

GC10A - Shropshire Council and ABCA - Timeline of DtC activity - Shropshire Council Local Plan Review – Cross Boundary Needs

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12 July 2022

Dear Ian,

Shropshire Council Local Plan Review – Cross Boundary Needs

As you are aware the emerging Shropshire Local Plan is progressing towards the Post-submission (Regulation 19) consultation stage at the end of July 2020, and following consultation on this in the summer, the Council are aiming to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State in January 2021. The Duty to Cooperate is an important feature of this process, and to this end the discussions we have had over the past few month have been invaluable in seeking to identify relevant cross boundary issues, and informing how each Local Planning Authority area should be seeking to respond to the challenge in a positive manner.

It is noted that a number of relevant evidence base documents have been prepared to inform the preparation of the emerging Black Country Plan, including the Urban Capacity Study and Green Belt Assessment, and that these have been used to inform discussions on the scale of any cross boundary support required. It is acknowledged the conclusions of these studies recognise there is likely to be a significant proportion of housing and employment need that cannot realistically be accommodated in the Black Country area up to 2038. As a result of this evidence it is accepted that the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) are seeking to have open and constructive discussions with neighbouring and closely related areas in seeking to distribute this unmet need more widely, whilst also seeking to ensure this is achieved in a sustainable manner. It is equally recognised that there are clear functional linkages between Shropshire and the Black Country that makes the issue of cross boundary need a necessary and reasonable consideration for both Planning Authorities.

The emerging Shropshire Local Plan seeks to positively encourage sustainable growth and proposes a housing requirement of around 30,800 dwellings and 300 hectares of employment land to be delivered over the plan period from 2016-2038. Alongside the County's significant number of completions and commitments since the start of the plan period, the emerging Local Plan proposes additional land allocations based upon the delivery of an 'urban focussed' strategy. This seeks, in the first instance, to support the sustainable growth of Shropshire's existing Strategic and Principal Centres. Importantly, the emerging Local Plan also encourages the development of two significant brownfield sites at the former Ironbridge Power Station and Clive Barracks at Tern Hill, near Market Drayton on the A41, as well as a proposed extension of the existing RAF Cosford site for military and associated purposes.

On the basis of our constructive discussions, and having given due consideration to the evidence provided regarding the ongoing challenges with the Black Country's ability to meet all their needs within their area, subject to Cabinet approval on 20th July, the principle for Shropshire to formally accept up to 1,500 dwellings of the Black Country's housing need over the period to 2038 is supported by Shropshire Council. If agreed, it is proposed that this additional housing need will be incorporated into Shropshire's overall emerging housing requirement of 30,800 dwellings between 2016 and 2038, and delivered in accordance with the overall strategic approach to the distribution of growth. This additional housing need would not therefore be proposed to be accommodated on any single site allocation, and it is therefore not anticipated this will require any further release of Shropshire's Green Belt.

By way of caveat, this offer of assistance is based upon the current housing need position in Shropshire. We are aware the Government have recently published updated sub-national household projections for the period to 2038. If, having considered this updated position, alongside any potential revision in the nationally prescribed methodology for calculating an area's housing need, Shropshire Council may need to review their ongoing ability to accept any additional housing need whilst continuing to ensure this is delivered in a sustainable manner. This offer should therefore be kept under review as we progress through the submission and examination process.

If this position is acceptable in principle with the Black Country authorities, Shropshire would welcome the opportunity to formalise this thorough a Statement of Common Ground agreed between the two Local Planning Authority areas, to inform the submission of the Local Plan to Government.

Yours sincerely,

Eddie West

Interim Planning Policy and Strategy Manager
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