

Statement of Common Ground between Wyre Forest District Council and Black Country Authorities (Dudley, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall)

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 the Black Country Authorities in order to fulfil its Duty to Cooperate requirements.

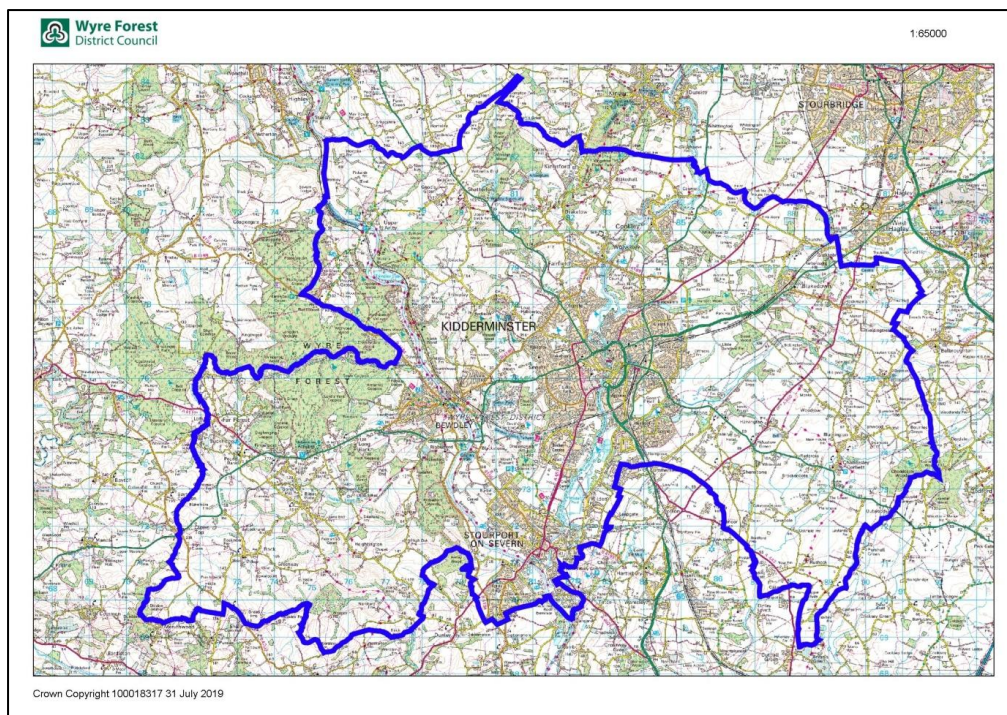
2) Parties Involved

This Statement of Common Ground (SofCG) has been prepared jointly by Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) and the association of Black Country Authorities (BCA). The Black Country Authorities comprise of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Wolverhampton City Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, and Walsall Council. The Black Country Authorities do not share a boundary with Wyre Forest 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 Cooperate

There has been ongoing engagement between WFDC and the Black Country Authorities throughout the preparation of the WFDC Local Plan Review. WFDC has consulted with the Black Country Authorities 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-opened) – September / October 2019

Duty to Cooperate meetings have also taken place on the following dates:-

- 9th February 2018
- 18th May 2018
- 25th September 2018
- 14th March 2019
- 18th July 2019
- 3rd October 2019
- 5th December 2019

Minutes of the above meetings can be viewed in Appendix 1.

The above meetings were jointly held with the Black Country Authorities and Birmingham City Council so that cross boundary duty to cooperate discussions could be had together to discuss strategic issues jointly. South Staffordshire Council was also invited to the duty to cooperate meetings to discuss strategic issues. A representative from the Black Country Authorities attended all of the above meetings.

5) Strategic Matters Identified

The Black Country Authorities responded to the WFDC Local Plan Pre-Submission consultation that was undertaken in November / December 2018. Table 1 shows a summary of the responses received from BCA (the full response can be viewed in Appendix 3).

Table 1: Black Country Authorities response to WFDC Local Plan Pre-Submission (October 2018)

	Issues
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	The Black Country authorities responded to the Preferred Option Consultation and, as part of this response, expressed the need to agree a Duty to Cooperate Statement / Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant local authorities. However, this has not been progressed. Therefore, the Black Country authorities now wish to submit a formal holding objection to the Plan until issues relating to the Duty to Cooperate are resolved.
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	The Plan makes no commitment to contribute towards meeting the evidenced unmet housing and employment needs of neighbouring authorities, including the Black Country authorities. This is

	disappointing and does not address the representations made by the Black Country local authorities to previous consultations. The Black Country authorities request that the Plan should make provision to help meet the unmet housing and employment needs of the Black Country, either in the form of the identification of additional sites or through a firm commitment to an early review of the Plan.
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	Paragraph 1.16 of the Plan acknowledges the Council's duty to meet the new tests of soundness and to comply with the Duty to Cooperate. Policy 6A (B) states <i>"As required by the Duty to Cooperate, due consideration will be given, through future review of the WFDC Local Plan where appropriate, to the housing needs of neighbouring local authorities in circumstances when it has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District Area."</i> Although the Plan acknowledges the importance of meeting the unmet housing needs of neighbouring authorities, we do not consider that the pre-submission Plan goes far enough to fully address this issue and therefore request that specific amendments are made to the pre-submission Plan to ensure that it is sound.
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	In light of the evidenced unmet housing needs in the neighbouring Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area, the Black Country authorities would expect Wyre Forest to allocate specific sites to help meet this need or to make a firm commitment to an early review of the Local Plan which could help meet this need, with specific timescales. Failure to do so would be contrary to the requirements of the tests of soundness.
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	Policy 7A has identified two areas of development restraint (ADR's) that could be released for residential development. Policy 7B has identified "Reserved Housing sites", should the Council fail to provide a 5 year housing supply or meet the housing delivery test. We request that Wyre Forest should first look to allocate these sites for housing during the Plan period to help meet the unmet housing needs of the Black Country.
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	Paragraph 1.18 states that there is a need to prepare a Statement of Common Ground for the purposes of examination. Such a Statement should be prepared prior to publication of the Plan. In the absence of the Statement of Common Ground, therefore, the Plan could be deemed to fail to fully comply with the tests of soundness. Paragraph 1.18 also states the Council's commitment to continuously work with neighbouring and nearby local authorities, especially to address unmet housing needs. However, the Plan does not make it clear how this process will be undertaken.
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	Paragraph 6.11 of the Plan reads <i>"It is clearly demonstrated by the HNS (2018) that, unusually in the West Midlands, the Wyre Forest District Council area is co-terminus with the Wyre Forest Housing Market Area. As such the housing requirement reflected by this Plan is based solely on that required for the needs of Wyre Forest District. However, this does not negate the need for the Plan to be prepared in consultation with the neighbouring and nearby authorities (e.g. other Worcestershire Districts, Birmingham and the Black Country, South Staffordshire, Shropshire): accordingly Wyre Forest District has co-</i>

	<p><i>operated with authorities that are both adjoining and beyond in order to consider strategic priorities for the delivery of homes, including cross boundary requirements. <u>The evidence base documents the joint working and other activities demonstrating effective co-operation consistent with the Duty to Cooperate legal requirements and the NPPF.</u></i></p> <p>In summary, the Black Country authorities do not consider that the Plan adequately addresses the Duty to Cooperate and the tests of soundness set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The commitment to continuously consult and engage with adjoining authorities does not sufficiently deal with Duty to Cooperate issues. In particular, in order for the Plan to be sound, there must be an inbuilt flexibility in the Wyre Forest housing supply up to 2036 to help meet the unmet housing needs of neighbouring and nearby authorities.</p>
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The Black Country Authorities also responded to the re-opening of the WFDC Local Plan Pre-Submission consultation that was undertaken in September / October 2019. Table 2 shows a summary of the responses received from BCA (the full response can be viewed in Appendix 4).

