

ID 10

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Representor unique Part A Ref *	A0609
Matter	3
Relevant questions nos	4,11, 12, 13, 14, 19

Stage 1 Hearing Statement

*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/>

Hearing Statement – Matter 3 Development Strategy (Policies SP1 – SP15)

Pegasus Group on behalf of Taylor Wimpey (UK) Limited.
Tasley Garden Village, Bridgnorth

Date: June 2022 | Rep ID: A0609 | Pegasus Ref: P20_1800_R008v1_PL_MAN_KR_JB

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been instructed on behalf of their client, Taylor Wimpey (UK) Limited, to prepare Statements in respect of their land interests at Tasley Garden Village, Bridgnorth. Tasley Garden Village is identified as an allocation with the draft Shropshire Local Plan as a comprehensive mixed use sustainable urban extension (BRDO30), identified under Policy S3 – Bridgnorth Place Plan Area.
- 1.2. This Statement deals with Matter 3 'Development Strategy (Policies SP1 – SP15) which addresses the following issue:

Issue – Whether the Development Strategy is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

2. Matter 3: Questions

2.1. The following provides a response to some of those questions identified in the Stage 1 Matters, Issues and Questions document (ID7). These are dealt with in the order that they appear within ID7.

4. Should Policy SP2 define the scale of development expected in the various urban locations and rural settlements?

2.2. We consider that Policy SP2 should set out the scale of development expected in each of the settlements identified in Schedule SP2.1 of the Local Plan. This could be expressed as minimum amounts although, this could be limited to the higher order settlements. Such an approach will help with future monitoring of the policy and would still provide the flexibility the Council wish to see, as set out at Paragraph 240 of examination document GC4.

11. 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?

2.3. We consider that both policies, as currently worded, should be treated as more detailed development management policies, rather than strategic policies. We consider that these policies could be amended to ensure that they deal with strategic matters only and that this could largely be done through amendments/removal of sections of each policy, rather than a complete redraft.

12. 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?

2.4. Our regulation 18 and 19 representations already set out our concerns in relation to the West Midlands Design Charter and our comments/concerns remain.

2.5. In addition, it is understood that the West Midlands Design Charter has not been subject to any formal consultation process, other than liaison between the West Midlands Combined Authority and some local authorities. Whilst the document forms part of the evidence base, clearly as a document that hasn't been prepared by Shropshire, there is no ability to seek changes or amendments to it through the Local Plan process. As such, whilst it may form a basis for any local design principles document prepared by Shropshire, a requirement for new development to accord with these principles is not considered to be justified. Reference to this document should be deleted.

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

2.6. Notwithstanding our comments in respect of Inspector's question 11, we do not consider that the requirement for a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for all 'major development proposals' is justified (see part 10 of draft Policy SP6). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) confirms that a health impact assessment is; *'a useful tool to use where there are expected to be*

significant impacts¹ [our emphasis]. It goes without saying that not all major development proposals will have a significant impact.

- 2.7. Instead, the Health Impact Assessments in Spatial Planning guide prepared by Public Health England (October 2020)² confirms at Section 4.0 that an initial screening stage is required to determine whether a HIA is required (Para 4.1). This goes on to advise that screening can either be carried out for planning applications, or to guide local planning authorities who are seeking to confirm a HIA policy and trigger threshold. We have been unable to locate any such screening assessment to inform the HIA requirement for all major development proposals in draft Policy SP6.
- 2.8. Unless a screening assessment is carried out to support the policy approach and trigger threshold, it is considered that this policy must be amended to allow individual application proposals to undertake the necessary screening assessment before determining whether a HIA is required.
- 2.9. As such we would suggest that the wording of part 10 of Policy SP6 is amended to read as follows:
- Major development proposals will be required to undertake a screening assessment to determine whether a Health Impact Assessment is required in accordance with relevant national guidance. Any such Health Impact Assessment shall be proportionate to the scale of development and detail how the application proposals respond to the above contributors to health and well-being, including details of ongoing management or mitigation of issues where necessary.'*
- 2.10. In addition to these points, we would highlight that the policy makes reference to the now defunct Use Class A5 and expect that this would be rectified through a minor modification.

