

Shropshire Parish and Town Councils

Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire SY2 6ND

Date: 12 February 2024

My Ref:

Your Ref

Dear Councillors,

Shropshire Local Plan Examination Process Briefing Note for Parish and Town Councils – February 2024

This note is intended to update you on progress of the Shropshire Local Plan review and to set out an indicative timetable for the remainder of the examination process.

As you may be aware the examination process, which began in September 2021, has been subject to some delay. Whilst delays to Local Plan examinations are not unique to Shropshire, it is appreciated this has led to some frustration locally. For the avoidance of doubt, it remains the firm intention of Shropshire Council to progress the examination in a timely manner and ultimately to adopt the new Local Plan in order to provide a positive and certain framework for future development in the County to 2038.

Recent communications from the Inspectors in January has provided much needed clarity on a number of issues. The Council now feels it has the opportunity to proceed with confidence to prepare and consult on additional material. This should ultimately allow for the positive continuation of the examination this year.

Examination Progress and Key Milestones achieved

- Draft Local Plan prepared, informed by extensive evidence, five Reg 18 (Plan-Making) consultations and one Reg 19 (Pre-Submission) consultation.
- Draft Local Plan submitted for examination in September 2021, following Council approval.
- Stage 1 hearing sessions undertaken in July 2022 and January 2023. These focused on legal compliance, duty to cooperate and strategic policies.
- Interim Findings from Planning Inspectors received in February 2023. Concluded the legal duty to cooperate achieved but further work required to inform examination.
- Hearing sessions on mineral and waste matters undertaken in May 2023.
- Response to Inspectors Interim Findings (with Cabinet approval) issued in July 2023.



- Inspectors queried some of the additional material prepared, requesting further work in October 2023.
- Council requested clarification on the further work required by the Planning Inspectors in November 2023.
- **Subsequent clarification response received from the Planning Inspectors in January 2024**

The recent letter from the Inspectors (referred to as ID37), which clarifies a number of issues, is available to view on the Council's webpages at [id37-inspectors-response-to-councils-request-for-clarification-to-id36-january-2024.pdf](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/id37-inspectors-response-to-councils-request-for-clarification-to-id36-january-2024.pdf) ([shropshire.gov.uk](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk))

Key messages from ID37

- The Council **will need to consult** on the updated additional Sustainability Appraisal work and on any updates to its housing and employment requirements before we can move to further hearing sessions;
- Whilst some additional Sustainability Appraisal work is required, much of what the Council prepared in July 2023 has been accepted by the Inspectors;
- We are being invited by the Inspectors to propose and assess revised housing and employment requirements. If, resulting from this work, there is a need for the Council to revisit any proposed housing and employment allocations or to propose additional site allocations, this will form part of the upcoming consultation in April.

Next Steps and Provisional Timeframes?

- Once completed, the additional material will need to be considered and approved for consultation by Shropshire Council's Cabinet. **We expect this to happen in April 2024**
- If approved, a 6-week public consultation on the additional material will follow. **We expect this to happen between April and June 2024**
- Following consultation, responses will be analysed and submitted to the Planning Inspectors alongside the additional material.
- Further Hearing sessions – **potentially late summer 2024**
- Further consultation on agreed Plan modifications and publication of Inspectors Report – **potentially autumn / winter 2024/25**
- Adoption – **potentially spring 2025**

***Important note** - the timing of future hearing sessions and wider impact on the timetable is subject to the availability of the Inspectors and could be impacted by the outcome of the upcoming consultation in April.*



Further hearing sessions will include consideration of the new material currently being prepared, informed by any consultation responses, and will include discussion on specific settlement strategies, site housing and employment site allocations and wider development management policies.

Kind regards,

Eddie West
Planning Policy and Strategy Manager



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