

# **Addendum: Statement of Common Ground Between Shropshire Council and the Black Country Authorities**

**Dated: October 2024**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. In July 2021, following ongoing and constructive discussions, a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) (EV041) was completed between Shropshire Council and the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) on behalf of the Black Country Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Council's).
- 1.2. Duty to cooperate engagement has continued between Shropshire Council and the Black Country Authorities since submission of the draft Shropshire Local Plan for examination in September 2021.
- 1.3. This document has been prepared in order to update the matters of agreement and disagreement reached within EV041 following the additional work undertaken by Shropshire Council to inform the ongoing examination of the draft Shropshire Local Plan.

## **2. Matters of Agreement within EV041**

- 2.1. Within EV041, the parties agreed that:
  - a. Unmet housing and employment land needs are forecast to arise in the Black Country. However, the extent of any unmet need is not established within an adopted Development Plan Document(s).
  - b. Due to the functional relationship between Shropshire Council and the Black Country Authorities, it is appropriate for duty to cooperate discussions to occur between them.
  - c. The unmet housing and employment land needs that are forecast to arise in the Black Country are relevant duty to cooperate matters. Shropshire Council, therefore, has accepted the principle of meeting a proportion of these unmet needs in a way which recognises the functional relationship between the areas and which respects the character of the area.
  - d. Shropshire accept, in principle, the following levels of unmet need as part of the draft Shropshire Local Plan:
    - Housing: up to 1,500 dwellings up to 2038.
    - Employment: up to 30 hectares up to 2038.
  - e. The draft Shropshire Local Plan seeks to plan positively to accommodate proposed contributions to unmet need in sustainable locations, in accordance with the draft Local Plan's strategic approach to development. But no one specific allocation will accommodate unmet need, rather this will be met through delivery of the overall draft Shropshire Local Plan housing requirement.

2.2. In October 2022, the Black Country Authorities resolved to cease work on the Black Country Plan. However, this decision has not altered the shortfall in the supply of land for housing and employment and the need to export some of it.

### **3. *Matters of Disagreement within EV041***

- 3.1. There was one area of disagreement in EV041, regarding whether there was a need for a mechanism to trigger an early review of the Shropshire Local Plan.
- a. The Black Country Authorities felt this was appropriate to allow an early review, should there be a need to do so, to address the ongoing level of unmet need in the Black Country, having regard to the quantum of development proposed in the Black Country Plan and contributions from other neighbouring Local Plans.
  - b. Shropshire Council considered there was no specific requirement for such a mechanism to be introduced, as the natural five year review cycle of Plan preparation will be sufficient to further consider any potential future accommodation of Black Country unmet need within the Shropshire plan making area. This position was informed by timeframes for plan making in the Black Country published in July 2021.

### **4. *Draft Shropshire Local Plan - Examination***

- 4.1. Following Stage 1 Hearings that considered legal issues (including the duty to cooperate) and strategic policies, the Inspectors issued their Interim Findings (ID28) and subsequent further correspondence (including ID36 and ID37).
- 4.2. The Council has produced and consulted upon additional evidence, including an additional Sustainability Appraisal and a Housing & Employment Topic Paper. As a result of this, the Council is proposing:
- a. **Specific contributions of 1,500 dwellings and 30ha of employment land up to 2038 towards unmet needs forecast to arise in the Black Country.**
  - b. **Specific site allocations to accommodate proposed contributions to the unmet needs forecast to arise in the Black Country.**

These proposed site allocations and the quantity of the overall proposed contribution to the unmet housing needs they are proposed to accommodate is as follows:

    - i. BRD030 - Tasley Garden Village, Bridgnorth: 600 dwellings.
    - ii. SHR060, SHR158 & SHR161 - Land between Mytton Oak Road and Hanwood Road, Shrewsbury: 300 dwellings.

- iii. IRN001 - Former Ironbridge Power Station: 600 dwellings.
- iv. SHF018b & SHF018d – Land east of Shifnal Industrial Estate, Upton Lane, Shifnal: 30 hectares of employment land.

**5. Updated Matters of Agreement**

- 5.1. By way of an update to the SoCG and to reflect the consideration of the additional material introduced to the Examination, the following is agreed:
- a. Specific contributions in the draft Shropshire Local Plan, up to 2038, of 1,500 dwellings and 30ha of employment land towards unmet needs forecast to arise in the Black Country continue to be appropriate, and are agreed by all parties.
  - b. The principle of identifying specific sites where the unmet need will be accommodated is appropriate, in order to support certainty of delivery, to ensure sustainable development, and for the purposes of monitoring.
  - c. The sites identified to accommodate these contributions (BRD030; SHR060, SHR158 & SHR161; IRN001; and SHF018b & SHF018d) are within an appropriate geography relative to the Black Country, and are considered appropriate in all other respects for accommodating the unmet need.
  - d. The manner in which the unmet need contributions (1,500 dwellings and 30ha employment land) are distributed between the four Black Country Local Authority areas is a matter for the Black Country Authorities, to be agreed through Duty to Cooperate engagement between them.

**6. Signatories**

6.1. This SoCG has been agreed and signed by the following:

<b>Shropshire Council</b>	
Name: Lezley Picton Position: Leader Date: 10/10/24 Signature:	
<b>Black Country Authorities</b>	
Name: Patrick Harley Position: Leader Organisation: Dudley MBC Date: 18.09.24 Signature:	Name: Aslan Lunt Position: Executive Director of Place Organisation: Sandwell MBC Date: 18 September 2024 Signature:

Name: Dave Brown Position: Executive Director Organisation: Walsall Council Date: 11 October 2024 Signature:	Name: Chris Burden Position: Cabinet Member for City Development, Jobs and Skills Organisation: City of Wolverhampton Council Date: 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024 Signature:
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