Table 2: Black Country Authorities response to WFDC Amendments to the Pre-Submission Publications Document (July 2019)

	Issues
Black Country Authorities (2019 response)	<p><u>Housing Representation:</u></p> <p>The Black Country Authorities broadly support the commitment that consideration will be given to a future early review of the WFDC Local Plan where it is established, as part of the Black Country Plan review process, that the Black Country cannot meet its own housing and employment land needs to 2038. However, you will recall that we wrote to Wyre Forest DC (via your Chief Executive) in July 2018, when we advised that our work indicated there was likely to be a significant shortfall in the ability of the Black Country’s urban areas to accommodate projected housing growth and we asked for cooperation towards meeting the anticipated shortfall capacity. Our preferred position would have been for the WFDC Local Plan to have acknowledged the potential housing shortfall from the emerging Black Country Plan evidence base (with further evidence to be published in November 2019) and attributed some of the WFDC’s additional housing allocation to meeting the Black Country’s needs.</p> <p>As part of the process for agreeing the Statement of Common Ground with Wyre Forest District Council, we would like to explore the point at which an early review of the WFDC plan will be triggered, in accordance with the emerging Draft Black Country Plan and the associated evidence base.</p> <p>The Leaders of the BC authorities have endorsed this response in</p>

	<p>principle through a meeting of the Association of the Black Country Authorities on 25th September 2019.</p>
<p>Black Country Authorities <i>(2019 response)</i></p>	<p><u>Transport Representation:</u></p> <p>The A456, from Birmingham to Kidderminster through the Black Country, is already stressed at peak periods, particularly at M5 Junction 3, Grange Island and Hagley. Projected housing growth being provided for in the conurbation and in Bromsgrove, as well as in your authority’s plan, will place additional demands on this corridor.</p> <p>To help meet growing demands for movement in this corridor the transport strategy for the West Midlands conurbation, as articulated in ‘Movement for Growth’, includes the provision of bus rapid transit, known as Sprint, between Birmingham and Quinton along with the provision of Park & Ride in the Quinton area to serve this route. The future extension of rapid transit in the Walsall to Stourbridge Corridor is also envisaged within the plan period. Through Midlands connect, the Midlands Rail Hub proposal looks to increase capacity on the Snow Hill lines both through the provision of additional platforms at Snow Hill and Rowley Regis but also in the longer term through electrifications and more frequent services. These developments will add to the demands on the A456.</p> <p>The A456 forms part of the West Midlands Key Route Network and a study is underway to bring forward measures to improve the management of this route, which includes a short section beyond the Dudley boundary to the junction at Hagley. However, these resulting measures will not by themselves deal with the future demands on this corridor. Rail and associated strategic park & ride facilities will have an important role to play. We would therefore like to place on record our support for the proposed development of a park & ride facility at Blakedown. This should intercept trips, particularly those bound for Birmingham, much earlier and will make better use of existing and future rail capacity on the Birmingham-Worcester route. In turn, this should provide relief to the highway network including the heavily congested junctions in Hagley.</p> <p>These proposals have recently been brought to the particular attention of the Black Country authorities through recent Duty to Cooperate discussions, so please take this representation as an officer response. We will report to a future meeting of ABCA to seek its endorsement and will advise you when that has been done.</p>

6) Matters that parties agree on

Table 3 below shows the matters that both parties agree on.

Table 3: Matters that both parties agree on

	Issues	WFDC Response
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	The Black Country authorities responded to the Preferred Option Consultation and, as part of this response, expressed the need to agree a Duty to Cooperate Statement / Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant local authorities. However, this has not been progressed. Therefore, the Black Country authorities now wish to submit a formal holding objection to the Plan until issues relating to the Duty to Cooperate are resolved.	<p>Since the Preferred Options consultation, WFDC has held several Duty to Cooperate meetings with the Black Country Authorities; 3 of these meetings were held before the Pre-Submission consultation in Nov/Dec 2018, and 5 of these meetings were held before the re-opening of the Pre-Submission consultation in Sept/Oct 2019. There was also a DtC meeting during the Pre-Submission consultation on 3rd Oct 2019.</p> <p>The need for a Statement of Common Ground (SofCG) was discussed at several of these meetings, starting on 18th May 2018. It was agreed during the meeting on 25th September 2018 that a SofCG would be prepared in time for the examination stage of the WFDC Local Plan. See meeting minutes in Appendix 1.</p>
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	The Plan makes no commitment to contribute towards meeting the evidenced unmet housing and employment needs of neighbouring authorities, including the Black Country authorities. This is disappointing and does not address the representations made by the Black Country local authorities to previous consultations. The Black Country authorities request that the Plan should make provision to help meet the unmet housing and employment needs of the Black Country,	WFDC has made an amendment to the Local Plan in light of these comments. The amendments to Policy 6A(B) are as follows: "As required by the Duty to Co-operate, due consideration will be given, through a future early review of the WFDC

	<p>either in the form of the identification of additional sites or through a firm commitment to an early review of the Plan.</p>	<p>Local Plan where appropriate necessary and in accordance with the NPPF, to the housing needs of neighbouring local authorities (Footnote 2) in circumstances when it has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District area. <u>The review will consider the need for additional growth and plan appropriately for this if the need has been clearly evidenced and justified.</u></p> <p>Footnote 2 added as follows: <u>“This includes the Black Country Local Authorities who are currently preparing a joint Local Plan Review.”</u></p> <p>These amendments were consulted on by WFDC during the Pre-Submission consultation held in September/October 2019.</p>
<p>Black Country Authorities (2018 response)</p>	<p>Paragraph 1.16 of the Plan acknowledges the Council’s duty to meet the new tests of soundness and to comply with the Duty to Cooperate. Policy 6A (B) states <i>“As required by the Duty to Cooperate, due consideration will be given, through future review of the WFDC Local Plan where appropriate, to the housing needs of neighbouring local authorities in circumstances when it has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District Area.”</i> Although the Plan acknowledges the importance of meeting the unmet housing needs of neighbouring authorities, we do not consider that the pre-</p>	<p>WFDC has made an amendment to the Local Plan in light of these comments. The amendments to Policy 6A(B) are as follows: <i>“As required by the Duty to Co-operate, due consideration will be given, through a future early review of the WFDC Local Plan where appropriate necessary and in accordance with the NPPF, to the housing</i></p>

	<p>submission Plan goes far enough to fully address this issue and therefore request that specific amendments are made to the pre-submission Plan to ensure that it is sound.</p>	<p>needs of neighbouring local authorities (Footnote 2) in circumstances when it has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District area. <u>The review will consider the need for additional growth and plan appropriately for this if the need has been clearly evidenced and justified.</u></p> <p>Footnote 2 added as follows: <u>“This includes the Black Country Local Authorities who are currently preparing a joint Local Plan Review.”</u></p> <p>These amendments were consulted on by WFDC during the Pre-Submission consultation held in September/October 2019.</p>
<p>Black Country Authorities (2018 response)</p>	<p>In light of the evidenced unmet housing needs in the neighbouring Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area, the Black Country authorities would expect Wyre Forest to allocate specific sites to help meet this need or to make a firm commitment to an early review of the Local Plan which could help meet this need, with specific timescales. Failure to do so would be contrary to the requirements of the tests of soundness.</p>	<p>WFDC has made an amendment to the Local Plan in light of these comments. The amendments to Policy 6A(B) are as follows: “As required by the Duty to Co-operate, due consideration will be given, through a future early review of the WFDC Local Plan where appropriate necessary and in accordance with the NPPF, to the housing needs of neighbouring local authorities (Footnote 2) in circumstances when it</p>

