



Shropshire Council Local Plan Examination

Stage 1: Matter 2 - Additional hearing on the Duty to Cooperate

Hearing Statement

December 2022



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SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Stage 1 Hearing Statement

Representor unique Part A Ref *	A0461
Matter	Additional Duty to Cooperate hearing session – 17th January 2023.
Relevant questions nos	1, 2, 3 and 4

*Your unique reference can be found in the Schedule of Respondents (Schedule 3 of document SD014.01) at:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-planning/local-plan-review/draft-shropshire-local-plan-2016-2038-examination/examination-library/earlier-regulation-18-plan-making-stages-of-consultation/regulation-19-pre-submission-draft-of-the-shropshire-local-plan-consultation/>

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INTRODUCTION

Background

- 2.1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Gladman Developments Ltd (Gladman) in response to the Stage 1 additional hearing session on the Duty to Cooperate scheduled for Tuesday 17th January 2023.
- 2.1.2 Gladman have fully engaged in the preparation of the draft Shropshire Local Plan 2016-2038 to date, making submissions in response to the Issues & Strategic Options consultation (January - March 2017), the Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation (October – December 2017), Preferred Sites consultation (November 2018 – February 2019), Strategic Sites consultation (July – September 2019), Reg 18 Pre Submission Draft consultation (August – September 2020) and Reg 19 Pre-Submission consultation (December 2020 – February 2021). In addition, Gladman submitted hearing statements and participated at the Stage 1 hearing sessions held in July 2022.
- 2.1.3 Gladman have also engaged with officers at the Council to outline the opportunities for development at 'Land off Longford Turning, Market Drayton', a proposed residential allocation (MRD039) in the Draft Shropshire Local Plan 2038.

MATTER 1 – THE DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

Issue - Whether the Council have complied with the duty to cooperate in the preparation of the Local Plan

Question 1: It has emerged that the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA): Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton have decided to cease work immediately on the Joint Black Country Local Plan and instead each develop their own Local Plan to a timescale to be agreed by each authority (GC19). What implications, if any, does this have for the examination in relation to the duty to cooperate in the preparation of the Local Plan and the submitted statements of common ground (SoCG) with ABCA?

- 2.1.4 Dudley Council announced in a Press Release on 6th October 2022 that it was withdrawing from being a member of the Draft Black Country Local Plan 2039. Following this announcement, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils announced on 13th October 2022 that plan preparation on the Joint Black Country Local Plan will cease immediately and the councils would now begin work on preparing their own individual local plans. The individual councils have since prepared updated Local Development Schemes which have been considered at their respective Cabinet/Full Council meetings to commence work on new individual local plans.
- 2.1.5 In the Draft Shropshire Local Plan (SD002), the Council have included a contribution of 1,500 dwellings towards specifically meeting the unmet housing needs of the wider Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA), as established through the Black Country Plan review. Gladman stress that although the Black Country Plan is no longer being progressed, the unmet housing need from the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) still exists and it remains relevant to the authorities in the housing market area.
- 2.1.6 It is well documented that there is a significant shortfall in housing across the GBBCHMA. Although the Black Country Plan has now been abandoned, the Regulation 18 version of that Plan (August 2021) established a shortfall of 28,239 homes up to 2039. This shortfall is robustly evidenced through the four councils' Urban Capacity Study Update and tested through the West Midlands Combined Authority Brownfield Land Study. Shropshire holds a strong inter-relationship with the ABCA based on commuting and migration flows (infrastructure links with the M54) and housing markets.
- 2.1.7 The November 2022 Duty to Cooperate Topic Paper, which has been published in support of the current consultation on the South Staffordshire Local Plan Publication version (11th November – 23rd December 2022), details the formal cooperation arrangements that have been established and followed with neighbouring local planning authorities and other relevant bodies, to secure on-going cooperation on this matter. It details that the GBBCHMA authorities are now in the process of agreeing a SoCG across the entire geography and related authorities to deliver a

review of the 2018 GBHMA Strategic Growth Study to support the changing position on housing shortfalls across the housing market area.

- 2.1.8 Gladman note that this SoCG has been agreed in draft and is currently being circulated for formal signing across all participant authorities (this does not include Shropshire Council as they already have a signed SoCG with the Black Country) (EV041). Quantifying and accommodating the unmet housing needs of the GBBCHMA is undoubtedly a complex and long-standing issue and thus it is vital that the authorities continue to work collaboratively to devise a suitable and sustainable solution to this matter.

Question 2: Are the SoCG with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders still relevant and up to date?

- 2.1.9 The SoCG between Shropshire Council and the ABCA to provide a contribution for up to 1,500 dwellings attributing to meeting the needs in the Black Country was agreed and signed by the Leader of Shropshire Council and all four Leaders of the ABCA (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) in July 2021 (EV041).
- 2.1.10 The SoCGs with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders remain relevant and up to date. However, it has been noted in the ABCA's hearing statement to the Matter 2 hearing session that: *"Whilst supporting the 1,500 uplift, it is stressed that this is a minimum and based on current migration flows. The implication being that should the requirement be increased further through the examination process, then the additional growth identified must contribute to the GBBCHMA / Black Country shortfall"*.

Question 3. Having regard to the additional evidence that has been submitted by the Council (GC15 – GC15I), has the Council maximised the effectiveness of the Local Plan by engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with the prescribed bodies on housing matters during the preparation of the Local Plan?

- 2.1.11 Examination documents GC15-GB15I demonstrate how the Council has engaged constructively and on a regular basis with the prescribed bodies on housing matters since July 2017. Gladman support the approach taken by the Council to positively

respond to significant unmet needs in the Black Country, which has been the result of an ongoing process of engagement. We note that the scale of unmet need in the Black Country is such that a request has been made for an early review mechanism to be incorporated in the Draft Local Plan, to be triggered when the scale of unmet need is ongoing.

Question 4. What has been the outcome of co-operation and how has this addressed the issue of overall housing provision?

2.1.12 This is a question for Shropshire Council to respond to.