

## Statement of Common Ground between Wyre Forest District Council and Shropshire Council

### 1) Introduction

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019), strategic policy making authorities, such as local planning authorities, should produce, maintain and keep up to date a Statement of Common Ground (SofCG) to highlight agreement on cross boundary strategic issues with neighbouring local authorities and other relevant bodies.

This SofCG has been produced to support the emerging Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review. It sets out how Wyre Forest District Council has engaged with Shropshire Council in order to fulfil its Duty to Cooperate requirements.

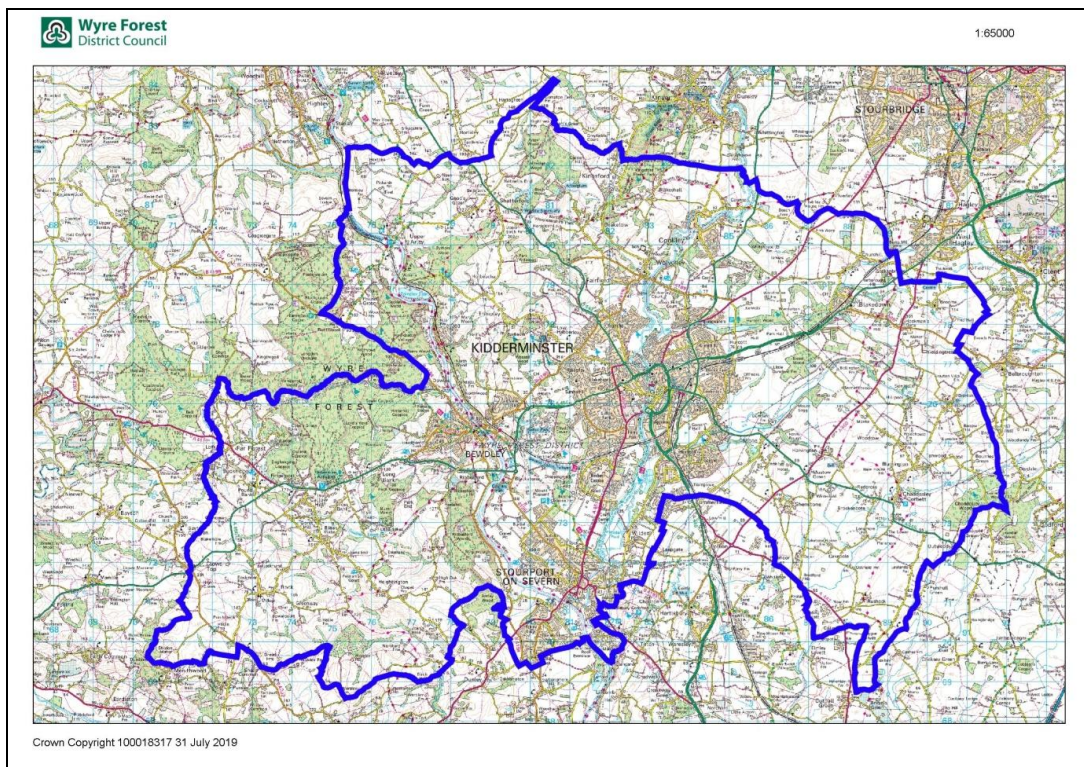
### 2) Parties Involved

This Statement of Common Ground (SofCG) has been prepared jointly by Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) and Shropshire Council (SC). Wyre Forest District shares a boundary with Shropshire Council in the north west of the District.

### 3) Strategic Geography

This SofCG covers all of the Wyre Forest District and has been produced for the purposes of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036, which is due to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2020. Figure 1 below shows the district boundary of Wyre Forest District.

