

Statement of Common Ground between Shropshire Council and the South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City 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 the three South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council) that jointly prepared and adopted the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) and are jointly undertaking the SWDP Review (SWDPR), 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 the South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council).
- 2.2. Shropshire Council's administrative area is located in the West Midlands Region of England. It adjoins Malvern Hills District Council's administrative area, which is located in Worcestershire County in the West Midlands Region of England.
- 2.3. As Malvern Hills District Council is a neighbouring Planning Authority, it is important that effective duty to cooperate discussions are undertaken with them and via them the other South Worcestershire Councils which jointly prepared the SWDP and are jointly undertaking the SWDPR, 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 the three South Worcestershire Councils 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 the South Worcestershire Councils throughout the Shropshire Council Local Plan Review. Specifically:
 - Duty to Cooperate discussions have occurred at appropriate times during the Local Plan Review process.
 - The South Worcestershire Councils 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 – 23rd January 2017 to 20th March 2017.
 - Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development Consultation – 27th October 2017 to 22nd December 2017.
 - Preferred Sites Consultation – 29th November 2018 to 8th February 2019.
 - Strategic Sites Consultation – 1st July 2019 to 9th September 2019.
 - Regulation 18: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan – 3rd August 2020 – 30th September 2020.
 - The South Worcestershire Councils 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). Malvern Hills District Council is a broadly self-contained HMA in terms of migration and is also part of the South Worcestershire HMA in terms of both migration and travel to work. The South Worcestershire Councils jointly prepared the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) covering the period 2006-2030 which was adopted in February 2016. The South Worcestershire Councils are currently reviewing the SWDP and undertook consultation on the SWDP Review (SWDPR) Preferred Options in late 2019 with the Regulation 19 consultation programmed for October 2021.
- 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 the South Worcestershire Councils 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. Using Government's Indicative Local Housing Need figures (December 2020, revised methodology), the LHN for the South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council) is 1,263 dwellings per annum. A joint South Worcestershire Development Plan (2006-2030) has been adopted for the area covered by the South Worcestershire Councils and a joint review of this Development Plan is currently ongoing. Within the most recent consultation undertaken to inform this review (Preferred Options Consultation – November 2019) a housing requirement was proposed to meet the entirety of the LHN calculated for the South Worcestershire Councils. It is intended that the LHN identified for South Worcestershire will be met within the South Worcestershire HMA area.

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 to 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 the South Worcestershire Council's 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 Malvern Hills District Council could assist in meeting the identified development needs for: Bridgnorth; Albrighton; Shifnal; Alveley; and RAF Cosford. The South Worcestershire Councils have advised that Shropshire's Green Belt development requirements could not be met in Malvern Hills District or the wider south Worcestershire area because it would be unsustainable given the location of the Malvern Hills District / south Worcestershire administrative area with regard to Green Belt in Shropshire and capacity constraints in towns / settlements within Malvern Hills District which are in close proximity to the Shropshire boundary.

5. Other Strategic Matters

Distribution of Development

- 5.1. There is a functional and physical relationship between Burford in Shropshire and Tenbury Wells in Malvern Hills District. They jointly provide services and facilities for their residents and those living in the wider rural hinterland. Dwellings are distributed across both settlements, whilst much of the employment land is located within Burford and the majority of the retail development is located on Tenbury High Street.
- 5.2. Within the Shropshire Local Plan Review, Burford has been identified as a Community Hub (significant rural service centres), with a development guideline of some 190 dwellings between 2016 and 2038. Two allocations are proposed at Burford within the Local Plan Review with a combined indicative capacity of around 140 dwellings. These sites are located to the east and west of Burford respectively. No specific employment guideline is proposed for Burford and no retail provision is proposed.
- 5.3. Within the ongoing review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, the most recent Preferred Options Consultation (November 2019), Tenbury Wells is identified as being within the Urban Area (3) category. Within this category small scale urban extensions and allocations within defined development boundaries that also provide potential windfall opportunities (subject to satisfying other SWDPR policies) may be proposed. The Preferred Options Consultation also proposes to re-allocate three existing allocations at Tenbury Wells with a combined indicative capacity of around 119 dwellings and identifies a further proposed allocation within Tenbury Wells, with an indicative capacity of around 61 dwellings. All these sites are located to the south of Tenbury Wells. No specific employment or retail allocations are proposed for Tenbury Wells.
- 5.4. The South Worcestershire Councils support the general approach in the Shropshire Local Plan of focusing development in the larger urban areas where there is typically better access to existing infrastructure and services. Following liaison with Tenbury Town Council, the South Worcestershire Councils have indicated that an additional 190 dwellings at Burford may place additional demands on existing services, such as doctors, at Tenbury which are reportedly stretched.

Minerals

- 5.5. No significant cross boundary issues identified.

Waste

- 5.6. No significant cross boundary issues identified.

Gypsies and Travellers

- 5.7. 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.
- 5.8. 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.

- 5.9. The South Worcestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), published in 2019, has been undertaken to inform the review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016-2041). This Assessment identifies a requirement for 30 permanent traveller pitches and 7 permanent travelling showpeople plots between 2019 and 2023. It also identifies a likely longer-term requirement for 20 traveller pitches and 1 travelling showpeople plot between 2024-2028; 22 traveller pitches and 1 travelling showpeople plot between 2029-2033; and 32 traveller pitches and 1 travelling showpeople plot between 2034-2041.
- 5.10. The most recent consultation undertaken to inform the review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, (Preferred Options Consultation – November 2019), indicates that the relevant Local Planning Authorities will identify and update annually a five year supply of deliverable pitches for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in order to meet their identified local targets. The South Worcestershire Councils will identify sites in a Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). The South Worcestershire Council's will consult on revised Preferred Options for the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD in Spring 2021. The South Worcestershire Councils therefore intend to address their own needs for gypsy and traveller provision.

6. Matters of Agreement

- 6.1. All above matters are agreed between Shropshire Council and the South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council).

7. Matters of Disagreement

- 7.1. There are no matters of disagreement between Shropshire Council and the South Worcestershire Councils.

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 and South Worcestershire Development Plan Review processes.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The parties agree that:
 - i) Shropshire Council has fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate with the South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City 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:

| Shropshire Council | South Worcestershire Councils |
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| Name: Edward West | Name: Holly Jones |
| Position: Planning Policy and Strategy Manager | Position: Director of Planning and Infrastructure, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils |
| Date agreed: 25/05/2021 | Date agreed: 05/05/2021 |
| Signature: | Signature: |