		<p>has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District area. <u>The review will consider the need for additional growth and plan appropriately for this if the need has been clearly evidenced and justified.</u></p> <p>Footnote 2 added as follows: <u>“This includes the Black Country Local Authorities who are currently preparing a joint Local Plan Review.”</u></p> <p>These amendments were consulted on by WFDC during the Pre-Submission consultation held in September/October 2019.</p>
<p>Black Country Authorities (2018 response)</p>	<p>Paragraph 1.18 states that there is a need to prepare a Statement of Common Ground for the purposes of examination. Such a Statement should be prepared prior to publication of the Plan. In the absence of the Statement of Common Ground, therefore, the Plan could be deemed to fail to fully comply with the tests of soundness. Paragraph 1.18 also states the Council’s commitment to continuously work with neighbouring and nearby local authorities, especially to address unmet housing needs. However, the Plan does not make it clear how this process will be undertaken.</p>	<p>Since the Preferred Options consultation, WFDC has held several Duty to Cooperate meetings with the Black Country Authorities; 3 of these meetings were held before the Pre-Submission consultation in Nov/Dec 2018, and 5 of these meetings were held before the re-opening of the Pre-Submission consultation in Sept/Oct 2019. There was also a DtC meeting during the Pre-Submission consultation on 3rd Oct 2019.</p> <p>The need for a Statement of Common Ground (SofCG) was discussed at</p>

		<p>several of these meetings, starting on 18th May 2018. It was agreed during the meeting on 25th September 2018 that a SofCG would be prepared in time for the examination stage of the WFDC Local Plan. See meeting minutes in Appendix 1.</p>
<p>Black Country Authorities (2019 response)</p>	<p><u>Housing Representation:</u></p> <p>The Black Country Authorities broadly support the commitment that consideration will be given to a future early review of the WFDC Local Plan where it is established, as part of the Black Country Plan review process, that the Black Country cannot meet its own housing and employment land needs to 2038. However, you will recall that we wrote to Wyre Forest DC (via your Chief Executive) in July 2018, when we advised that our work indicated there was likely to be a significant shortfall in the ability of the Black Country’s urban areas to accommodate projected housing growth and we asked for cooperation towards meeting the anticipated shortfall capacity. Our preferred position would have been for the WFDC Local Plan to have acknowledged the potential housing shortfall from the emerging Black Country Plan evidence base (with further evidence to be published in November 2019) and attributed some of the WFDC’s additional housing allocation to meeting the Black Country’s needs.</p> <p>As part of the process for agreeing the Statement of Common Ground with Wyre Forest District Council, we would like to explore the point at which an early review of the WFDC plan will be triggered, in accordance with the emerging Draft Black Country Plan and the associated evidence base.</p> <p>The Leaders of the BC authorities have endorsed this response in principle through a meeting of the Association of the Black Country Authorities on 25th September 2019.</p>	<p>WFDC is pleased that the Black Country Authorities broadly support the amendments to the Pre-Submission Local Plan, and in particular the changes that have been made to Policy 6A of the Local Plan, with the revised wording in part B and footnote 2.</p> <p>The ‘early’ review will be where necessary and in accordance with the NPPF, following the formal adoption of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036). WFDC will continue to have DtC discussions with the Black Country Authorities as they progress with their own Local Plan review.</p>

<p>Black Country Authorities <i>(2019 response)</i></p>	<p><u>Transport Representation:</u></p> <p>The A456, from Birmingham to Kidderminster through the Black Country, is already stressed at peak periods, particularly at M5 Junction 3, Grange Island and Hagley. Projected housing growth being provided for in the conurbation and in Bromsgrove, as well as in your authority's plan, will place additional demands on this corridor.</p> <p>To help meet growing demands for movement in this corridor the transport strategy for the West Midlands conurbation, as articulated in 'Movement for Growth', includes the provision of bus rapid transit, known as Sprint, between Birmingham and Quinton along with the provision of Park & Ride in the Quinton area to serve this route. The future extension of rapid transit in the Walsall to Stourbridge Corridor is also envisaged within the plan period. Through Midlands connect, the Midlands Rail Hub proposal looks to increase capacity on the Snow Hill lines both through the provision of additional platforms at Snow Hill and Rowley Regis but also in the longer term through electrifications and more frequent services. These developments will add to the demands on the A456.</p> <p>The A456 forms part of the West Midlands Key Route Network and a study is underway to bring forward measures to improve the management of this route, which includes a short section beyond the Dudley boundary to the junction at Hagley. However, these resulting measures will not by themselves deal with the future demands on this corridor. Rail and associated strategic park & ride facilities will have an important role to play. We would therefore like to place on record our support for the proposed development of a park & ride facility at Blakedown. This should intercept trips, particularly those bound for Birmingham, much earlier and will make better use of existing and future rail capacity on the Birmingham-Worcester route. In turn, this should provide relief to the highway network including the heavily congested junctions in Hagley.</p>	<p>WFDC is pleased that the Black Country Authorities are supportive of the proposed development of a park and ride facility at Blakedown railway station. WFDC agree that this should help to intercept trips, particularly those bound for Birmingham, much earlier and will therefore provide relief to the highway network including the heavily congested junctions in Hagley.</p>
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	<p>These proposals have recently been brought to the particular attention of the Black Country authorities through recent Duty to Cooperate discussions, so please take this representation as an officer response. We will report to a future meeting of ABCA to seek its endorsement and will advise you when that has been done.</p>	
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7) Matters that parties disagree on

Table 4 below shows matters that parties disagree on.

Table 4: Matters that parties disagree on

	Issues	WFDC Response
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	<p>Policy 7A has identified two areas of development restraint (ADR's) that could be released for residential development. Policy 7B has identified "Reserved Housing sites", should the Council fail to provide a 5 year housing supply or meet the housing delivery test. We request that Wyre Forest should first look to allocate these sites for housing during the Plan period to help meet the unmet housing needs of the Black Country.</p>	<p>The Reserved Housing Sites in the WFDC Local Plan are to help with accommodating WFDC future growth as Wyre Forest District is a green belt authority.</p>
Black Country Authorities (2018 response)	<p>Paragraph 6.11 of the Plan reads <i>"It is clearly demonstrated by the HNS (2018) that, usually in the West Midlands, the Wyre Forest area is co-terminus with the Wyre Forest Housing Market Area. As such the housing requirement reflected by this Plan is based solely on that required for the needs of the Wyre Forest District. However, this does not negate the need for the Plan to be prepared in consultation with the neighbouring and nearby authorities (e.g. other Worcestershire Districts, Birmingham and the Black Country, South Staffordshire, Shropshire): accordingly Wyre Forest District has cooperated with authorities that are both adjoining and beyond in order to consider strategic priorities for the delivery of homes, including cross boundary requirements. <u>The evidence base documents the joint working and other activities demonstrating effective co-operation consistent with the Duty to Cooperate legal requirements and the NPPF.</u>"</i></p>	<p>Wyre Forest District does not comprise part of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA). Birmingham City Council currently has an established housing shortfall, some of which has already been met within the GBBCHMA. However, the Black Country Authorities, alongside other local authorities within the GBBCHMA, have yet to provide sufficient evidence that any remaining shortfall cannot be accommodated within their own Housing</p>

	<p>In summary, the Black Country authorities do not consider that the Plan adequately addresses the Duty to Cooperate and the tests of soundness set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The commitment to continuously consult and engage with adjoining authorities does not sufficiently deal with Duty to Cooperate issues. In particular, in order for the Plan to be sound, there must be an inbuilt flexibility in the Wyre Forest housing supply up to 2036 to help meet the unmet housing needs of neighbouring and nearby authorities.</p>	<p>Market Area, and to justify why they need WFDC to accommodate some of their shortfall. WFDC is a Green Belt local authority and therefore exceptional circumstances are required to release land from the green belt.</p> <p>Flexibility has been built into Policy 6A(B) (see comments in table 1 above). WFDC has also held a number of DtC meetings with the Black Country Authorities and has agreed to prepare this Statement of Common Ground with them.</p>
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8) Other Strategic Matters

As WFDC is a green belt local authority, the question of whether neighbouring and nearby local authorities can help to meet the housing need for Wyre Forest in the emerging and future local plans needs to be considered. As the Black Country Authorities have a housing and employment shortfall, they will not be in a position to help Wyre Forest District with its housing need.

