

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Stage 1 Hearing Statement

Representor unique Part A Ref *	A0629
Matter	1
Relevant questions nos	2,15

SUBMISSION REGARDING Q2

Q2. Are the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the Local Plan adequately and accurately assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)?

1. INTRODUCTION

The significant document is:

SD006.01 - Sustainability Appraisal and Site Assessment Environmental Report of the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan.pdf

2. DISCUSSION

This document identifies:

- Reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions
- Reduce climate change
- Promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the amount of energy from renewable sources

as 'Issues' (p.6) and goes on (p.7) to incorporate these into Sustainability Objectives :

SO12 Reduce carbon dioxide emissions

SO13 Promote adaptation and mitigation to climate change

3. SA SCORING

The way these SOs are then used in the scoring objectives is UNSOUND. Specifically:

- a) In Tables 2.6 (Scoring options for site SA) (p.40) SO12 and SO 13 are mentioned in ways that do not seem associated with the Sustainability Objectives. There is no transparency in the methodology used to construct this table.

- b) In Table 2.7 (Assessment matrix for the SA of sites) (from the Scoping Report) (p.43) SO12 and SO 13 are NOT given any specific scoring attributes and thus cannot influence the SA scores.

The answer to Q2 in this Matter is thus NO, as although the SOs are created they are not given any scoring weight in the SA matrix.

4. ACCESS TO ENERGY

The “social and economic effects...” in Q2 must include consideration of the sources and cost of energy.

The social and economic effects include:

- a) inability to access employment as fossil-fuel vehicles will be removed and poor general health from inadequate housing,
- b) lack of opportunity to create employment due to limits on energy availability and
- c) diet and economic effects obviously include the direct effects of energy costs and how these can be mitigated.

SP3 only discusses the ‘possibility’ of renewable energy. It does not give specific strategies or targets.

It does not:

- a. use access to adequate energy supplies from the existing utilities as a SA criteria,
- b. assess accurately the costs of energy for different developments,
- c. evaluate the opportunity to develop community renewable energy schemes e.g. in terms of space, visual impact etc) as a SA criteria or
- d. evaluate the consequent direct costs of energy as criteria in the SA.

Again, therefore, the answer to Q2 is NO. Social and economic effects are not given proper representation in the SA scoring system.

SUBMISSION REGARDING Q15

Q15. How does Policy SP3 along with the overarching strategy of the Local Plan secure the development and use of land which contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change consistent with S19 (1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraphs 152 – 158 of the Framework?

1. INTRODUCTION

This Question tests whether there is a proper approach to the development and use of land in a way consistent with general climate change requirements.

Our response takes a two-stage approach:

- a) What is the ‘intent’ that should be understood by the NPPF paras. cited?
- b) Is that intent properly reflected in SP3 and hence will it secure the required development and use of land in general?

2. The NPPF: para 152 -158.

The intent of these paragraphs is clear. They aim to produce a rapid and significant reduction in carbon emissions in line with declared UK government policy.

In full, these paragraphs read:

“152. The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

153. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.

154. New development should be planned for in ways that:

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and*
- b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards.*

155. To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat,

plans should:

- a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);*
- b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and*
- c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for colocating potential heat customers and suppliers.*

156. Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.

157. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new

development to:

a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and

b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

158. When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and

b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable . Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.”

The text highlighted thus by us is of particular relevance

Definitions

The following table takes extracts of the NPPF text and gives the definitions (from www.thefreedictionary.com) of some of the key verbs and phrases used, in order to establish their proper meaning and hence strength.

We make no apology for presenting what might seem to be a pointless exercise, for two reasons:

- a) Any planning strategy (such as a Local Plan) must related to and be meaningful to the world as it is and which it will operate for its period of applicability. Any such document based in a ‘might have been’ world is of no value or relevance to the public it affects.
- b) Within any specialised community of expertise, words can acquire a ‘jargon’ meaning which may not match with the meaning ascribed by the public.

Table 1: Summary of NPPF text and proper meaning:

NPP Text	Proper meaning
<p>152: ... <i>shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience</i></p> <p>...</p>	<p>Contribute: To give or supply in common with others</p> <p>Radical: Departing markedly from the usual or customary; extreme or drastic</p>
<p>153: <i>Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change</i></p>	<p>Proactive: tending to initiate change rather than reacting to events</p>
<p>153: <i>Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure...</i></p>	<p>Support: To provide for or maintain by supplying with money or necessities</p>
<p>154. <i>New development should be planned for in ways that: a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts</i></p>	<p>Avoid: elude, escape; shun; prevent from happening</p>
<p>155. <i>To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:</i></p> <p>a) <i>provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);</i></p> <p>b) <i>consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and</i></p> <p>c) <i>identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for colocating potential heat customers and suppliers.</i></p>	<p>Positive; Measured or moving forward or in a direction of increase or progress</p> <p>Strategy: a particular long-term plan for success, esp in business or politics</p> <p>Consider: To think carefully about (something),</p> <p>Identify: to establish or recognize the identity of; ascertain as a certain person or thing</p> <p>Opportunity: A chance for progress or advancement,</p>
<p>156. <i>Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas</i></p>	

<p><i>identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.</i></p>	
<p><i>157. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:</i> <i>a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply</i></p>	<p>Note that decentralised supply is a permitted element of the Local Plan</p>
<p><i>development, local planning authorities should:</i> <i>a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;</i></p>	<p>Note the default position is that small-scale renewable development is recognised as important</p>

c) SP3 – Does it properly support the intent expressed in the Framework?

The main characteristic of the words used in the Framework is that they compel action in a direction. SP3 does not use words that compel action, it merely refers to passive activities such as ‘supporting’ and ‘encouraging’. In short, it fails to contribute to the imperative need for action expressed in the Framework.

In addition, SP3 does NOT meet the need set out in other national documents and legislation related to climate change. This is a typical example:

“This includes finance, technology transfer, capacity building and supporting efforts to adapt to current and future climate impacts around the world. This should involve putting in place much stronger climate adaptation planning, which has languished for the last decade, alongside its strengthened emissions reduction Commitments.”

p.342, The Sixth Carbon Budget, The UK’s path to Net Zero, Committee on Climate Change, December 2020

3. Q15 reply

To return to the question: *Q15. How does Policy SP3 along with the overarching strategy of the Local Plan secure the development and use of land.....*

It is our view that it fails to do so and is thus UNSOUND because:

- a) SP3 is couched in terms that do not carry the strength of meaning to compel the action implicit in the Framework, merely to encourage it, at best,
- b) it does not accord with other national policy imperatives and thus risks creating a Local Plan that is not applicable to the real world and

- c) it does not propose any system of measurement or 'carbon audit'.
This is a serious fault as:
 - i) it is not in line with the general approach of the draft Local Plan, which uses a 'numeric scoring' approach to land use designation etc, and
 - ii) it is not possible to evaluate and measure progress with a strategy without measurement.

4 ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC COMMENTS

SP3 as set out within the draft Local Plan stands in isolation from the remainder of the content. The intent of SP3 is not fully reflected into the other parts of the Local Plan; it has not been considered as a fully-integrated and consistent document, merely a patchwork of proposals.

Although, of itself, SP3 rehearses the climate change issues adequately, it fails to contain any strategic policy. More worryingly, the remaining SP and DP policy statements set out in the draft Local Plan fail to take any account of SP3 in their own drafting. This renders the draft Local Plan internally inconsistent and hence UNSOUND.

We consider that these faults can be remedied by a 'main revision' and the consequent consultation process. As an example we list some (NOT all) typical changes.

A) At SP1 para. 1 add:

h. Regards the Spatial Vision for Shropshire set out in 2.31 above as a mandatory test for any decision including any planning decision made by Shropshire Council.

B) Revise SP1 para2 to read:

In addition, and where appropriate proposals should seek to reflect relevant considerations of Shropshire Council's objectives for net zero carbon Shropshire by 2030, and other strategies, including its Community Led Plans, Local Economic Growth Strategies (including the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan), the Local Transport Plan, the Public Health Strategy and the need for all new planned development to be of zero carbon standard from 2030 in line with declared objectives responding to the Declared Climate Emergency.

C) Revise DP 11 para 'd' to read

d. Ensuring all proposals for one or more dwellings and in particular residential development of 50 or more dwellings to:

- i. Achieve zero net-carbon emissions;
- ii. Maximise the use of on-site district heating and cooling systems, especially where these utilise renewable energy and
- iii. Maximise opportunities to connect to wider heating and cooling networks both for energy supply and export, especially where these utilise renewable energy

The Future Homes Standard consultation should be mandated for all planning decisions where construction will start after 2025 (not where application has been made after 2025), thus supporting national policy.

add the following to DP11:

Energy use in new development

Development will be expected to:

Minimise the demand for heating, cooling, hot water, lighting and power,

Meet its remaining heat/cooling demand sustainably,

Maximise on-site renewable energy generation,

Meet any outstanding reduction in residual emissions through carbon offsetting and

after applying onsite measures, development is expected to achieve a 100% reduction in its remaining regulated and unregulated emissions through the use of carbon offsetting as set out below.

New development should demonstrate through an Energy Strategy set out as part of its Sustainability Statement how these requirements will be met. Where existing buildings are being converted into new uses the Energy Strategy should show that energy demand has been reduced to the lowest practical level.

Carbon offsetting: financial contributions and other allowable solutions

Once on-site CO2 reduction requirements for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures have been met, the remaining emission reductions will be met by carbon offsetting measures such as:

Using a financial contribution to renewable energy, low-carbon energy and energy efficiency schemes elsewhere in the Shropshire area; or

Agreeing acceptable directly linked or near-site provision.

PassivHaus buildings

Where buildings are proposed to be certified PassivHaus standard, it will be sufficient to submit the technical information required to demonstrate that the PassivHaus standard can be achieved and for the Sustainability Statement to demonstrate that the residual heat/cooling demand for the development has been met sustainably as set out below.

Heating and Cooling Systems

New development will be expected to demonstrate sustainable heating and cooling systems have been selected, using the approach below, including embedded carbon costs of the system as a whole:

- Where possible, connection to an existing or new classified heat network from the point of occupation;
 - Designing development with a communal heating system,
 - Employing sustainable alternatives to heat networks,
 - Demonstrate that cooling systems have been designed in accordance with the following steps:
 - Minimise excessive solar gain through orientation, built form, massing, fixed, mobile and seasonal shading and green infrastructure;
 - Maximise passive cooling through natural ventilation, diurnal cooling, placement of thermal mass;
 - Meet residual cooling load renewably, and consider opportunities for seasonal cooling/heating.
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D) S16. 1

Add to S16. 1 (8) :

Further, to take advantage of the implementation of the Big Town Plan as a key intervention opportunity to begin the development of a zero carbon Town Centre.

E) DP26

Replace DP26 with the following:

In determining applications for renewable and low carbon energy, and associated infrastructure, the following issues will be considered:

- a) the contribution of the proposals to cutting greenhouse gas emissions,
- b) the impact of the scheme, on landscape character, visual amenity, water quality and flood risk, heritage significance, recreation, biodiversity and, where appropriate, agricultural land use, aviation and telecommunications.
- c) the impact on users and residents of the local area,
- d) the direct benefits to the area and local community.

Proposals for wind energy development:

- may also be suitable in principle if they are located in large new development sites, existing industrial estates or if they are proposed in neighbourhood plans or through community energy schemes; and
- where appropriate, provision should be made for the removal of the facilities and reinstatement of the site should it cease to be operational.

Particular support will be given to renewable and low carbon energy generation developments that are led by, or meet the needs of local communities, and supports the development of local employment and the economy.

F) SP3 1.g

In relation to SP 23 should have the following addition paragraph made:

8. The Council will seek to encourage and enable the sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in historic buildings (including listed buildings and buildings of solid wall or traditional construction).

END