

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Stage 1 Hearing Statement

Representor unique Part A Ref *	A0487
Matter	Matter 3 – Development Strategy (Policies SP1 – SP5)
Relevant Questions Nos.	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22 & 23

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
MATTER 3 – DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (POLICIES SP1 – SP15)

Inspector’s issues and questions in bold type.

This Hearing Statement is made for and on behalf of the HBF, which should be read in conjunction with our representations to the pre submission Local Plan consultation dated 26 February 2021. This representation answers specific questions as set out in the Inspector’s Matters, Issues & Questions document (ID7) issued on 12 April 2022.

Issue : Whether the Development Strategy is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Questions :

Q9. Is Policy SP3 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)?

As set out in the 2021 NPPF, the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate (para 152) and any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards (para 154b).

The NPPG sets out that any local requirements for a building’s sustainability and for zero carbon buildings should be based on robust credible evidence and tested for impacts on viability (ID: 6-009-20150327). The NPPG also clarifies that locally set energy performance standards for new housing should not exceed the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and any requirement for a proportion of used energy to be from renewable and / or low carbon energy sources should be reasonable (ID: 6-012-20190315).

Therefore, whilst the Council’s policy approach in Policy SP3 – Climate Change is commendable, it should not undermine the Government’s intention to set energy efficiency standards through the Building Regulations via the 2021 Part L Interim Uplift (effective from June 2022) / 2025 Future Homes Standard, to provide electric vehicle charging points under Part S of the Building Regulations (effective from June 2022) and water efficiency standards in Part G of the Building Regulations.

The HBF also note that Policy SP3 is cross referenced to Policies DP11 – Minimising Carbon Emissions and DP20 – Water Efficiency, further detailed comments on these Policies will be submitted in Written Hearing Statements for Matters to be discussed during the Stage 2 Examination Hearing Sessions.

Q10. Is Policy SP4 necessary as it rehearses national planning policy, contrary to the advice in PPG (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 61- 036-20190723)?

Policy SP4 – Sustainable Development is not necessary because it is repetitious of national policy. Policy SP4 should be deleted.

Q11. The Framework at paragraph 28 advises that ‘non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods, or types of development. This can include...the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level...establishing design principles...’ Are Policies SP5 and SP6 strategic policies or development management policies?

Policies SP5 – High Quality Design and SP6 – Health & Wellbeing are non-strategic development management policies rather than strategic policies.

Q12. What is the status of the West Midlands Design Charter and does Policy SP5 align with its principles? Is there any scope for tension between Policy SP5 and Policy DP24? Is Policy SP5 justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

The West Midlands Design Charter is an example of best practice guidance, it is a non-statutory document, which has not been subject to the same process of preparation, consultation and examination as the Shropshire Local Plan. The reference to the West Midlands Design Charter in Policy SP5 is unjustified, which should be deleted.

Q13. How have the health impacts of the Local Plan been assessed and addressed? Is Policy SP6 justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

Policy SP6 Bullet Point 10 is not justified. The requirement for a Health Impact Assessment without any specific evidence that an individual scheme is likely to have a significant impact upon the health and wellbeing of the local population is inconsistent with guidance set out in the NPPG. Bullet Point 10 of Policy SP6 should be deleted.

Q21. Does the Local Plan strategy rely on windfall development and is the windfall allowance based on paragraph 71 of the Framework? Does the windfall allowance for housing need to be set out in the Local Plan?

The Local Plan strategy is reliant upon a significant allowance for windfall development. From Year 4 to the end of the plan period, there is an allowance of 299 dwellings per annum (for sites of less than 5 dwellings).

Historically, small windfall sites have become available for development, however, there is no guarantee or compelling evidence that such sites will continue to be a reliable source of housing land supply as set out in the 2021 NPPF (para 71). Indeed, this is particularly concerning given that Policy SP7 –

Managing Housing Development is effectively seeking to put barriers in place against otherwise compliant residential developments in the event of “residential guidelines” being exceeded in a settlement. Towards the end of the plan period, the potential for a housing moratorium will impact on housing land supply including windfall sites.

Q22. Does the Local Plan allocate 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare as set out in paragraph 69 of the Framework or is the Council relying on windfalls and commitments?

The Local Plan does not allocate 10% (3,080 dwellings) of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare. The Council’s Housing Topic Paper (Document GC4i) confirms that in March 2021 only 9 proposed allocations for circa 128 dwellings and only 10 proposed to be “saved” allocations for circa 85 dwellings are sites no larger than one hectare (para 5.8).

The Council is reliant on windfalls (see HBF answer to Q21 above) and existing commitments. Between 2016/17 - 2020/21, 3,590 dwellings were completed on sites of up to one hectare (para 5.4). On 31st March 2021, there were on sites of up to one hectare, 2,874 dwellings with planning permission and 97 dwellings with Prior Approval (para 5.7).

Q23. Should the Local Plan include more small and medium size sites to provide greater choice, flexibility, and certainty?

The Local Plan should include more small and medium sized sites, which would provide greater choice, flexibility and certainty. The Council has not demonstrated any strong reasons for not allocating more small & medium sized sites or that allocating 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare could not be achieved (see HBF answers to Q21 & Q22 above).