



6 Stafford Place SHIFNAL Shropshire TF11 9BH

Tel: 07976 080813

Email: andy@advance-planning.co.uk

EXAMINATION OF THE TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031

MATTER 2 – DUTY TO COOPERATE

Question 2.1 Has the Council fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate?

The short answer to this question is plainly no. The Council has unilaterally decided that its proposed housing requirement is necessary only to meet its own needs and it is clear that no real consensus or agreement has been reached with the West Midlands Authorities or South Staffordshire. Any engagement appears to have been superficial and merely a 'token gesture' aimed at 'ticking the duty to cooperate box', rather than a concerted effort to reach a workable and appropriate understanding.

We know that Birmingham cannot meet all of its housing need (shortfall of 38,000 homes) and it is understood that the Black Country Authorities will have difficulty in satisfying their own needs and are unlikely to be able to accommodate all of the shortfall. As a consequence, there is likely to be a 'ripple-effect' into South Staffordshire District and possibly the eastern parts of Shropshire, which are constrained by Green Belt.

Question 2.2 Is the Council's position seeking not to meet any unmet housing demand from the West Midlands conurbation or South Staffordshire sufficiently justified?

One of the primary purposes of Telford New Town was to accommodate 'overspill' from the West Midlands conurbation and in doing so, to protect the intervening Green Belt.

If Telford was lacking in facilities, services and infrastructure and if it did not have excellent road and rail communication links to the region, it might be understandable for the Borough to say 'no more thanks', but this is not the case – it was purposely designated and now represents a highly sustainable location for development.

The Council became a Constituent Member of the West Midlands Combined Authority and appears keen to encourage economic investment into the Borough – taking advantage of the M54 corridor and the ‘Jaguar effect’, but it is unwilling to accept a share of additional housing despite being a highly sustainable location with the environmental capacity to do so.

Instead, it merely suggests that the matter cannot be properly addressed until the Black Country OAN is published in the coming months and the issue will continue to be ‘kicked down the road’ for a subsequent review, or go around in a circular fashion whilst needs are not properly met.