

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Stage 1 Hearing Statement

Representor unique Part A Ref *	A0513
Matter	3
Relevant questions nos	Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19

*Your unique reference can be found in the Schedule of Respondents (Schedule 3 of document SD014.01) at:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-planning/local-plan-review/draft-shropshire-local-plan-2016-2038-examination/examination-library/earlier-regulation-18-plan-making-stages-of-consultation/regulation-19-pre-submission-draft-of-the-shropshire-local-plan-consultation/>

Shropshire Local Plan Review Examination

Stage 1: Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 3: Development Strategy

Hearing Statement on behalf Mr E Maiden

Wednesday 6th/Thursday 7th July 2022

Introduction

This Hearing Statement is prepared in order to set out the position of Mr E Maiden (the Representor) who owns an area of land extending to 1.1 ha to the south of the built up area of Hinstock, with regard to a number of policies contained in the Draft Local Plan Review, but most particularly the operation of Policies SP11 and SP13.

The Statement concentrates on the issues raised by the Inspectors and which will be discussed in Stage 1 of the Examination which relate to the “Development Strategy” (Policies SP1-SP15) of the Draft Plan, as far as they relate to the identification of Hinstock as a Community Hub without seriously considering the possibilities of encouraging employment in the village and to fail to allocate land for that purpose. In particular the Statement relates to questions 3, 4, 15, 16 and 18 of the Inspectors’ Matters, Issues and Questions document ID7.

Summary of the objection and Relationship to Planning Policy

In brief, the objection submitted in respect of the Regulation 19 consultation draft of the Plan Review and which remain the Representor’s concern are that:

The strategy outlined in Policy SP2.2 as far as it relates to residential development indicates that some 30,800 dwellings will be delivered during the Plan period. This will be accompanied by 300ha of employment land. The “rurality” of much of Shropshire is noted in Policy SP2.6 as is “the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of rural communities”. On this basis development in the rural area of the County will be guided towards Community Hubs and Community Clusters, outside of which new development will be limited to affordable housing and to support rural employment.

This approach is considered appropriate by the Representor as a general principle; there is no surprise or objection to Hinstock being designated a Community Hub.

Policy SP8 relates to managing development in Community Hubs which, the policy says, are significant service centres in the rural area. These settlements will be permitted appropriate

levels of development, subject to a number of detailed criteria and Hinstock is expected to accommodate 155 new dwellings in the Plan period. With regard to employment development SP8 says only that it should be “appropriate and complements the size, character and identity of the settlement”.

Policy SP10 deals with Managing Development in the Countryside, and says that the focus for new development in rural areas will be on Community Hubs and Community Clusters, and fostering evidenced local need for affordable housing and appropriate rural employment opportunities.

Policy S11.2.3 says

“Within these Community Hubs (i.e. those Hubs identified in the Market Drayton Place Plan area) new employment development will be delivered through appropriate small scale windfall employment development within the settlements development boundary.....”

Explanatory para 3.131 says that

“New development (for employment) will also be permitted on sites of a suitable size within the Community Hubs in addition to any saved employment allocations.”

And para 3.133 that,

“Development in rural areas beyond preferred settlements (i.e. Community Hubs, Clusters and Countryside) should be appropriate in scale and impact to the proposed location for the development.”

And further that,

“This policy recognises that small scale economic developments (up to 1ha) including workshops, professional services, goods distribution companies should be supported in the Community Hubs and Clusters.”

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says in para 84 that planning policies should enable (amongst other things):

“The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.”

Para. 85 goes on to say that,

“Planning policies.....should recognise that sites to meet local businesses and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.”

The Representor is concerned that Policy S11.2.3 is unduly restrictive in requiring all new employment development to be delivered through small scale windfall development within Hinstock's development boundary.

It is considered that the site owned by the Representor being situated less than 1km from the southern edge of the development boundary, but within around 700m of the A41 Trunk road, and yet is visually screened from both the trunk road and all parts of the development in Hinstock could be sensibly developed and provide a base for the establishment of local businesses to serve the expansion of the village in residential terms.

Background

Hinstock is a village lying around 9.5km north of Newport (off the A41) and 8km south of Market Drayton. It has a current population of 887 people.

Before Shropshire became a Unitary Authority the area in which Hinstock is situated lay in the jurisdiction of North Shropshire District Council (NSDC). The last Local Plan prepared by NSDC before it became part of Shropshire Council was adopted in December 2005. In that document Hinstock was classified as a "Main Service Village". This was the second tier of the settlement hierarchy in the District, after the Market Towns of Ellesmere, Market Drayton, Wem and Whitchurch. The main Service Villages were said to be the principle focus of development in the rural area because they had a wide range of facilities and were accessible by public transport. Hinstock was allocated a single residential housing site for 30 dwellings, but was indicted as also being suitable for infilling and small groups of houses within its development boundary.

The Plan also indicated acceptance for development for employment purposes of sites within the boundaries of these villages that had development boundaries, which, of course, Hinstock had.

NSDC become part of Shropshire Council Unitary Authority in April 2009. Shropshire Council adopted its first strategic plan, the Shropshire Core Strategy (CS), in 2011. This document introduced the concept that, in the rural area of the County "communities will become more sustainable" by focusing private and public investment, allowing development, ensuring that development made appropriate contributions to community infrastructure and identifying Community Hubs and Community Clusters. The identification of Community Hubs and Clusters was to be carried out in the following Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev), adopted in December 2015.

The Core Strategy indicated that its purpose was to improve the sustainability of rural settlements and their hinterlands. A key consideration in identifying Hubs and Clusters, the CS said, was the views of the local community on the status they wished to adopt.

Hinstock was classified as a Community Hub in the SAMDev Plan, and set a housing target of 60 dwellings to be provided on two new allocated housing sites, infilling and conversions. These dwellings have now been constructed. There was no special provision for employment uses.

Representor's Concerns.

Hinstock has, for many years, been regarded as "Main Village", or "Mains Service Village" or a "Community Hub" and has maintained a good level of community facilities and services. However, there has never been any adopted policy that positively encourage employment development. The

majority of the new housing development has been small estate-type development for people moving into the village. The lack of local employment however, has meant a significant increase in commuting.

Hinstock has been allocated a target of 155 dwellings in its role as a Community Hub in the Local Plan Review. This represents a 49% increase in the number of dwellings in the settlement. If the population of the settlement were to increase by the same percentage, the village would expand by 435 people, or if an average of 3 persons per house were to be taken, the expansion would be 465. Either way, it is clear that the population of the village could expand to around 1320 people.

There is presently little local employment in Hinstock, but a village with over 1300 inhabitants, the majority young and middle aged families could be expected to require employment, preferably without travelling at least 8km to find it.

It is considered that the restriction imposed by Policy S11.2.3 places an unnecessary restriction on employment possibilities in the village, is in conflict with para 3.25 of the Review, which follows Policy SP2, and runs contrary to the encouragement for employment in rural areas expressed in the NPPF.

This situation is considered to be an issue of strategic distribution of employment land, as it is difficult to imagine that this restriction applies only to Hinstock. The issue of employment development, which appears to relate only to Classes B2 and B8 uses, in rural areas, is seldom addressed with any clarity or as a matter of strategy in Local Plans.

It is appreciated that reference has been made to the Representor's land at Hinstock, which was proposed in earlier stages of the Local Plan Review process for either residential or employment development. It is not intended, however, at this Stage of the Examination to promote the merits of the Representor's land in detail, as that may be considered further in Stage 2 of the Examination.