

**Inspectors:**

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Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Shropshire Council Response to Inspectors Correspondence ID48**

Dear Inspectors,

Thank you for your letter of 17<sup>th</sup> February, which the Council received on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025, setting out your response to the Council's letter GC56.

Clearly, the Council are hugely disappointed by your conclusions, the outcome of which provides no route to the adoption of the draft Local Plan. The choice now facing the Council is whether to agree to withdraw the Plan further to your recommendation, or to request you prepare a final report, of which you have already set out what your conclusions would be.

As the only choices open to the Council result in the same conclusion, the Council therefore recognises ID48 as a decision of the Planning Inspectorate that the draft Local Plan cannot be adopted due to the soundness concerns you have already set out in full in ID47 and within previous correspondence.

Set against the changing picture nationally with regard to Plan making, and in particular the new housing need figures derived from the Government's revised standard methodology, it had already become necessary for the Council to begin work on a new Local Plan later in 2025 regardless of the progress with the examination. However, having responded positively to the majority of your concerns, it remains extremely frustrating that we are now not being allowed an opportunity to undertake the work programme we set out in GC56.

Regarding the rationale for your position set out in ID48, having specifically invited the Council to prepare a project plan (paragraph 67 of ID47), it is now surprising you consider the work required to fulfil this would exceed the definition of 'limited' and could not be carried out in the defined six months. The Council are unaware of any material change in circumstance since the publication of ID47 regarding either your soundness concerns, or the



Government's advice to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the application of pragmatism in these circumstances. Put simply, it is unclear why this position was not reached in ID47, which would have saved the Council both time and expense.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council continues to consider that the necessary work to address your soundness concerns, as set out in GC56, is capable of being undertaken within a six month period. It is also apparent there is flexibility regarding the application of the six month timetable as demonstrated by recent conclusions of other Local Plan Inspectors.

However, it is clear that despite this, you have concluded that undertaking necessary additional work in accordance with the proposed project plan is no longer an option open to the Council.

On this basis, officers feel that there is little choice but to recommend to elected members that the draft Shropshire Local Plan is withdrawn from the examination.

However, under our Constitution the decision to withdraw the Local Plan from examination requires full Council approval. Because our pre-election period commenced on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March, ahead of elections on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May, the first opportunity for full Council to consider this recommendation and reach a decision is likely to be 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025. As a result, it is our intention to take a report to this meeting with a recommendation that our members provide approval to withdraw the Local Plan from examination.

Therefore, please accept this letter as the Council's intention to withdraw the Plan from examination, and on this basis we would ask that no further work be undertaken by you on the examination. We will write to you formally confirming the decision of Council in due course.

Your sincerely

Eddie West  
Planning Policy and Strategy Manager