The emerging WFDC Local Plan is intending to accommodate all of its housing and employment 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
Black Country Authorities	ABCA Leaders' Meeting – 12 th February 2020

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	- Overview & Scrutiny – 6 th February 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet Meeting – 11th February 2020 - Extraordinary Council Meeting – 20th February 2020
Black Country Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ABCA Chief Executives Meeting – 29th January 2020 - ABCA Leaders’ Meeting – 12th February 2020

11) Conclusions

The parties agree that:

- i) WFDC has fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate with the Black Country Authorities.
- ii) The Black Country Authorities are broadly satisfied that all matters raised in its representations to the WFDC Local Plan Review (2016-2036) have been addressed, based on the Black Country’s evidence published at that time.
- iii) 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:-

<u>Black Country Authorities</u>	<u>Wyre Forest District Council</u>
Name: _____	Name: _____
Position: _____	Position: _____
Date agreed: _____	Date agreed: _____
Signature: _____	Signature: _____

13) Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Duty to Cooperate Meeting Minutes between WFDC and the Black Country Authorities
- Appendix 2 – Black Country Authority response to the WFDC Preferred Options consultation (June – August 2017)
- Appendix 3 – Black Country Authority response to the WFDC Pre-Submission Consultation (Nov / Dec 2018)
- Appendix 4 – Black Country Authority response to the WFDC Pre-Submission Consultation (Sept / Oct 2019)

Present:

Martin Dando (Dudley)	Ian Culley (Wolverhampton)
Kelly Harris (South Staffs)	Uyen-Phan Han (BCC)
Andy Donnelly (WM Metropolitan Authorities)	Mike Parker (WFDC)
Helen Smith (WFDC)	Kate Bailey (WFDC)
	Actions
1.	<p>Local Plan Timetables</p> <p>HS ran through the LP timetable for WFDC. Full Council in November and EiP in 2019 and adoption July 2019.</p> <p>Black Country – Issues and Options (Summer 2017). Preferred Options due out at end of this year. Draft plan summer / autumn 2019. Unmet need of 22k (still subject to testing) until 2036.</p> <p>South Staffs – site allocations examination end 2017 and now out to consultation on modifications and hope to have the plan found sound. Want to adopt by August 2018 and also started work on LP review. Have started drafting Issues & Options and aim to finish this by Summer 2018. New Local Plan aiming to be submitted by 2021.</p> <p>Birmingham – adopted development plan Jan 2017. The Plan is providing 51,000. Housing shortfall to be met by other LPAs in the housing market – 38k approx, against an OAHN of 89,000.</p>
2	<p>Green Belt Review</p> <p>MD explained that the GB review hasn't been commissioned yet. Wanted to tie it in to the GL Hearn Housing Study so was put on hold.</p> <p>Now also waiting for Issues & Options consultation responses to be published before GB review can be commissioned – will publish without a response from the Council in March 2018. Approximately 1800 consultation responses were received.</p> <p>Combined Authority (CA) are looking at developing an overarching Investment and Spatial Delivery Framework which will not have any statutory planning making powers but will support delivery of existing plans. Therefore not involved in the GL Hearn study (HMS).</p> <p>CA – officers discussed the constituent and non-constituent members and mismatch in the geographies with the HMA. Spatial Investment and Delivery Framework – enables Mayor to have a discussion about priorities for the CA. Discussed timings around the household projections / standardised methodology being published and how this links to the pre-submission consultation timelines in context of WFDC timetable.</p>

Appendix 1

3	<p>Strategic Growth Locations Study (GL Hearn & Wood plc)</p> <p>Leaders meeting 20th February 2018 to consider the study and should be available publically after that.</p>	
4	<p>Duty to co-operate meeting on 14th February 2018 (Black Country)</p> <p>The Black Country LAs will outline the main consultation responses and timetable and discuss any DTC issues that are likely to arise. Further meetings will follow.</p>	
5	<p>Ongoing engagement with DTC partners</p> <p>Discussed the previous comments given at the DTC. WFDC figures aren't over-provided but meet the range identified by Amion (199 – 332) and we then selected 300 to meet the economic growth aspirations at the time. The DCLG standardised methodology was 246 so waiting on this to be finalised and 2016 population data to be available to then update to OAHN. BCC would be keen if we agreed to a MofU to take some of their numbers on the grounds that we are close to their HMA.</p> <p>The final WFDC OAHN number and the site technical evaluation will highlight whether there is over-provision or not and therefore what the Black Country might say at DTC.</p> <p>The GL Hearn study will then inform us as to whether there is a shortfall or not and as BC work continues will know whether they can meet that shortfall or not by their own GB.</p> <p>Unlikely that the Planning Inspector will have clarity on the BC position when they conduct the WFDC EiP in early 2019.</p> <p>Discussed the role of Solihull in meeting the needs of the conurbation. North Warwickshire is planning for in excess of OAHN and demographic need, with the surplus contributing to wider HMA shortfall. MP advised that it was unlikely that WFDC would be in this position.</p> <p>Issue raised that if a HMA planning for economic led migration above that reflected in trend based projections, then logically it needed to come from somewhere else, otherwise there was a risk of double counting e.g. Telford.</p> <p>Discussed the WFDC Housing Market Area and where the inward migration to the district was coming from.</p>	<p>WFDC will arrange a meeting again April / May 2018 to hold further DTC.</p>

Duty to Co-operate Meeting**14th March 2019****Present:**

Vicki Popplewell (Dudley)	Ian Culley (Wolverhampton)
Kelly Harris (South Staffs)	Kate Bailey (WFDC)
Helen Smith (WFDC)	
Apologies:	
Mike Parker (WFDC)	Uyen-Phan Han (BCC)
Andy Donnelly (WM Metropolitan Authorities)	
	Actions
1. Introductions	
Vicki Popplewell from Dudley Council was welcomed to the group. Vicki has replaced Martin Dando for Duty to Cooperate meetings.	
2. Local Plan Timetables	
<p>HS ran through the LP timetable for WFDC. The pre-submission consultation was held last year in November/December 2018. The team has since been working through the consultation responses received and checking for any soundness issues for the plan. The EiP is expected to commence in late 2019 and adoption in 2020, based on the current LDS timetable which was approved by Cabinet on 12th June 2018.</p> <p>Black Country – Issues and Options (Summer 2017). The draft Black Country Plan to be published for consultation in Autumn 2019. The Publication stage will be published in 2020 and Submission in early 2021. It is hoped that adoption would be in Autumn 2021. The current housing shortfall for the Black Country LAs is 26,000.</p> <p>Black Country LAs have had encouraging engagement with South Staffs and also Shropshire. Telford is not willing to help with the shortfall at this stage. The Black Country LAs have done some more work on the urban capacity in terms of employment areas, open spaces, growing population, economy and the need for more land for housing and employment.</p> <p>South Staffs – local elections being held in May 2019. The Issues & Options document was published at end of last year. South Staffs are now preparing the preferred spatial distribution document and intend to consult on this during Summer 2019. The Preferred Options document is planned for 2020. South Staffs hope that they will submit to Planning Inspectorate by end of 2021.</p> <p>Black Country LAs and South Staffs will have more clarity with their plans by early 2020.</p> <p>GBSLEP – the housing delivery target and the housing deal was also discussed. A target of 215,000 homes to be delivered. An expectation that LAs within the LEP geography will help to meet this housing target, but this is dependent on suitable sustainable locations being found. We also discussed how the LEP geography is likely to change and it is currently unclear which LEP Wyre Forest District will fall within. Ian Culley referred</p>	

