

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Stage 1 Hearing Statement

Representor unique Part A Ref *	A0377
Matter	1 – Duty to Cooperate
Relevant questions nos	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<p>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?</p> <p>The Black Country Councils are of the view that the cessation of work on the Black Country Plan does not have any significant direct implications for the Local Plan Examination.</p> <p>In the time following the submission of GC19, the four Black Country Councils have secured cabinet approval to progress individual Local Plans as indicated in the October 2022 Press Statements referred to in GC19. This has included Local Development Schemes (LDS) being brought into effect in the case of Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The Dudley LDS is anticipated to be considered by Cabinet in January 2023. Sandwell Council have prepared a Regulation 18 Local Plan Issues and Options Report as the first stage of the Local Plan which was approved by Cabinet for consultation on 7th December 2022. The Wolverhampton Local Plan will form a continuation of the Black Country Plan process for Wolverhampton and will draw on the Draft BCP consultation responses and evidence to date. Therefore, Wolverhampton is still in the process of a preparing a Plan and the next stage, Issues and Preferred Options consultation, is programmed for early 2023.</p> <p>The revised LDS for Walsall indicates that the Walsall Local Plan is unlikely to be adopted until 2027. This means that it will need to address housing need up to 2042. The extended time period will increase the overall housing and employment land requirement, and the size of the shortfall that may need to be exported.</p> <p>The revised LDS for Dudley will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2023 for approval. It is anticipated that the Dudley Plan timescale will be extended to 2041. The extended time period will increase the overall housing and employment need for Dudley from that included in the Draft Regulation 18 Black Country Plan.</p>	

The current position in relation to unmet housing and employment land needs arising in the Black Country remains as set out in the Black Country Plan Regulation 18 consultation in 2021, and the additional Walsall sites consultation in the Summer of 2022. The position of the Black Country Councils on supporting the approach set out in the Shropshire Local Plan remains as it was in our previous Matter 2 Examination Statement in relation to the Duty to Cooperate – that the planned level of housing growth and employment land provision is supported, but that in order to be sound, the Local Plan requires additional Policy guidance to enable the early delivery of additional homes and employment land to meet needs arising in the Black Country should this be justified through ongoing evidence gathering. This ongoing evidence gathering will include work progressed in support of the Local Plans outlined above, and any joint working through the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area Group and Strategic Employment Sites Study.

The proposed 1,500 home housing contribution will need to be apportioned between the Black Country Councils to support the preparation of the individual Local Plans and this will be secured through a Statement of Common Ground between the four Councils.

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

For the reasons set out in response to Question 1, the broad approach set out in the SoCG with the Black Country Councils remains relevant.

In terms of whether it is up to date, clearly elements of it do not reflect the current position:

- the references in para 4.5, 5.6 and 5.7 to the Black Country Plan programme. This would need to be updated to reflect the individual programmes for the four Local Plans.
- para 7.12 – the reference to the forecast housing and employment land shortfalls being subject to further public consultation. The Black Country Plan Regulation 18 consultations took place in 2021 and 2022. The responses to these consultations are published on the Black Country Plan website - <https://blackcountry.oc2.uk/document/55> . The consultation generated a very significant level of response but the Councils are of the view that the responses do not challenge the position that the Black Country as a whole has a significant shortfall of land to meet forecast housing and employment land needs and the approach to the Shropshire Local Plan through the Duty to Cooperate remains appropriate.

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?

Yes. Shropshire Council have engaged in a constructive, active and ongoing manner with the BCAs in the preparation of the Local Plan. This has been achieved through direct engagement with the BCAs through meetings and correspondence, and through Shropshire attending meetings of the GBBCHMA Group. The additional evidence submitted by Shropshire Council is consistent with this view.

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

The outcome of this engagement has been the incorporation of an uplift of 1,500 homes to meets needs arising in the Black Country and which cannot be accommodated within the Black Country administrative area.

5 - 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 employment related matters during the preparation of the Local Plan?

Yes. Shropshire Council have engaged in a constructive, active and ongoing manner with the BCAs in the preparation of the Local Plan. This has been achieved through direct engagement with the BCAs through meetings and correspondence, and through Shropshire attending meetings of the GBBCHMA Group. The additional evidence submitted by Shropshire Council is consistent with this view.

6 - What has been the outcome of co-operation and how has this addressed the issue of jobs growth and employment land provision?

The outcome of this engagement has been the incorporation of an uplift of 30ha to meets needs arising in the Black Country which cannot be accommodated within the Black Country administrative area.

Furthermore, progress has been made with the commissioning of the West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study referred to in our previous Matter 1 Statement. This work has been tendered with the appointment of the consultants anticipated to be confirmed in December 2022.