



# WEM CIVIC SOCIETY

[Registered Charity No: 1001351]

*Chairwoman:* Shelagh Richardson

Fairfields, Soulton Road, Wem

Shropshire SY4 5HR

Tel. No.: 01939 235443

e-mail: [wemcivsoc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wemcivsoc@yahoo.co.uk)

[www.wemlocal.org.uk](http://www.wemlocal.org.uk)

---

Daphne Woof – Programme Officer  
c/o Planning Policy Team  
Shropshire Council  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND

5<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Dear Daphne Woof

## **SAMDev Plan: Shropshire**

Please pass on the comments of Wem Civic Society with regard to the Examination of the above plan to the Inspector.

Wem Civic Society has noted the results of the work with regard to Wem town. Members are relieved to see that you have accepted the results of the many consultations and discussions held within the town and with external individuals and groups. The redrawing of the development boundary in Mill Street was requested by the Town Council and many others and is a sensible amendment.

The numbers of homes now planned exceeds the original allocation. It has been stated by some individuals "numbers aren't everything". Well, it depends. Numbers are not everything if those numbers are adhered to but houses are sited in areas prone to flooding, over a town boundary threatening the integrity of the town and nearby small settlements This is of great concern when access is via roads that are designated 'quiet lanes' or to feed through to a dangerous level crossing. Numbers are crucial if the intention is to build a sustainable community and that a particular level of development has been deemed appropriate for the existing and future infrastructure by a process of consultation.

Many individuals and groups in Wem, including the Civic Society, welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the future development of the town offered by the SAMDev project. It was a successful exercise in democracy and localism but as all such exercises was costly in terms of the expenditure of resources. The result in Wem was regarded by most people as the least bad solution of the series of difficult

options available. After all the efforts that went into this project, people in Wem expect that the development, particularly the town boundary, to be settled by this exercise for the next few years. This was encouraged by the NPPF that states, "*The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*" There is concern that the planning committee and officials are not following the guidelines set out in the draft SAMDev report. It could be argued that it is still a draft report and that both committee and officials are permitted to regard it simply as guidance and to be ignored, as seems to be happening at the moment. Once this report is no longer a 'draft', it must provide the template for future planning decisions in this town and the rest of Shropshire. We ask you to emphasise this in either your introduction or commentary with regard to the report.

Local democracy will be damaged if the SAMDev project proves to carry little weight in future planning decisions and that it turns out to have been a waste of the time and resources that organisations and individuals have committed to it. It would also be unfortunate if we were to repeat the errors of post-war development where a combination of panic and vested interests led to catastrophic mistakes in town planning.

Yours sincerely

Shelagh Richardson  
*Chairwoman: Wem Civic Society*