14. Is Policy SP7 positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy? How have the residential guidelines been derived? Do these policies duplicate parts of other policies?

- 2.11. We have concerns with the effectiveness and general approach in respect of part 3 of the policy. Part 3 seeks to restrict the level of residential development delivered within settlements to those levels and guidelines which are inferred in other policies. This would require residential proposals, that would otherwise be policy compliant, to accord with several additional policy considerations. Whilst the policy does identify criteria that will be considered in such event, this could effectively place a moratorium on the delivery of housing development in certain settlements which would clearly fail to deliver on the aims of the NPPF to significantly boost the supply of homes. Such a policy approach suggests that the residential development guidelines for settlements in the plan should be seen as a maximum figure, however this does not appear to be the case or accord with other draft policies in the rest of the Plan. As set out in our comments to Matter 3 Question 4, these settlement guidelines should be treated as a minimum figure to ensure that the identified housing needs can be met over the plan period.

¹ Paragraph: 005 Reference ID:53-005-20190722

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-impact-assessment-in-spatial-planning>

- 2.12. The approach in part 3 of the draft policy is likely to result in other negative impacts on housing delivery and the local housing market. Firstly, this could prevent the identified housing needs being met over the plan period by hampering housing delivery in settlements where delivery rates are high, and which could otherwise make up for any shortfall in delivery in other settlement areas.
- 2.13. Secondly, the approach would hamper the delivery of homes across the whole plan period, noting that it is entirely possible that residential development guidelines could be reached in smaller settlements within the first 10–15 years of the plan period (i.e., up to 2031), or earlier, through the delivery of site allocations and committed sites. This would then leave any development proposals that would deliver homes over the remaining years of the plan (to 2038) having to overcome this unnecessary policy hurdle which could prevent the delivery of new homes in the latter years of the plan. This would ultimately result in increased pressures on the local housing market through a lack of consistent delivery which could see increasing house prices as demand outstrips supply in the later years of the plan period.
- 2.14. Finally, the wording of part 3 of the policy is such that it could apply to sites allocated for residential development through the plan. This could occur in the event that development on windfall sites is delivered ahead of a site allocation meaning that delivery of an allocation could result in the level of housing delivery exceeding a settlement's residential development guideline. Whilst it is assumed that this is not the intention of the policy, given the reference to site allocations and commitments that is made, on simple reading of the current wording it could be applied to allocated sites.
- 2.15. Although there may be some justification for such an approach in very small settlements which may have limited infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of additional residential development that is greater than the settlement guidelines, this should not be extended to the larger settlements within Shropshire which are clearly much better placed to accommodate additional residential development.
- 2.16. Given these comments, part 3 of the draft policy is not considered effective or to accord with the NPPF and should be deleted or substantially redrafted.

19. Is Policy SP14 justified, effective and consistent with national policy? Should the corridors be marked on a map or plan? Is this policy consistent with other policies in the Local Plan? Is it the purpose of this policy to allow for significant growth in addition to that allocated in the Local Plan, including development in the Green Belt?

- 2.17. Whilst this matter is primarily one for the Council, it would be useful for the corridors to be marked on a plan, and this to be provided as a figure within the Local Plan.
- 2.18. If it is the policy's intention to allow for significant growth in addition to that allocated in the Local Plan, it will be important for the policy to give sufficient support and weight first to those sites allocated within the Local Plan. Whilst part 3 of the policy seeks to apply a sequential approach to such considerations by giving priority to allocated sites, part 4 of the policy should also make it clear that the criteria set out only applies to appropriate windfall sites, rather than putting an unnecessary policy test on allocated sites within the Local Plan.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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