



OSWESTRY

town council

Mr A Cooper
Team Leader
Environmental and Economic Policy
Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire

3rd February 2014

Dear Mr Cooper

SAMDEV – REVISED PREFERRED OPTION - OSWESTRY

The Council discussed the consultation document – ‘*SAMDEV – Revised Preferred Options – Oswestry*’ at its meeting on Monday 27th January and has resolved to make the following submission:

1. The Council continues to support the allocation of the following sites:

OSW042 – Richard Burbidge
OSW033 – Alexandra Road Depot
OSW029 – Former Leisure Centre
OSW034, 35, 36, - Land South of Cemetery
OSW025 – Oswestry Eastern Gateway Sustainable Urban Extension

2. **Site OSW030 – The Cottams**

The Council continues to have concerns about the allocation of this site as expressed at Preferred Option Stage. However, in view of the need to allocate a sufficient range of housing sites and the seeming lack of suitable alternatives, the Council will not pursue its objection to allocation at this stage.

3. **Site OSW002 – part - Land off Gobowen Road**

The Council strongly opposes this allocation on the basis of its proximity to the Ancient Monument and the harmful impact it would have on its setting. The site would extend the developed boundary of the town on rising ground towards the Hillfort and the ‘Coppice’ Hill. This would seriously erode the open setting of the Hillfort. Such significant damage in return for the small number of proposed dwellings is not in the best interests of the future development of Oswestry.

4. **Site OSW003 – part – Oldport Farm, Gobowen Road**

The revised allocation in its present form is opposed by the Council. The Council has concerns for the impact of development on the setting of the Ancient Monument. Any proposal to find a new use for the Oldport Farm Complex should be handled with the greatest care. The Council supports the approach put forward by English Heritage that the sensitive reuse of vernacular buildings on the site could be acceptable but that redundant modern farm buildings should be removed. The aim of any redevelopment should be to significantly reduce the visual impact of the existing development on the setting of the Hillfort. The proposed large scale car park is not supported by the Council.

5. **Site OSW004 – part – Land off Whittington Road**

The reduced allocation is supported.

6. The Council continues to have significant concerns about the potential impact of new housing development within the setting of Old Oswestry Hillfort and the Councils' support for site OSW04 as proposed, and OSW003 in a suitable further reduced form, is conditional upon the following safeguards as resolved by the Council. Namely that in supporting OSW003 and OSW004, and the position of English Heritage, then these inclusions in SAMDev can only be made if a full review of the existing Historical Assessment is secured by Shropshire Council. This, in terms of the direct impacts of development, following a process of due diligence, so that the important confirmation is provided that the Heritage Impact Assessment is NPFF compliant. To achieve this then assurance is sought that independent evaluation will be taken. It is considered that such scrutiny must also include a full examination of the Heritage Statement provided by the Old Oswestry Hillfort Campaign Group dated December 2013.

7. In considering the acceptability of individual sites the Council has borne in mind the need to allocate sufficient scale and range of sites to meet Oswestry's agreed role in the future development of the County. The Council would now wish to see the deletion of site OSW002 – part – land at Gobowen Road and a reduction in numbers at OSW003 – part – Oldport Farm. This may result in a shortfall in the region of 50 dwellings. The Council has given considerable thought to how this may be addressed. It is keen to see full advantage taken of the considerable potential for brown field site redevelopment and the reuse of town centre and other properties to provide new accommodation. Shropshire Council should reconsider the present windfall allowance in the light of these comments. It is also essential to make the best use of urban sites in terms of maximising housing density and it is felt that re-examination of capacity may yield further potential.

8. **Employment Sites**

The Council fully supports the proposed allocations and welcomes the progress made by Shropshire Council in promoting adequate employment development opportunities for the town.

9. **Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages**

The Council continues to have concerns about the continued relevance of this policy in view of the changing role of town centres and the need to respond positively to new proposals.

10. **Proposed Development Boundary**

The Council supports the Development Boundary in its proposed form.

In conclusion, the Council wish to thank Shropshire Council for extending the consultation period in order to deal with many contentious issues. During this time the Council has carried out extensive consultations with interested parties, visited sites, and held a Seminar to consider the full implications of the proposed pattern of development. The Council would wish to make it clear that its submission on the Revised Preferred Options are the result of much careful deliberation, not only regarding the suitability of individual sites, but also the urgent need to agree a suitable and adequate allocation of development sites and opportunities to serve Oswestry's need over the plan period.

Yours sincerely

David J Preston
Town Clerk