to accommodate development in such a way that helps make more sustainable, balanced, vibrant, resilient and self-reliant places in which to live and work. Specifically, the Local Plan Review intends direct the majority of new development towards the larger settlements with the most extensive range of services, facilities and infrastructure to support it. However, it also allows for appropriate levels of development within rural areas, to support the longer-term sustainability of rural communities.
- 4.6. The eastern part of Shropshire is located within the West Midlands Green Belt. To inform the ongoing Local Plan Review, Shropshire Council has undertaken a Green Belt review. Whilst most additional development is proposed in locations outside the Green Belt, the strategic economic importance of the eastern part of the County, particularly the M54 corridor, is a significant consideration. Impacts on longer term sustainability of Green Belt settlements due to constraints on their ability to meet their local development requirements have also been identified. As such a level of Green Belt release is proposed within the ongoing Local Plan Review.
- 4.7. As required by the NPPF, Shropshire Council has explored with Wrexham County Borough Council their ability to accommodate Green Belt development requirements, particularly those relating to the sustainable growth requirements of specific settlements/sites. This has been formalised in a written communication sent 27th February 2020 which asked whether Wrexham County Borough Council could assist in meeting the identified development needs for: Bridgnorth; Albrighton; Shifnal; Alveley; and RAF Cosford.
- 4.8. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the location of the Wrexham County Borough Council administrative area with regard to Green Belt in Shropshire, they have not indicated that they are able to meet these identified Green Belt development requirements.

## **5. Other Strategic Matters**

### **Distribution of Development**

- 5.1. Although there is significant planned residential mix use growth affecting the A483/A5 corridor south of Wrexham, no significant cross boundary impacts are anticipated to arise from the growth strategies for Wrexham / Oswestry.

### **Minerals**

- 5.2. There are low levels of mineral flows experienced across the boundary. No significant cross boundary issues identified.

## **Waste**

- 5.3. No significant cross boundary issues identified.

## **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (WHS)**

- 5.4. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS is recognised as an important cross boundary heritage feature. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS has been considered as part of the Shropshire Local Plan Review process.
- 5.5. The draft Deposit Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 includes a draft WHS policy BE1 which has been discussed with Shropshire Council and is supported by them. The draft Shropshire Local Plan will include a Policy regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment (draft Policy DP23 of the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan), which provides protection and conservation of designated heritage sites, including the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS.

## **Gypsies and Travellers**

- 5.6. Shropshire has finalised an updated Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA 2019). The updated GTAA refines the previously published GTAA (2017) by updating site information and considering public site management data to better understand and evidence site capacity and pitch turnover. Unauthorised encampment activity is also considered.
- 5.7. The evidence concludes that there is no current strategic requirement for allocation. However, there was a need to provide a permanent plot for Travelling Showpeople resident on a temporary site in Shropshire, a site for which has now been granted Planning Permission. There was also the need to consider provision of public transit capacity to support private provision, which is being undertaken. In addition to the intended direct provision, policies within the ongoing Local Plan Review will facilitate the ongoing delivery of sites to meet arising needs. Shropshire thus intends on addressing its own needs for gypsy and traveller provision.
- 5.8. The draft Deposit Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 proposes to allocate sufficient land to meet the identified residential needs of Gypsy and Travellers over the plan period, as detailed in the Wrexham Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. It also includes a draft policy to facilitate the ongoing delivery of sites to meet arising needs.

## **6. Matters of Agreement**

- 6.1. All above matters are agreed between Shropshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.

## **7. Matters of Disagreement**

- 7.1. There are no matters of disagreement between Shropshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.

## **8. Governance Arrangements**

- 8.1. Governance arrangements are key to ensure that effective duty to cooperate discussions are undertaken and an appropriate SoCG prepared.
- 8.2. Updating of this SoCG will be linked to key milestones within the Shropshire Local Plan Review process.

## 9. Conclusions

9.1. The parties agree that:

- i) Shropshire Council has fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate with Wrexham County Borough Council.
- ii) The parties will continue to work positively together and where relevant with other prescribed bodies on strategic cross boundary issues.

## 10. Signatories

10.1. This SoCG has been agreed and signed by the following:

<b>Shropshire Council</b>	<b>Wrexham County Borough Council</b>
Name: Edward West	Name Linda Sharp
Position: Planning Policy and Strategy Manager	Position: Head of Service Planning Policy
Date agreed: 25.05.2021	Date agreed: 17.02.2021
Signature:	Signature: