

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Stage 1 Hearing Statement

Representor unique Part A Ref *	A0088 MW Refresh Group A0028 MWTC
Matter	4 Housing and Employment Land Needs (policy SP2)
Relevant questions nos.	2, 3, 9

Question 2

- SP2 2.** Specifically states that employment land will equate with development growth. Shropshire Council (SC) cannot demonstrate that this requirement for equilibrium between development of housing and employment growth can be met. The proposed new development target of 200 is not properly aligned with potential job growth for Much Wenlock.
- S13** notes that the site of 0.72 hectares, known as EMP1 (MUW011) in the Shropshire Council (SC) Much Wenlock Place Plan, should remain as the site for development supporting employment in Much Wenlock. MUW011 has been available since before 2005 but has never been adequately marketed by SC, remains unoccupied and no new or alternative sites have been proposed. SC has not proposed a delivery strategy for the employment site which would create the employment it suggests is possible. It is unclear whether the viability of MUW011 is understood. If the Draft Plan's policy is to create balanced growth, there needs to be a proactive approach for site assembly and marketing. Otherwise, the Plan will fail and is unsound.
- It is demonstrable that development of new employment sites significantly large enough to be commensurate with the proposed development target set in the SC Local Plan of 200 houses will adversely affect the Gaskell Arms Junction. 43% of workers drive to work, while an additional 3% are a passenger in a car or van. By far the largest majority must pass through the junction [2011 Census, Much Wenlock Town Profile Spring 2021 page 25].
- Policy EJ1 Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan (MWNP)** p11: 'Proposals for the development of employment on this site (MUW011) will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- the proposals and their HGV traffic generation would not have an unacceptable traffic impact on the wider town and the capacity and operation of its highway network.’

Question 3

5. In conjunction with proposed over-development of 200 houses in Much Wenlock we also see a proposed 1000 houses at Tasley, over 1000 houses at Ironbridge Power Station and the designation of the Eastern Belt Strategic corridor, SP14, 3.142a A458 – A4169. This can only mean that Much Wenlock is part of the strategic development to provide housing for a workforce in the Black Country with none of the infrastructure advantages that a strategic centre would bring. The Local Plan for Much Wenlock is counterproductive to employment growth, tourism and sustainable development. [See pp59-60 Reg 19 *Submission Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Group*].

Question 9

6. Shropshire Council has not expressed the employment land allocation for MW in terms of jobs created. MUW012VAR (120 dwellings) alone could mean approximately 288 extra residents in Much Wenlock, (*average family 2.4 ONS.*) 65% of the population is of working age (ONS). We can estimate that this would need 195-200 jobs to support households.

7. It is unlikely that a high percentage of those 200 will work in Much Wenlock with only 14% working from home (ONS). Job density in Broseley/Much Wenlock is amongst the lowest in the county with 0.47 jobs per resident compared with 0.95 in the rest of Shropshire. [2011 Census, *Much Wenlock Town Profile Spring 2021 p27*]. This suggests a high degree of commuting will take place by private car.

8. The MUW011 employment site designated by Shropshire Council is .72 hectares, which could support 40 – 200 jobs depending on the nature of the employment in 20 + small industrial units / offices. (*See footnote 1 below*).

Realising either the larger or smaller number of jobs, full time or part time will require investment in the site, including access, parking and services on a well-designed and highly marketed scheme to get it moving and on-track in parallel with the housing being proposed and delivered within the plan period.

9. Unless there is a much clearer commitment from SC, it is hard to assert that the Draft Plan will deliver on SP13.1. 2 Hierarchy of Existing Employment areas (pages 61- 62; local employment with clear economic benefits). Whilst we support the creation of local

employment and the policy of a balanced, sustainable town, the Draft Plan falls well short of showing how this will be delivered. Indeed, at MWTC's meeting with Eddie West (EW), Strategic Planning Manager of Shropshire Council (SC), on 15th September 2021, [see pp17-20; [Microsoft Word - 8a Draft Minutes 2nd Sept 2021.docx \(muchwenlock-tc.gov.uk\)](#)], EW stated that SC's priorities for employment development were focused on the larger principal centres. This is in sharp contrast to SC's insistence on 'certainty and deliverability' on its housing proposals. As a result, the plan is unsound and its objectives for sustainable development will fail.

Footnote 1. The following notes are based on national averages from a variety of government and commercial sources.

- Calculating Land to Building Ratio and Why It Matters (thebalancesmb.com) advises a site area to floor space ratio of around 3:1. Given we are in a rural location and would expect quality design, landscaping etc, we could assume 2:1 ratio, which might assume 20 plus small industrial units. [Calculating Land to Building Ratio and Why It Matters \(thebalancesmb.com\)](#)
- The Employment Densities Guide (publishing.service.gov.uk) says for B1 uses (light industrial, business park) we'd expect some 47m² of space per Full Time Employee (FTE). Which suggests around (at least) 100 FTEs could be generated on the site. [Employment Densities Guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- A Small-Medium size Enterprise unit with car parking / delivery is about 250 – 400sq metres with each employing 2 – 10 people per unit <https://www.pallmallestates.co.uk/small-industrial-unit/>
- 95% of businesses in the UK have fewer than 10 employees <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf>