

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan: Examination in Public

Initial Statement by Council

Matter 2 Duty to Co-operate & Relationship to other plan areas

1. The Council takes seriously its duty to cooperate.
2. We have shown in our Duty to co-operate statement (Doc A6) how we have screened the range of potential local authorities to engage with. We made initial contact with local authorities extending from Powys in the west to Birmingham in the east and from Stoke in the north to Herefordshire in the south. Our engagement has extended way beyond our housing market area. We have also made contact with all the prescribed national and London-based bodies with whom we are obliged to cooperate.
3. Our statement provides an audit of engagement and scopes out the matters on which it was necessary to cooperate.
4. We have signed memoranda of understanding with the two adjoining authorities – Shropshire and Stafford – with whom we have the longest contiguous land boundary and strongest migration links. You will see again at Matter 7 the extent of our close working with Shropshire on the preparation of a joint local aggregate assessment. We look to Stafford Borough Council for views on planning decisions affecting Newport, not South Staffordshire.
5. We have letters of support from other bodies and agreement on complex matters such as transport modelling (Highways England) and flood risk and water management (the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water). Many of the policies in the plan directly reflect the expert advice of Historic England and Natural England.
6. The only outstanding area of disagreement is whether we should take some of Birmingham's unmet housing need. In raising this matter, our neighbours in South Staffordshire, the Black Country and Birmingham are not arguing that we have failed in our duty to cooperate. These authorities also agree that we operate in a separate housing market area from them and display distinct and separate migration patterns to us.
7. We submit that their request for the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan to make provision for 2,000 homes of Birmingham's unmet housing need is arbitrary, not backed by credible evidence and, moreover, cannot be justified at this stage until the authorities in the Greater Birmingham area have looked to address their own unmet housing need. Peter Brett Associates have given the Greater Birmingham authorities six ways of doing this.