

REPRESENTOR - A0516

MATTER 3

QUESTION 15

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation is prepared and submitted by Landor Planning Consultants Ltd, acting on behalf of Mr and Mrs Holland (The Representor) and specifically responds to Matter 3 and Question 15 promulgated by the Inspector prior to the Examination.
- 1.2 The representations to this Examination are consistent with all previous representations submitted on behalf of the objectors to the Shropshire Local Plan 2016-2038 (The Local Plan).
- 1.3 The representations prepared for this Hearing specifically relate to a request to modify Policy SP9 – Managing Development in Community Clusters to reflect the aspirations of the Local Plan that seeks to maintain the long term sustainability of rural communities.

2.0 REPONSE TO QUESTION 15

- 2.1 The Representor agrees with Question 5 and considers there is a disconnect between the adopted Core Strategy and the Local Plan. The former is rural focused, and the latter is urban focused.
- 2.2 Local Plan Policy SP8 – Managing Development in Community Hubs, recognises the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of rural communities. It is therefore consistent with the Core Strategy.
- 2.3 The overarching strategy, to sustain rural communities, is also reflected in Policy SP9.1. It defines community clusters as consisting of

“...of individual or groups of small rural settlements of varying function but with aspirations to maintain or enhance their sustainability through modest levels of appropriate development”.
- 2.4 However, the disconnection between strategy and implementation arises in Policy SP9.2.c which refers to:

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“suitable small-scale infill sites of 0.1 hectare or less, which are clearly within and well related to the built form of the settlement, have permanent and substantial buildings on at least two sides and are for up to a maximum of 3 dwellings”.

- 2.5 We consider the criterion and reference to infill sites of less than 0.1 hectares and up to a maximum of 3 dwellings is overly prescriptive precluding many appropriate formats in a rural location. A courtyard development, for example, may well be considered an appropriate architectural response in many rural locations but would not be in accord with Policy SP9.2.c on capacity or qualifying as an infill development.
- 2.6 Community clusters are typically ‘villages’ characterised by a variety of settlement forms – some compact, some linear and some dispersed. For this reason, the reference to infill sites is likely to preclude many candidate sites. Greater weight should be given to such issues as sustainability, connection to services, footpaths and avoidance of flood risk.
- 2.7 The restrictions proposed by Policy SP9.2.c will impose severe limitations in terms of format, style and choice of house and delivery of affordable housing in rural area in favour of schemes of 2 to 3 detached dwellings. For the Local Plan to be sound and positively prepared SP9.2.c ought to be modified.

3.0 PROPOSED MODIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION

- 3.1 As written, Policy SP9.2.c is unsound. It is in conflict with the Council’s Strategic Approach to ensuring sustainable development as expressed in Policy SP2.6 and with paragraph 3.23 of the Local Plan, which allows for appropriate levels of development within rural areas, to enhance the longer-term sustainability of rural communities. This includes Community Clusters described as *“...settlements with aspirations to enhance their sustainability..... the focus for rural development”*.
- 3.2 This aspiration can be achieved by modifying Policy SP9.2.c. As written Policy SP9.2.c is in conflict with Policy SP8 and NPPF paragraph 77 and 78 which identify that local plans should provide opportunities for villages to grow and thrive especially where this will support local services.
- 3.3 It is requested that Policy SP9.2.c is modified to refer to sites capable of accommodating between 5-10 dwellings in the interest of encouraging housing

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choice, avoiding standard design formats and increasing the supply of affordable housing to meet local needs. It is well known that house prices in rural areas have increased since the pandemic, at a much faster rate than in other locations reducing opportunities and housing choice for local people, especially on lower incomes.