	<p>us all to the West Midlands Combined Authority 'Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan' as the revised draft was published February 2019. See link to revised draft:</p> <p>https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s2639/2019.02.13%20HLDB%20Revised%20SIDP%20appendix%20to%20covering%20paper%20-%20Public%20paper%20-%20FINAL.pdf</p>	
3.	<p>Black Country Green Belt Review</p> <p>The Black Country LAs have appointed Land Use Consultants (LUC) to undertake the Green Belt review. The first draft of the Green Belt Review has been completed by the consultants and is currently being checked by officers. The Green Belt review is being done jointly with South Staffs.</p>	
4.	<p>Consultation Responses to WFDC Pre-Submission Local Plan</p> <p>The consultation responses received by WFDC from Black Country LAs and South Staffs to the WFDC Pre-Submission Local Plan were discussed.</p> <p>Black Country LAs - A discussion was had about the standardised methodology for calculating housing need and the use of either 2014 or 2016 figures. If Wyre Forest is looking to provide above their 2014 needs then the Black Country LAs would want WFDC to consider attributing any surplus to meeting wider needs of BC and the broader HMA. The Black Country LAs would also want commitment from Wyre Forest for an early Local Plan Review with the purpose of identifying sites to accommodate unmet housing needs arising in the Black Country. WFDC would need clear evidence that the housing/employment shortfall could not be accommodated elsewhere in the HMA. It was also pointed out that Wyre Forest is not the most sustainable location as it does not have a motorway network running through the district, unlike some of the LAs already located within the HMA.</p> <p>South Staffs – They are not objecting to the WFDC Local Plan but think that Wyre Forest should revise wording in draft Local Plan to commit to an early Local Plan Review in light of the Black Country LAs shortfall.</p>	
5.	<p>Revised NPPF and Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>We discussed the need for a Statement of Common Ground and how this could be used to iron out any issues before the Wyre Forest Local Plan examination.</p> <p>As South Staffs are not objecting to the WFDC Local Plan, a separate SofCG would be prepared instead of a joint one with the Black Country LAs.</p> <p>It was agreed that the SofCGs should be prepared ready for Submission Stage of the Wyre Forest Local Plan.</p>	
6.	<p>Ongoing engagement with DTC partners</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should be in July 2019, after the local</p>	WFDC will arrange a meeting in

	elections in May.	July 2019 to hold further DTC.
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The Black Country LAs have been undertaking some migration analysis. It was agreed that this information could be shared with WFDC.</p>	<p>Migration analysis to be sent by Vicki Popplewell to WFDC when this information is available.</p>

Duty to Co-operate Meeting**18th May 2018****Present:**

Martin Dando (Dudley)	Ian Culley (Wolverhampton)
Uyen-Phan Han (BCC)	Mike Parker (WFDC)
Helen Smith (WFDC)	
Apologies:	
Kate Bailey (WFDC)	Kelly Harris (South Staffs)
Andy Donnelly (WM Metropolitan Authorities)	
	Actions
1.	<p>Local Plan Timetables</p> <p>HS ran through the LP timetable for WFDC. The LP timetable is being revised and will go to Cabinet for approval on 12th June 2018. The pre-submission consultation will be held later this year, the EIP in 2019 and adoption in 2020.</p> <p>Black Country – Issues and Options (Summer 2017). Preferred Options was due out at end of this year, but the timetable is being revised due to delays with dealing with the consultation responses and the Green Belt review.</p> <p>South Staffs – Aiming to publish Issues & Options in September/October 2018.</p> <p>Birmingham – adopted development plan Jan 2017. The Plan is providing 51,000. Housing shortfall to be met by other LPAs in the housing market – 38k approx, against an OAHN of 89,000.</p>
2	<p>Black Country Green Belt Review</p> <p>The Green Belt review has been delayed. Walsall will be finding out who their lead political party is next Wednesday; is it hoped that the Green Belt review work will start shortly after this. Waiting for the politicians to give the green light.</p> <p>The WMCA Investment Plan was discussed. Wyre Forest DC has been approached in the sense that we are a LEP partner. WFDC have provided them with a pipeline of sites. WFDC have engaged as a LEP partner, not as a combined authority partner.</p> <p>Discussed timings around the revised NPPF / standardised methodology being published and how this links to the pre-submission consultation timelines in context of WFDC timetable.</p>
3	<p>Strategic Growth Locations Study (GL Hearn)</p> <p>The GL Hearn Strategic Growth Study was published in February 2018. LAs agreed to publish it on their websites. There is nothing in the study on Wyre Forest. It's not policy, not set in stone. It will be up to LAs to undertake a Green Belt review and plan making.</p> <p>Within the study there are options for urban extensions, rounding</p>

	<p>off of green belt, new settlements and broad locations for this. The conclusion was that the study is a starting point; it is for LAs to take forward in their Local Plans and test out. By 2031 the needs are capable of being met by HMA. It will require some Green Belt development and rounding off of Green Belt. There are some significant large scale proposals to 2031. 2031 onwards the scale of the challenge is more significant. To meet the shortfall to 2036, would need much larger urban extensions. Increased densities. South of Dudley was a proposal and also in Bromsgrove District. It will be up to LAs to visit this in their local plan reviews. Some LAs have distanced themselves from the study. The status: a piece of evidence. It has not been approved as such, but the LAs cannot ignore it. It needs to be tested.</p> <p>The assumptions on densities were quite brave. LAs will need to consider how they will introduce policies of increased densities.</p> <p>North Warwickshire – going to examination in July 2018. Solihull will be later this year.</p>	
4	<p>Duty to co-operate meeting on 14th February 2018 (Black Country)</p> <p>The Black Country LAs presented the findings of the Issues & Options consultation responses and discussed DTC issues with those that attended the meeting. The meeting consisted of representatives from LAs, Historic England, Natural England, NHS etc. BC will undertake these types of sessions again when they reach the next stage of the Plan. They will also have focus group sessions as and when necessary.</p>	
5	<p>Revised NPPF and Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>The revised NPPF does not make reference to HMAs; it refers to neighbouring geographies instead.</p> <p>Possible topics for Statement of Common Ground could include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GL Hearn Study - FEMA – Black Country, Wyre Forest connectivity. <p>LEPS – they are a Duty to Cooperate body. Would be involved in the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground. Would have to be engaged, but can't formally sign it.</p> <p>Think about whom do you need, who is important to the delivery of your plan?</p>	
6	<p>Ongoing engagement with DTC partners</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should be in September 2018, preferably late September.</p>	<p>WFDC will arrange a meeting in September 2018 to hold further DTC.</p>

Present:

Martin Dando (Dudley)		
Helen Smith (WFDC)		
Apologies:		
Kate Bailey (WFDC)	Kelly Harris (South Staffs)	
Andy Donnelly (WM Metropolitan Authorities)	Mike Parker (WFDC)	
Ian Culley (Wolverhampton)	Uyen-Phan Han (BCC)	
		Actions
1.	<p>Local Plan Timetables</p> <p>HS ran through the LP timetable for WFDC. The LP timetable was revised and went to Cabinet for approval on 12th June 2018. The pre-submission consultation will be held later this year, the EiP in 2019 and adoption in 2020.</p> <p>Black Country – Issues and Options (Summer 2017). The draft Black Country Plan to be published for consultation in Autumn 2019. The Publication stage will be published in 2020 and Submission in early 2021. It is hoped that adoption would be in Autumn 2021.</p> <p>The Black Country LAs and wider HMA have shortfalls in both housing and employment up to 2036. If Wyre Forest is looking to provide above their needs then they would want WFDC to consider attributing any surplus to meeting wider needs of BC and the broader HMA.</p> <p>Shropshire LA is looking for a higher growth over their current need, so may be able to assist the Black Country LAs in meeting some of their shortfall.</p> <p>Telford LA is looking at their additional sites for housing (but not employment) to possibly help the Black Country LAs.</p> <p>South Staffs – helping with the employment, particularly around I54.</p>	
2	<p>Black Country Green Belt Review</p> <p>A Cabinet meeting in June 2018 gave the permission to start the tender process for a Green Belt review.</p> <p>The Black Country LAs have appointed Land Use Consultants (LUC) to undertake the Green Belt review. The inception meeting was being held on 25th September 2018 and work should start soon after. The completion date for this work is April 2019 (could be a tight timetable).</p> <p>The Green Belt review is being done jointly with South Staffs.</p> <p>The Black Country LAs want to start writing the draft Plan by next</p>	

