



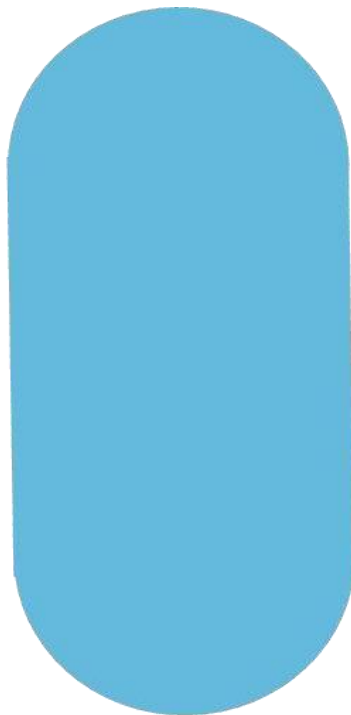
 Part of Shakespeare Martineau

Statement in Respect of the South Staffordshire Local Plan Examination

Matter 7 – Site Allocations

On Behalf of Catesby Estates

April 2025



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Marrons on behalf of Catesby Estates with respect to Matter 7 - Site Allocations.

2. MATTER 7 – SITE ALLOCATIONS

Issue 1: Site Allocations

Q1 In terms of the proposed planned housing and employment developments:

b. Has the identification and selection of the proposed site allocations been robustly evidenced and subject to robust, consistent and transparent methodologies, including in relation to the approach to existing committed sites?

- 2.1 Catesby Estates consider that the non-strategic housing allocations set out in Policy SA3 of the Local Plan have not been selected on a robust basis, with particular reference to the failure to allocate Land off Bridgnorth Road, Wightwick (Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) site reference 260).
- 2.2 As set out in their Matter 5 Hearing Statement, Catesby Estates consider the wider Spatial Strategy to be unsound, with particular reference to the lack of growth proposed on the urban edge of Wolverhampton. Catesby Estates also consider that the minimum housing requirement is insufficient (Matter 4 Hearing Statement), and thus further housing allocations will be required to make up the shortfall.
- 2.3 Land off Bridgnorth Road, Wightwick is assessed in the supporting SHELAA, site reference 260. The assessment of the Site is generally positive, recognising the site's location on the western border of the Black Country and the lack of on-site constraints, with County Highways support in principle subject to highway improvements. However, a number of concerns are raised in the assessment of Land off Bridgnorth Road.

- 2.4 Firstly, the likely high Green Belt harm resulting from release and allocation of the Site is identified in the SHELAA. Criticism of the Council's approach in the Green Belt Study is provided in Catesby Estates' Matter 6 Hearing Statement, however it is clear that the SHELAA conclusion is based on the assessment of much larger land parcels which the Site falls within, with the Site itself only making limited contributions to the purposes of the Green Belt when assessed individually.
- 2.5 Similarly, the SHELAA makes reference to the Site falling within an area of moderate landscape sensitivity, but this is on the basis of the supporting Landscape Study (2019 and 2022 Addendum; EB53 and EB52 respectively) which identify the Site as falling within parcel SL29 which measures a total of 187.1ha. Parcel SL29 is considered to have moderate landscape sensitivity overall, with specific concerns raised in relation to the open land which falls between the southern edge of Perton and Wightwick; this does not include land which the Site is within.
- 2.6 An individual assessment of the Site, which measures circa 7.8ha and is thus far less significant in terms of the scale of assessment undertaken in the Landscape Study, would not raise significant concerns in terms of impact on landscape given the nature of the site and its location, and in any case it is considered any landscape impacts could be sufficiently mitigated through detailed design and masterplanning.
- 2.7 Finally, the SHELAA identifies that the Site is separated from the highway by a dense tree belt which is subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Whilst this is accurate, the SHELAA fails to recognise that the Site benefits from an existing access from Bridgnorth Road to serve the existing dwelling known as Cherringham, and a suitable access to the site could be achieved with minimal impact on the existing tree belt, which would be either entirely or majority retained, with further tree planting able to be made elsewhere in the site to negate for any loss and to assist with the achievement of Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 2.8 Given the above review of the SHELAA in the context of Land off Bridgnorth Road, Wightwick, Catesby Estates consider that the SHELAA is an unjustified as the basis for site allocations in the Local Plan.

- 2.9 There are no technical or environmental reasons why Land off Bridgnorth Road, Wightwick (SHELAA site reference 260) cannot be allocated, with the only concerns raised in the assessment of the site in the Housing Site Selection Topic Paper 2024 either considered to be unfounded or able to be dealt with through detailed design and masterplanning.
- 2.10 It has been demonstrated that the Site is developable, and the site is easily deliverable within the early part of the Local Plan period. To remedy, in part, the identified shortfall in housing requirement and deficiency of the Spatial Strategy, Catesby Estates request the allocation of Land off Bridgnorth Road, Wightwick (SHELAA site reference 260) in Policy SA3; an appropriate minimum housing figure would be 125 dwellings.
- 2.11 The Council's approach is not justified and is therefore unsound in line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023) Paragraph 35 b).

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Marrons
10th April 2025

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