

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan: Examination in Public

Initial Statement by the Council

Matter 5: General Development Requirements & Specialist Housing

1. Our Local Plan will help raise the quality of life here, deliver sustainable development and help make Telford & Wrekin a place where more people will want to live and work in years to come. Part of achieving this will be through the application of development management policies that are evidence based, transparent in their requirements and minimise the burden on developers.
2. All of the policies that address the general development requirements of the Local Plan are clearly expressed, adequately justified and viable relying on a robust evidence base and a pragmatic approach to achieving the vision and objectives of the plan. The Council has assessed the viability of whole plan and concluded that the policy burdens on development are fair and reasonable. Our approach to affordable housing policy is considered to be balanced. We recognise in the SHMA 2016 that there is a great need for affordable housing, but our evidence supports the view that policy should also be informed by local viability factors that impact on delivery.
3. The Council's approach to plan-making recognises that it is better to be clear about the expectations of a policy, than not. It is reasonable to conclude, given the application of the tests for the use of a planning obligation, that not all parts of a policy will necessarily apply to every site. For example, a site might be close to an existing commercial bus route, negating the need for a contribution towards a new or expanded bus service.
4. The SHMA 2016 also identifies increased levels of under-occupation for older families in market housing who do not have an option to downsize. Our population forecasts tell us we need to plan for a wider mix of housing that will allow more older residents to live in their homes longer as well as more specialist housing to meet the needs of vulnerable people. New developments that provide a better mix of housing when built will foster lifetime communities, help to reduce the long term burdens of healthcare costs, as well as provide people with the choice to stay in their local area should they wish to downsize.
5. The Council has already secured permission for virtually all of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers using a study that relied on the 2012 definition of gypsies and travellers. Based on past performance, the remaining shortfall of three pitches can be met through the development management process. When combined with the robust nature of the Gypsy and Traveller Assessment and its positive approach to identifying requirements the approach adopted by the Council is justified, effective, positively prepared and consistent with national policy.

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