	Spring time.	
3	<p>Revised NPPF and Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>Following the GL Hearn study, the Black Country LAs have put together a position statement to say ‘this is where we are’, ‘these are the facts’, ‘this is what we need to do’ etc. When this position statement is in the public domain, Martin Dando will send a copy to WFDC.</p> <p>We discussed the need for a Statement of Common Ground and how this could be used to iron out any issues before the Wyre Forest Local Plan examination (examination to start September 2019).</p> <p>The idea of a joint Statement of Common Ground was discussed as the duty to co-operate meetings have been held as joint meetings.</p>	
6	<p>Ongoing engagement with DTC partners</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should be in November or early December 2018, to coincide with the Wyre Forest Local Plan consultation on the Pre-Submission Publication version.</p>	WFDC will arrange a meeting in Nov/Dec 2018 to hold further DTC.
7	<p>AOB</p> <p>Wyre Forest Preferred Options consultation responses will be published as part of the next consultation due to be held later this year (November – December 2018).</p> <p>Black Country consultation responses for the Issues and Options stage were published end of June 2018, but without the officer comments. Officers are still working on these and will continue to do so as plan making work progresses.</p> <p>The Black Country LAs have held a joint meeting with the statutory consultees, i.e. Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency. They are thinking of holding these types of meetings every 6 months during plan making.</p> <p>Martin Dando will be leaving Dudley Council by end of this year and will be moving to Birmingham City Council. Martin to send WFDC contact details of his replacement for future Duty to Co-operate discussions.</p>	

Duty to Co-operate Meeting**18th July 2019****Present:**

Vicki Popplewell (Dudley)	Martin Dando (BCC)
Rachel Blanchard (Dudley)	Kate Bailey (WFDC)
Helen Smith (WFDC)	
Apologies:	
Ian Culley (Wolverhampton)	Uyen-Phan Han (BCC)
Andy Donnelly (WM Metropolitan Authorities)	Kelly Harris (South Staffs)
	Actions
1.	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Rachel Blanchard from Dudley Council was welcomed to the group. Martin Dando was also welcomed to the group in his new role at Birmingham City Council.</p>
2.	<p>Local Plan review progress and timetables</p> <p>HS ran through the LP timetable for WFDC. The pre-submission consultation was held last year in November/December 2018. The team has since been working through the consultation responses received and checking for any soundness issues for the plan. Due to some technical issues identified in the transport evidence base, the Pre-Submission consultation is being re-opened from 2nd September 2019 to 14th October 2019 (6 weeks). The EiP is expected to commence in Spring 2020 and adoption in late 2020, based on the current LDS timetable which was approved by Cabinet in June 2019.</p> <p>Black Country – Issues and Options (Summer 2017). The draft Black Country Plan to be published for consultation in Autumn 2020. The Publication stage will be published in 2021 and Submission in early 2022 for EiP. It is hoped that adoption would be in Spring 2023. This revised timescale has been agreed by ABCA, but is still subject to Cabinet approval for each LA. The current housing shortfall for the Black Country LAs is 26,000 after 2031. The Plan period will be until 2038 to allow a 15 year timescale after adoption.</p> <p>Black Country LAs continue to have encouraging engagement with South Staffs and also Shropshire. Telford is not willing to help with the shortfall at this stage.</p> <p>Birmingham City Council adopted their Plan in January 2017. The adopted Plan anticipates a review after 3 years of adoption, i.e. in January 2020. BCC are currently undertaking work to establish if a review of the Plan will be necessary. BCC intends to publish a paper later this year to show their position on this. The shortfall for housing is 38,000. Some of this has been dissipated because of what other plans have produced in their areas. The Birmingham SHLAA has also identified further sites. Changes to the Government's standard methodology for calculating housing need has also changed the housing need for Birmingham. Some neighbouring LA's have offered to take some of Birmingham's shortfall, which has helped the situation. BCC are therefore not expecting to have to undertake a</p>

	<p>complete review of their Plan in January 2020; it is more likely to be a partial review, but this will be confirmed in the paper that is published later this year.</p> <p>BCC are currently delivering on the Plan very well. They are meeting their expected targets. It is mainly private led housing being delivered, not much affordable housing. This is because there are a lot of viability issues.</p> <p>Shortfall – Solihull is looking to help out by offering approx. 2,000. Bromsgrove, Lichfield, South Staffs and Cannock are also looking to help with the shortfall for Birmingham.</p>	
3.	<p>Update on Black Country Green Belt Review</p> <p>The Green Belt assessment for the Black Country LAs is still being finalised. A call for sites is planned to take place in Autumn 2019.</p>	
4.	<p>Amendments to WFDC Pre-Submission Local Plan</p> <p>HS presented to the group the amendments to the WFDC Local Plan that were relevant to the DtC discussions. These amendments to the Local Plan were agreed by Cabinet in July 2019 and will be formally consulted on as part of the Pre-Submission consultation in September/October 2019.</p>	
5.	<p>Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>We discussed the need for a Statement of Common Ground and how this could be used to iron out any issues, following the re-opening of the Pre-Submission consultation.</p> <p>It was agreed that the SofCGs should be prepared ready for Submission Stage of the Wyre Forest Local Plan so that it is available for the examination.</p>	
6.	<p>Ongoing engagement with DtC partners</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should be in September/October 2019 to discuss the drafting of the Statement of Common Ground.</p>	<p>WFDC will arrange a meeting in September/October 2019 to hold further DTC.</p>
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The Black Country LAs have been undertaking some migration analysis. It was agreed that this information could be shared with WFDC.</p>	<p>Migration analysis to be sent by Vicki Popplewell to WFDC when this information is available.</p>

Duty to Co-operate Meeting**3rd October 2019****Present:**

Vicki Popplewell (Dudley)	Martin Dando (BCC)
Ian Culley (Wolverhampton)	Andy Donnelly (WM Metropolitan Authorities)
Helen Smith (WFDC)	Kate Bailey (WFDC)
Apologies:	
Uyen-Phan Han (BCC)	
	Actions
1.	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Andy Donnelly was also welcomed to the group.</p>
2.	<p>Local Plan review progress and timetables</p> <p>HS ran through the LP timetable for WFDC. The pre-submission consultation is currently open and closing on 14th October 2019. The EiP is expected to commence in Spring 2020 and adoption in late 2020, based on the current LDS timetable which was approved by Cabinet in June 2019.</p> <p>Black Country – The draft Black Country Plan to be published for consultation in Autumn 2020. The Publication stage will be published in 2021 and Submission in early 2022 for EiP. It is hoped that adoption would be in Spring 2023.</p> <p>The Black Country LAs are intending to publish a suite of evidence base documents in November 2019, which will include a Green Belt Study, an Urban Capacity Study, and ecology reports. <i>[Since the DtC meeting, the BCA has decided to postpone publishing their evidence base documents due to the General Election being held on 12th December 2019].</i></p> <p>In terms of the Black Country housing shortfall, they still need to find land for around 10,000 homes. They are currently working on their SHLAA's. They have tried increasing densities, but still need help from neighbouring LA's to accommodate the 10,000 homes shortfall. South Staffs have made an offer of 4,000 homes and are due to publish their Preferred Options soon. Shropshire Council is testing out the possibility of a 3,000 contribution. Shropshire has a strong relationship with Wolverhampton by rail and road and has a growing elderly population. Lichfield and Cannock could be helping in excess of 7,500. Telford Council is looking at reviewing their Local Plan and DtC discussions will be taking place.</p> <p>Birmingham City Council adopted their Plan in January 2017. There is commitment in the Birmingham Plan to monitor the situation in 3 years of adoption. The City Council has been writing to all the local authorities in the HMA and is preparing a Position Statement paper that will be presented to its Members by end of year and published. This will show a) what the shortfall is, b) will try to see where the shortfall can be met, c) potential suppliers, and d) there will be a plan review every 5 years.</p>