**Figure 1 Map of Wyre Forest District**



#### **4) Background/Duty to Co-operate**

There has been ongoing engagement between WFDC and SC throughout the preparation of the WFDC Local Plan Review. WFDC has consulted SC at every stage of plan making. The Local Plan Review consultation periods were as follows:-

- Issues and Options Consultation – September / October 2015
- Preferred Options Consultation – June / August 2017
- Pre-Submission Consultation – November / December 2018
- Pre-Submission Consultation (re-opening) – September / October 2019

A Duty to Cooperate meeting took place on the following date:-

- 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Minutes of the meeting can be viewed in Appendix 1.

#### **5) Strategic Matters**

Shropshire Council responded to the WFDC Local Plan Issues and Options consultation that was undertaken in September /October 2015. They stated that they would consider any potential implications for Shropshire that arise from the Wyre Forest Local Plan Review on the publication of the Preferred Option. No comments to the Preferred Options consultation or the Pre-Submission consultations were submitted by SC.

The consultation response from SC to the WFDC Issues and Options consultation can be viewed in Appendix 2.

#### **6) Matters that parties agree on**

All matters were agreed on.

#### **7) Matters that parties disagree on**

There are no matters that WFDC and SC disagree on.

#### **8) Other Strategic Matters discussed at Duty to Co-operate Meetings**

As WFDC is a green belt local authority, the question of neighbouring local authorities helping to meet the housing need for Wyre Forest in the emerging and future local plans was discussed at the DtC meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Shropshire Council responded by stating that they may take unmet housing and employment need from the Black Country Authorities and think that it would be difficult to take any unmet need from WFDC if required, as the only possible area would be Cleobury Mortimer where there will be an allocation for approximately 200 dwellings. The emerging WFDC Local Plan is intending to accommodate all of its housing need within its own district area; however this will involve some green belt release which will need to be considered at examination stage by the Planning Inspector.

## 9) Governance Arrangements

The governance arrangements are key to the effectiveness and implementation of the Statement of Common Ground. The table below sets out the requirements for the authorities involved.

Local Authority	Method of Approval
Wyre Forest District Council	SofCG to be agreed by Council Members
Shropshire Council	SofCG to be agreed at Officer level.

## 10) Timetable for Agreement

The table below sets out the timetable arrangement for the Statement of Common Ground to be agreed.

Local Authority	Timetable for Approval
Wyre Forest District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Overview &amp; Scrutiny – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020</li><li>- Cabinet Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020</li><li>- Extraordinary Council Meeting – 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020</li></ul>
Shropshire Council	To be signed off by the Interim Planning Policy and Strategy Manager of Shropshire Council

## 11) Conclusions

The parties agree that:

- i) WFDC has fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate with SC.
- ii) The parties will continue to work positively together, including with other authorities where relevant on strategic cross boundary issues.

## 12) Signatories

This Statement of Common Ground has been agreed and signed by the following:-

<b>Shropshire Council</b>	<b>Wyre Forest District Council</b>
Name: _Edward West	Name: Mike Parker
Position: Interim Planning Policy and Strategy Manager	Position: Corporate Director Prosperity and Place
Date agreed: 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2020	Date agreed: April 2020
Signature: _____	Signature: 

### 13) **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Duty to Co-operate meeting minutes between Wyre Forest District Council and Shropshire Council.
- Appendix 2 Shropshire Council response to the Wyre Forest District Council Issues and Options consultation (September/October 2015)

Duty to Co-operate Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019 WFDC and Shropshire Council

