

Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Jubilee House
59 Wolverhampton Road
Codsall
WV8 1PL

13th December 2021

Dear Local Plan Team,

I wanted to start by recognising the real challenges that the District Council faces in making this local plan and all the hard work that has gone into it so far. I appreciate, as I know so many in the council do, the importance of producing a viable plan within expected timeframes to ensure the Green Belt is protected for everybody here in South Staffordshire.

However, I would say that there are some areas that do need to change as a result of this consultation to ensure we have as robust a plan as possible which works for all residents. I hope that the council can take on many of the points other residents and I have made as part of this consultation process and adapt their current plans in a positive way for the district's future. My main points that I have made in my consultation response are that:

- The housing target numbers preferred by the District Council are too high because of Duty-to-Cooperate negotiations. There seems to have been a willingness to accept a level of future growth that ends up disproportionate to the housing stock required by local need. The proposed should be revised down either substantially or completely.
- The District Council should seek to make the most of the oversupply of employment land in South Staffordshire following the approval of the West Midlands Interchange. The consequences of this large release of land for employment use have not been fully considered in previous consultations held by SSDC and other local authorities, and should be considered now in the following ways:
 - Historic employment land allocations could be reconsidered more suitable sites can be released for housing use.
 - The District Council could leverage the oversupply of employment land in duty to cooperate conversations and use this to negotiate down their contribution to the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area's shortfall.
- The council's plan for meeting their Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showman housing need by regularising illegal sites risks encouraging illegal behaviour and rewarding those who resist enforcement processes for long enough. Alternative solutions to meeting this need should be pursued, especially as neighbouring councils have yet to offer any assistance to meet this need via the Duty to Co-operate despite their willingness to allocate South Staffordshire such a large part of the housing shortfall.

It is so important, as part of this consultation, that the views of residents are properly listened to and that any plan which is taken forwards has the interests of residents at the heart of it. I know that this is something that the council is incredibly committed to and I look forwards to working with you on this.

Yours sincerely,

Gavin Williamson