	<p>Shortfall – Solihull is looking to help out by offering approx. 2,000. Bromsgrove, Lichfield, South Staffs and Cannock are also looking to help with the shortfall for Birmingham. Bromsgrove’s adopted Plan has a commitment written into policy to helping with the shortfall through their local plan review.</p>	
3.	<p>Update on Black Country Green Belt Review</p> <p>The Green Belt Study has assessed the NPPF GB purposes; it also considers harm and landscape sensitivity. It looks at the quality of the Black Country Green Belt as there are areas of less significance that could be released. This study will help to crystallise the gap in terms of employment need and land supply. However unfortunately, the Green Belt Study won’t tell us how much land can be released. More clarity is therefore needed.</p>	
4.	<p>Amendments to WFDC Pre-Submission Local Plan (currently being consulted on as part of Reg 19 consultation)</p> <p>The Black Country LA’s and Birmingham City Council are broadly supportive of the changes that have been made to the Wyre Forest District Local Plan in the amendments document. In particular, they were supportive of the Blakedown railway station park and ride site.</p> <p>Both will be working up a final consultation response to be sent to WFDC before close of consultation on 14th October 2019.</p>	
5.	<p>Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>It was agreed that the SofCGs should be prepared ready for Submission Stage of the Wyre Forest Local Plan so that it is available for the examination.</p>	<p>HS to send draft SoCG for comments.</p>
6.	<p>Ongoing engagement with DtC partners</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should be in December 2019 to discuss the Statement of Common Ground.</p>	<p>WFDC will arrange a meeting in December 2019 to hold further DtC.</p>
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The Black Country LAs have been undertaking some migration analysis. It was agreed that this information could be shared with WFDC.</p>	<p>Migration analysis to be sent by Vicki Popplewell to WFDC when this information is available.</p>

Appendix 2

From: Local Plan [localplan@dudley.gov.uk]
Sent: 14 August 2017 16:43
To: LPR Consultation
Cc:
Subject: Wyre Forest Local Plan 2016-2034
Attachments: Wyre Forest Letter.docx
Categories: Blue Category

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Please find attached an officer response on behalf of the four Black Country Authorities

Best Regards



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To comment on a planning application, go to - <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/planning/planning-services/comment-on-a-planning-application/>

DMBC Strategic Planning & Historic Environment Web pages:
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/planning/>

The Dudley Historic Environment Record (HER) is now accessible on-line via the Heritage Gateway at
<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

The Dudley HER participates in the OASIS Project providing on-line access to archaeological grey literature. Please visit www.oasis.ac.uk

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Appendix 2

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Planning Policy
Wyre Forest District Council,
Wyre Forest House,
Finepoint Way,
Kidderminster,
DY11 7WF.

Our Ref: MD/WFRESPONSE

E-Mail: localplan@dudley.gov.uk

14th August, 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

Wyre Forest Local Plan Review 2016-2034. Response on behalf of the Black Country Local Authorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. Although emanating from Dudley Council, please accept this representation as an officer response on behalf of the four Black Country Authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton.

As a member of the GBSLEP, Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) participated in the initial PBA strategic Housing Needs Study work. Stage 2 of the SHNS was published in November 2014 and confirmed that whilst WFDC did not comprise part of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA), it had close links with it. Based on the earlier housing market areas work undertaken for the National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit and published by DCLG in 2010, WFDC was a best fit with the Worcester HMA along with the three South Worcestershire Authorities (Worcester, Malvern Hills and Wychavon), but as these authorities have an adopted plan, it follows that for the purpose of this round of local plan making, WFDC is a free-standing HMA.

The Preferred Options document summarises the responses to the Issues and Options consultation noting support for additional in-migration, particularly of working age people, due to the ageing population in WFDC. The Amion / Edge Analytics 2017 Objective Assessment of Need report verifies the ageing population and also identifies internal migration as being the principal source of population growth. Figure 2.3 and table 2.2 in this report show that the principal source of this is conurbation authorities within the GBBCHMA.

In considering economic factors, the Amion / Edge Analytics Report suggests an OAN of 300 dwellings per annum, compared to a demographically driven figure derived from the 2014 household projections of 199 dwellings per annum. The situation in the South Worcestershire Authorities mirrors that of WFDC in that they too are seeking economic led growth, which requires more people than demographic projections suggest and is reflected in the adopted plan. It follows, therefore, that the same must apply in WFDC.

Cont'd...

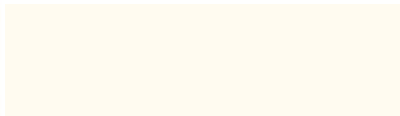
Appendix 2

It is now formally acknowledged in the adopted Birmingham Development Plan that there is a shortfall of 37,900 dwellings in the GBBCHMA arising from the city alone and evidence emerging from the Black Country Core Strategy may lead to the overall HMA shortfall increasing further. In the light of these growth pressures in the GBBCHMA and the established migration patterns with WFDC, it is logical to conclude that increased supply in WFDC is likely to be met by additional migration from the GBBCHMA; this is reflected in 8.12 of the Amion / Edge Analytics report. The recently published proposed modifications into the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan are relevant in this context in that the Inspector has acknowledged interactions between HMAs, PM 1 states that:

Given this relationship, and based on current evidence available at this time, the potential contribution of in-migration arising from the Local Plan's housing requirement towards meeting the needs of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBC HMA) has not been quantified. The Council will continue to consider this matter in the light of emerging evidence. It does not at present rule out the potential apportionment of some of the Local Plan's housing requirement towards meeting the needs of the GBBC HMA

As a consequence, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you further with a view to, at some point signing a Duty to Cooperate statement / Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant local authorities.

Yours Sincerely,



Helen Martin

**CHIEF OFFICER - REGENERATION AND ENTERPRISE
DUDLEY COUNCIL on behalf of the four Black Country Authorities of Dudley,
Sandwell, Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton**

17 December 2018

Planning Policy
Wyre Forest District Council
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster
DY11 7WF

Dear Planning Policy Team,

**Wyre Forest Local Plan Review 2016-2036 (Pre-Submission Publication)
Response on behalf of the Black Country Local Authorities**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. Please accept this consultation response on behalf of the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA), composed of Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC and the City of Wolverhampton Council.

The Black Country authorities responded to the Preferred Options Consultation and, as part of this response, expressed the need to agree a Duty to Cooperate Statement / Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant local authorities. However, this has not been progressed. Therefore, the Black Country authorities now wish to submit a formal holding objection to the Plan until issues relating to the Duty to Cooperate are resolved.

In particular, the Plan makes no commitment to contribute towards meeting the evidenced unmet housing and employment needs of neighbouring authorities, including the Black Country authorities. This is disappointing and does not address the representations made by the Black Country local authorities to previous consultations. The Black Country authorities request that the Plan should make provision to help meet the unmet housing and employment needs of the Black Country, either in the form of the identification of additional sites or through a firm commitment to an early review of the Plan.