Present

Adrian Cooper Planned Policy and Strategy Manager (Shropshire)	Edward West Principle Planning Policy Officer (Shropshire)	Helen Checketts Senior Planning Policy Officer (Wyre Forest)
		Actions
1	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Introductions of those present and set out the purpose of the meeting to have a duty to co-operate discussion regarding Wyre Forest District Local Plan and to discuss the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground.</p>	
2	<p>Local Plan Stages and Timetable</p> <p>HC outlined the progression of the WFDC Local Plan, the current position and the Local Plan timetable.</p>	
3	<p>Wyre Forest District - Amendments to Pre-Submission Plan.</p> <p>HC outlined reason for reopening of Pre-Submission consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport modelling,</li> <li>• Updated IDP</li> <li>• Updated submission viability note</li> <li>• Some changes to sites (two additional, one removed)</li> </ul> <p>HC explained that WFDC are using the 2016 housing figure (276), this is higher than the 2014 figure but decided to go with the higher figure as we are being ambitious with our housing growth, helps the Government housing numbers, the numbers could be altered by the Government so seemed safer to go with the higher figure. WFDC are over allocating by 15% as 49% of allocations are on brownfield sites so adding 15% to ensure that there are enough housing sites and some reserved housing sites. Discussed if SC has any concerns, none were identified.</p> <p>AC and EW outlined the likely numbers and locations of allocations in their Local Plan review. Only allocations near to WFD are 200 proposed dwellings at Cleobury Mortimer which will form part of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	
4	<p>Consultation response to WFDC Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation.</p>	

	Discussed that comments had not been made to subsequent consultations as there are no issues.	
5	<p>Green Belt Review</p> <p>Discussed WFDC Green Belt review which was undertaken by Amec Foster Wheeler and discussed the wider Green Belt review for SC. Discussed consistency of GB review across West Midlands if different companies undertake this work. Langes consultants undertaking SC GB review, they also undertook South Staffordshire and are doing the Black Country GB review.</p>	
6	<p>Black Country shortfall.</p> <p>Discussed that SC may be taking unmet housing and employment need from the Black Country Authorities, approximately 3000 dwellings and 50 hectares of employment land at a site close to Shifnal (3 miles from Wolverhampton). Discussed that this is unlikely to impact WFD or Worcestershire as close to Junction 3 M54 with good transport links. SC strategic sites are at Ironbridge power station, RAF Cosford and Clive barracks.</p> <p>WFDC intend to allocate all housing need within WFD but discussed if SC could take any WFDC shortfall if Inspector at EIP said that all of the housing could not be met within WFD. SC said that it would be difficult to take any shortfall and so would be reluctant to do so as the only possible area would be Cleobury Mortimer who in their Neighbourhood Plan are likely to be allocating 200 dwellings.</p>	
7	<p>Identification of any cross boundary or strategic issues.</p> <p>No issues identified.</p>	
8	<p>Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>Discussed that this needs to be agreed by December 2019. Needs to go through Committee cycle at WFDC in January/February 2020., Shropshire Council will sign off the SofCG at Officer level.</p> <p>Agreed that the SofCG should be prepared ready for Submission Stage of the Wyre Forest Local Plan.</p>	HC to send draft SofCG to EW
9	<p>Ongoing engagement with DtoC Partners.</p> <p>Agree to engagement via email and meetings when necessary.</p>	

## Appendix 2

Planning Policy Manager  
Wyre Forest House  
Finepoint Way  
KIDDERMINSTER  
DY11 7WF

Shropshire Council  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
Shropshire SY2 6ND

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015

My Ref:

Your Ref

Dear Mrs Brown

**Wyre Forest District Council  
Local Plan Review – Issues and Options**

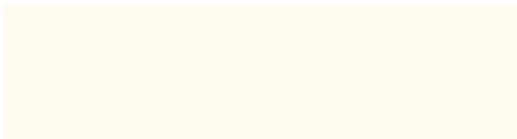
Thank you for consulting Shropshire Council on your Issues and Options for your Local Plan Review for the period to 2032.

This authority welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Issues and Options document. The document contains a broad ranging discussion of the issues within your district and a considered range of policy options to inform the preparation of the Preferred Option proposed for the summer of 2016.

This authority notes the current indications of the needs of the district particularly for new housing and jobs growth but recognises that further evidence has been commissioned and there is continuing work to develop the evidence base for the Local Plan Review.

This authority proposes to consider any potential implications for Shropshire arising from the Wyre Forest Local Plan Review on the publication of the Preferred Option next year.

Yours faithfully



Liam Cowden  
Principal Policy Specialist  
Policy Team

