

# **Shropshire Local Plan**

## **Examination**

### **Hearing Statement: Matter 2**

Morris & Company Limited

September 2024



**Shropshire Local Plan Examination**  
**Stage 2: Matter 2**  
Land to the South of Stanton Road, Shifnal

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# 1. Development Strategy - Q3

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

- 1.1. This hearing statement is submitted on behalf of Morris & Company Limited in relation to their land interests at Site SHF018a in Shifnal.
- 1.2. We contend that the areas currently identified in the Shropshire Local Plan to meet Black Country unmet housing needs are not fully justified or appropriate. Specifically, we argue that Shifnal is a more suitable location than Shrewsbury, Ironbridge or Bridgnorth for accommodating this unmet need, and that Site SHF018a should be allocated for housing development to contribute to meeting Black Country needs.

Shifnal is best located to support Black Country Needs

- 1.3. Shifnal is significantly closer geographically to the Black Country than Shrewsbury, being approximately 8 miles from the Black Country border compared to over 30 miles for Shrewsbury. This aligns with the Planning Inspectors' expectation that sites to accommodate Black Country needs would be "in the part of Shropshire nearest the Black Country" (ID28, para 21).
- 1.4. Shifnal has strong existing transport links to the Black Country via the M54/A5 corridor and Shrewsbury-Wolverhampton railway line. This enables easier commuting and stronger functional relationships with the Black Country, as acknowledged in the Updated Housing and Employment Topic Paper (Section 9.16).
- 1.5. The Plan already proposes to allocate employment land in Shifnal (SHF018b & SHF018d) to meet Black Country unmet needs. Allocating housing nearby would create a more sustainable pattern of development, in line the NPPF.
- 1.6. Shifnal's closer proximity and strong transport links to the Black Country enhance its suitability for meeting unmet needs. As noted in the Updated Housing and Employment Topic Paper (Section 16), "Geographic proximity is considered to be particularly important in the context of identifying an appropriate location for the provision of a contribution in Shropshire to the unmet employment land need forecast to arise in the Black Country." While this statement refers specifically to employment land, the same principle can be applied to housing provision, ensuring a coherent approach to meeting both housing and employment needs.

Site SHF018a Should be Allocated

- 1.7. Site SHF018a is well-located adjacent to the proposed employment allocation SHF018b & SHF018d. Allocating it for housing would create a more coherent urban extension, as shown in Figure 1-1 of the Morris & Company representations to the consultation on the updated Sustainability Appraisal.

- 1.8. The site is available and deliverable within the plan period. It would make an important contribution to meeting Black Country housing needs in a sustainable location, addressing the shortfall in housing provision noted in the Updated Housing and Employment Topic Paper (Section 8).
- 1.9. Exceptional circumstances exist to justify releasing this site from the Green Belt, as already accepted for the adjacent employment allocation in the Updated Green Belt Topic Paper (Section 9).

### Conclusion

- 1.10. To be found sound, the Plan should be amended to:
  - Identify Shifnal as a preferred location for accommodating Black Country unmet housing needs
  - Allocate Site SHF018a for housing development to contribute to meeting these needs
- 1.11. These changes would ensure the Plan takes a justified and appropriate approach to addressing this key strategic issue, in line with the requirements of the NPPF and the guidance provided by the Planning Inspectors.

