

Hearing Statement for the Shropshire Council Local Plan Examination

Matter 4 – Employment Land Need, Requirement and Supply (policy SP2) – see MMs 001 -004

Statement on Behalf of the Stanmore Consortium Ref: A0497

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Representor Unique Part A Ref:	A0497
Matter	4
Relevant Question No.s	1, 2 & 3

Stage II - Hearing Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Hearing Statement is on behalf of The Stanmore Consortium (“TSC”) (Apley Estate and Stanmore Properties) and should be read in conjunction with previous representations made on behalf of TSC at the Regulation 18 and 19 Stages.
- 1.2. In 2017 Shropshire Council approached TSC with a view to delivering proposals for a Garden Community for the future housing and employment needs of Bridgnorth on land owned by TSC.
- 1.3. In November 2018 the Shropshire Local Plan Review: Consultation on Preferred Sites was published with a masterplan mixed use garden settlement at Stanmore, initiated by the Council, as a Preferred Site. This followed extensive discussion between the Council and TSC, public consultation and provision of detailed information requested by the Council.
- 1.4. In April 2020 the Council abruptly changed its position on the Stanmore Garden Community proposal to an alternative on land west of Bridgnorth, not previously promoted nor consulted upon. This alternative was included in the Regulation 18 and 19 Stages of the Local Plan.
- 1.5. TSC have continued to promote Stanmore Garden Community as the best option for Bridgnorth and Shropshire.
- 1.6. This Hearing Statement focusses on those specific questions which are directly relevant to TSC’s position.

2. Matter 4 – Employment Land Need, Requirement and Supply (policy SP2) – see MMs 001 -004

Employment Land

Question 1

Is the updated approach to the employment land requirement and supply set out in the Council’s Updated Housing and Employment Topic Paper – April 2024 (GC45) of minimum of 320 ha of employment land over the plan period of 2016 to 2038, justified, positively prepared and consistent with national policy?

- 2.1. We have no comment to make on the updated approach to employment land requirement as set out in GC45.

Question 2

What provision is made within the Plan to fulfil the identified unmet employment needs of the Black Country, and will the Plan’s approach be effective in addressing this sustainably within the plan period, in accordance with national policy?

- 2.2. The Council proposes allocating SHF018b & SHF018d – Land east of Shifnal Industrial Estate, Upton Lane specifically to meet the unmet employment needs arising from the Black Country [GC45 2.30] as required by the Inspectors in ID28.
- 2.3. Whilst using sites SHF018b and SHF018d to meet Black Country unmet need meets the request of the Inspectors, the failure to provide additional allocations or provide safeguarded land elsewhere in the County to meet the need of existing or new businesses arising in Shropshire will result in increased competition and inevitably for some businesses having insufficient land on which to develop and grow.
- 2.4. The Council should ensure there is sufficient flexibility and supply of land within the Plan to allow for the non-delivery of allocations. There are a number of reasons for non-delivery against employment land targets. For example:
- the inclusion of SAMDev allocations from the previous Plan which have failed to come forward during the current adopted plan period suggest some difficulty in delivering some of the sites. There is insufficient evidence that the position has changed on all sites to guarantee their delivery in this Plan;
 - as a result of the examination process, some sites may, for a range of reasons, be amended, reduced in capacity or removed from the Plan entirely; and
 - some proposed new allocations may not come forward due to unforeseen issues arising at a later date and consequently face similar difficulties in delivery during the plan period.

- 2.5. Provision should be made, either through additional allocations or at the very least through safeguarded or reserving additional land to provide a contingency pool of land on which to draw should delivery rates of employment land fall below expectations during the plan period. Doing so will support the Council's growth aspirations and delivering on the broader aims of the Plan.

Question 3

Should the employment land requirement be also expressed in terms of the number of jobs expected to be provided?

- 2.6. This is for the Council to answer however it is suggested that a clear policy identifying the number of jobs to be supportive would aid clarity and assist in the monitoring of the efficacy of individual policies and allocations and the plan as whole.



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