

Hearing Statement for the Shropshire Council Local Plan Examination

Matter 2 – Development Strategy (policies SP1-10 & SP12-15) – see various MMs

Statement on Behalf Bridgnorth Aluminium ref B-A310

ID 10

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Representor Unique Part A Ref:	B-A310
Matter	2
Relevant Question No.s	1, 2, 3 & 4

Stage II - Hearing Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Our client, Bridgnorth Aluminium, operates a large industrial site at Bridgnorth. The business has operated in the town since the 1950s and is a major employer in its own right as well as supporting a substantial number of jobs locally and indirectly across the County, within the wider region in supply chain, maintenance and associated businesses. The business undertakes casting, rolling and finishing operations at the site and produces over 100,000 tonnes of flat rolled aluminium products per annum and is considering expanding that capacity in the coming years to cover additional opportunities.
- 1.2. More than 90% of the products are exported to various customers in Europe, US, India and other global regions. Bridgnorth Aluminium is for certain products like lithographic coils for the printing industries one of the top market leaders. The business is serving into other key global markets like EV market, packaging sector, automotive, building and construction and other industries with further growing potential.
- 1.3. The business also undertakes R&D operations from the site. Bridgnorth Aluminium is committed to its operation in the town, from which it draws a highly experienced workforce, including specialist and engineering roles. The business has approximately 350 employees at the site in addition to other roles supported as part of the supply chain both in Bridgnorth and elsewhere within the County. Indeed, the business is constantly considering opportunities to diversify and expand its operations in order to secure its future and grow within the town and be an economic driver for the wider county.
- 1.4. The site is located to the south-east of Bridgnorth, to the east of the River Severn. Bounded to the west and north by the urban form of the town and to the south and east by the Green Belt.

2. Matter 2 – Development Strategy (policies SP1-10 & SP12-15 – See various MMs

Question 1

Do any of the policies in the Plan require updating as a result of changes in national planning policy since the previous hearings in July 2022?

- 2.1. For the Council to answer.

Question 2

Is it proposed that the overall spatial strategy and broad distribution of growth set out in Policy SP2 will remain the same following the additional work? If not, how would it change and are the changes justified, effective and consistent with national policy? Are any consequential changes to Policy SP2 or the supplementary text required?

- 2.2. For the Council to answer.
- 2.3. Bridgnorth Aluminium wish to reiterate the points made in previous representations and in responses to other the Housing and Employment Topic Paper (GC45) regarding the proposed means of accommodating unmet Black Country employment need, in particular the implications of incoming demand for employment land impacting on the needs of existing businesses within Shropshire, such as Bridgnorth Aluminium, to grow and expand.

Question 3

Are the areas identified to meet the Black Country unmet housing needs justified and appropriate?

- 2.4. For the Council to answer.

Question 4

Has meeting some of the housing and employment needs of the Black Country led to the need to release or safeguard more land from the Green Belt? If so, what are the exceptional circumstances for doing this?

- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. Using SHF018b and SHF018d to meet Black Country unmet need meets the request of the Inspectors but without providing additional allocation or 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 to have insufficient land on which to develop and grow.
- 2.7. By way of an example, no provision has been made for Bridgnorth Aluminium to expand. The nature of a major manufacturer such as Bridgnorth Aluminium requires land adjacent to it's existing site onto which it can expand to avoid unnecessary double handling of materials and excessive transport impacts. No such provision is proposed in this plan, indeed it is not clear that the Council has considered the needs of Bridgnorth Aluminium in its evidence, employment land demand projections and allocations.
- 2.8. The allotment of the two employment allocations in Shifnall will result in increased competition for sites in Shifnall and the surrounding areas. This will undoubtedly have a knock-on impact on other areas of Shropshire, particularly on neighbouring sub-areas such as Bridgnorth.
- 2.9. As a result the Plan as proposed presents a number of challenges to Bridgnorth Aluminium's ability to plan for future expansion. As a major employer in the County, offering a key element of diversity to a predominantly services and agri-food dominated economy and with significant number of upstream and downstream jobs supported in associated business, it is important that Bridgnorth Aluminium is afforded the space and opportunity to grow if market forces require. As such we strongly advise that land adjacent to the existing Bridgnorth Aluminium is allocated for future employment development or at the very least reserved or safeguarded to allow for future expansion in future plan periods.
- 2.10. The identification of land at Bridgnorth for either safeguarded or reserved land would also make a major contribution to the delivery of employment land, particularly where the delivery of other major employment sites stall.



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