

Shropshire Local Plan Examination: Stage 2

Representor Unique Number: A0682

Representor: Miller Homes

Matter: Matter 5 – Infrastructure, Delivery and Viability
(Policies SP1, SP2 & SP14)

Relevant Question Numbers: Question 3

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Miller Homes (A0682)

1. This Hearing Statement is submitted on behalf of Miller Homes (“Miller”).

3. Will the delivery of strategic infrastructure allow for the delivery of planned development in line with the latest housing trajectory? If not, what will be the shortcomings and how will the Council address these matters?

2. This Hearing Statement seeks to respond to Question 3 as set out in the MIQs, and is to be read in conjunction with the Hearing Statement submitted on behalf of Miller Homes in relation to Stage 1: Matter 8 (Examination Document Ref: M8.20 A0682 Miller Homes) and Stage 2: Matter 32 Hearing Statement enclosed within this submission.

3. As set out within our Matter 32 Hearing Statement, Miller is aware of the Council’s aspiration for the Draft Local Plan and its Evidence Base to deliver significant infrastructure mitigation/enhancements at Shifnal during the plan period; however, it is currently unclear how the small-scale of residential development proposed in the Draft Local Plan for Shifnal will be capable of making a meaningful contribution towards this infrastructure package.

4. The updated Green Belt Topic Paper (Examination Document Ref: GC46), recently consulted upon, sets out that:

“Shifnal has been constrained by its location within the Green Belt. This constraint to development has also limited investment in the infrastructure of the town and in the range and quality of the retailing, services and facilities available to the resident population. Shifnal requires a progressive and steady rate of growth to permit the infrastructure of the town to be improved in response to the requirements of new development. This will refresh and upgrade the infrastructure of the settlement to the benefit of the whole community. The enclosure of the town in the Green Belt without future provision for future growth will prevent Shifnal from benefitting from these objectives. It is considered this represents an exceptional circumstance to justify the release of land from the Green Belt.”

5. It is in this light that Miller contend that the Draft Plan subject to Examination needs to ensure that the delivery of strategic infrastructure supports and enables the delivery of planned development in line with the latest housing trajectory, and vice versa.

6. Our Matter 3 Hearing Statement sets out the case for a greater scale of development in Shropshire, including at Shifnal, to enable it to grow sustainably and proportionately in the period to 2038 (and beyond as referred to in our Matter 1 Hearing Statement), and this includes the case for investment in infrastructure enhancements.

7. As set out within the latest “Shropshire’s Strategic Infrastructure and Investment Plan 2024” (Examination Document Ref: GC54), key infrastructure projects for Shifnal include flood management; green infrastructure; and various improvements to the highway network, including the town centre enhancement scheme, Integrated Transport Scheme, strategic and local road improvements associated with SHF018b and SH018d, SHF013, SHF015, SHF029, SHF022 and part SHF023. Miller, therefore, consider that strategic plan-making should be progressed in relation to the delivery of further development at Shifnal, particularly in the context of the Draft Local Plan recognising at Paragraph 5.216 (amended to Paragraph 5.221 via Minor Modification AM101) that a link road *“will effectively create a by-pass around the town. This will enable though traffic to avoid the principal highway junction in the town centre.”*
8. As outlined throughout the evolution of the Local Plan to date, as a strategic-scale new community which can deliver c. 1,200 dwellings in total, South West Shifnal provides a valuable opportunity to make proportionate contributions to the package of infrastructure improvements identified for Shifnal (provided that the CIL Regulation 122(2) test is satisfied at planning application stage). Such a package of infrastructure improvements could include:
 - A link road between the A464 (south) and the A4169 to help ease highway capacity issues in the town centre (recognised in the Draft Local Plan at Paragraph 5.216 (amended to Paragraph 5.221 via Minor Modification AM101);
 - A school car parking drop-off point and new footway on Park Lane to ease existing congestion;
 - Provision of land for a new primary school to ease existing capacity issues;
 - A local centre, including a new health centre and new retail facilities;
 - New active travel routes providing links between existing communities and the wider countryside, including the potential delivery of a link between public right of way ref. 0141/12/1 and Stafford Avenue, as identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy (EV052-20, p12);
 - Flood management measures to the Wesley Brook corridor, which is included as part of South West Shifnal, including significant new areas of green infrastructure and habitat creation (as identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy EV052-20);
 - Contributions to off-site highway junction improvements and public transport;
 - Provision of significant areas of new open space; and
 - Significant affordable housing provision to redress worsening levels of affordability.
9. It is on this basis that Miller consider that the implication of the shortcomings in the approach to strategic infrastructure could mean that neither the housing or infrastructure required will be delivered within the plan period, and therefore the needs of existing and future residents will not be met.