Local Plans are required to meet the tests of soundness as required by paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which means that they are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The tests of soundness which are of concern are as follows:

Positively prepared: the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;

Effective: the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic priorities.

Paragraph 1.16 of the Plan acknowledges the Council's duty to meet the new tests of soundness and to comply with the Duty to Cooperate. Policy 6A (B) states *"As required by the Duty to Cooperate, due consideration will be given, through future review of the WFDC Local Plan where appropriate, to the housing needs of neighbouring local authorities in circumstances when it has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District Area."*

Although the Plan acknowledges the importance of meeting the unmet housing needs of neighbouring authorities, we do not consider that the pre-submission Plan goes far enough to fully address this issue and therefore request that specific amendments are made to the pre-submission Plan to ensure that it is sound.

In light of the evidenced unmet housing needs in the neighbouring Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area, the Black Country authorities would expect Wyre Forest to allocate specific sites to help meet this need or to make a firm commitment to an early review of the Local Plan which could help meet this need, with specific timescales. Failure to do so would be contrary to the requirements of the tests of soundness.

Policy 7A has identified two areas of development restraint (ADR's) that could be released for residential development. Additionally, Policy 7B has identified "Reserved Housing Sites", should the Council fail to provide a 5 year housing supply or meet the housing delivery test. We request that Wyre Forest should first look to allocate these sites for housing during the Plan period to help meet the unmet housing needs of the Black Country.

Paragraph 1.18 states that there is a need to prepare a Statement of Common Ground for the purposes of examination. Such a Statement should be prepared prior to publication of the Plan. In the absence of the Statement of Common Ground, therefore, the Plan could be deemed to fail to fully comply with the tests of soundness. Paragraph 1.18 also states the Council's commitment to continuously work with neighbouring and nearby local authorities, especially to address unmet housing needs. However, the Plan does not make it clear how this process will be undertaken.

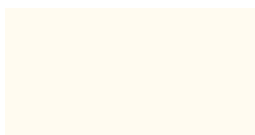
Paragraph 6.11 of the plan reads *"It is clearly demonstrated by the HNS (2018) that, usually in the West Midlands, the Wyre Forest area is co-terminus with the Wyre Forest Housing Market Area. As such the housing requirement reflected by this Plan is based solely on that required for the needs of the Wyre Forest District. However, this does not negate the need for the Plan to be prepared in consultation with the neighbouring and nearby authorities (e.g. other Worcestershire Districts, Birmingham and the Black Country, South Staffordshire, Shropshire): accordingly Wyre Forest District has cooperated with authorities that are both adjoining and beyond in order to consider strategic priorities for the delivery of homes, including cross boundary requirements. The evidence base documents the joint working and other activities demonstrating effective co-operation consistent with the Duty to Cooperate legal requirements and the NPPF".*

In summary, the Black Country authorities do not consider that the Plan adequately addresses the Duty to Cooperate and the tests of soundness set out in the National

Planning Policy Framework. The commitment to continuously consult and engage with adjoining authorities does not sufficiently deal with Duty to Cooperate issues. In particular, in order for the Plan to be sound, there must be an inbuilt flexibility in the Wyre Forest housing supply up to 2036 to help meet the unmet housing needs of neighbouring and nearby authorities.

The Black Country authorities would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with Wyre Forest District Council with a view to preparing and agreeing a Duty to Cooperate Statement / Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant local authorities.

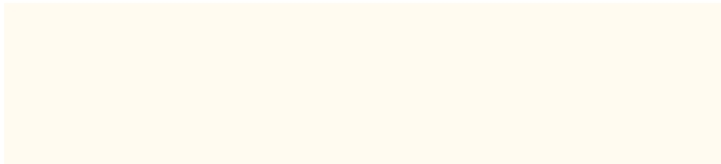
Yours faithfully



Michele Ross

Lead Planning Manager (Sub-Regional Strategy), Planning

on behalf of the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA)





Association of Black Country Authorities
Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton

Helen Smith
Spatial Planning Manager
Wyre Forest District Council
By email : Helen.Smith@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Dear Helen

Wyre Forest Pre-submission Draft Plan

Thank you for consulting the Black Country authorities on the Wyre Forest Pre-submission Draft Plan.

This letter is to confirm that following our meeting on 4 December 2019, the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) endorsed the officer response sent to you on 10 October 2019.

We would welcome the opportunity to continue to work with Wyre Forest District Council in a positive and constructive manner through the preparation of the Local Plan Review.

We trust you find these comments helpful and look forward to further discussions with you.

If you would like to discuss our response please contact Ian Culley, Lead Planning Manager at Wolverhampton Council on 01902 555636 or via email ian.culley@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Patrick Harley
Leader
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor Mike Bird
Leader
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor Yvonne Davies
Leader
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor Ian Brookfield
Leader
Wolverhampton City Council

Dr Helen Paterson, Secretary to ABCA
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council,
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Appendix 4

ABCA Response to Wyre Forest Pre-submission Draft Plan

Housing Representation

The Black Country Authorities broadly support the commitment that consideration will be given to a future early review of the WFDC Local Plan where it is established, as part of the Black Country Plan review process, that the Black Country cannot meet its own housing and employment land needs to 2038. However, you will recall that we wrote to Wyre Forest DC (via your Chief Executive) in July 2018, when we advised that our work indicated there was likely to be a significant shortfall in the ability of the Black Country's urban areas to accommodate projected housing growth and we asked for cooperation towards meeting the anticipated shortfall in capacity. Our preferred position would have been for the WFDC Local Plan to have acknowledged the potential housing shortfall from the emerging Black Country Plan evidence base (with further evidence to be published in November 2019) ¹ and attributed some of the WFDC's additional housing allocation to meeting the Black Country's needs.

As part of process for agreeing the Statement of Common Ground with Wyre Forest District Council, we would like to explore the point at which an early review of the WFDC plan will be triggered, in accordance with the emerging Draft Black Country Plan and the associated evidence base.

The Leaders of the BC authorities have endorsed this response in principle through a meeting of the Association of Black Country Authorities on 25th September 2019.

Transport Representation

The A456, from Birmingham to Kidderminster through the Black Country, is already stressed at peak periods, particularly at M5 Junction 3, Grange Island and Hagley. Projected housing growth being provided for in the conurbation and in Bromsgrove, as well as in your authority's plan, will place additional demands on this corridor.

To help meet growing demands for movement in this corridor the transport strategy for the West Midlands conurbation, as articulated in 'Movement for Growth', includes the provision for a bus rapid transit, known as Sprint, between Birmingham and Quinton along with the provision of Park & Ride in the Quinton area to serve this route. The future extension of rapid transit in the Walsall to Stourbridge Corridor is also envisaged within the plan period.

Through Midlands connect, the Midlands Rail Hub proposal looks to increase capacity on the Snow Hill lines both through the provision of additional platforms at Snow Hill and Rowley Regis but also in the longer term through electrification and more frequent services. These developments will add to the demands on the A456.

The A456 forms part of the West Midlands Key Route Network and a study is underway to bring forward measures to improve the management of this route, which includes a short section beyond the Dudley boundary to the junction at Hagley. However, these resulting measures will not by themselves deal with the future demands on this corridor. Rail and associated strategic park & ride facilities will have an important role to play. We would therefore like to place on record our support for the proposed development of a park & ride facility at Blakedown. This should intercept trips, particularly those bound for Birmingham, much earlier and will make better use of existing and future rail capacity on the Birmingham-Worcester route. In turn, this should provide relief to the highway network including the heavily congested junctions in Hagley.

¹ Dates now changed due to General election.