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**South Worcestershire Development Plan Examination**

**Duty to Cooperate Statement (CD 004): Supplement  
(February 2014)**

**South Worcestershire Councils and North  
Worcestershire Councils**

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**SWC: 27 February 2014**

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## **South Worcestershire Development Plan**

### **Duty to Cooperate Statement (CD 004): Supplement (February 2014)**

#### **South Worcestershire Councils and North Worcestershire Councils Objective Assessment of Housing Need**

##### **Context**

- 1 The Worcestershire SHMA (2012) (CD 090) was submitted as part of the evidence base with the South Worcestershire Development Plan Submission Document (CD 001).
- 2 In his assessment of the evidence provided by CD 090 the Inspector considered that although the approach was generally sound, there were a number of data-related shortcomings in the document and further work should be undertaken on employment forecasting. Following the Initial Hearing sessions the Inspector helpfully outlined the revisions to the SHMA in his letter (EX 400) and Interim Conclusions (EX 401). In identifying this way forward the Inspector invited the SWCs to provide an updated Objective Assessment of Housing Need (OAHN, "the study").
- 3 In their Response to the Inspector's Initial Conclusions (EX 407) the South Worcestershire Councils (SWCs) committed themselves to the provision of an updated OAHN by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

##### **Commissioning and conduct of the work**

- 4 The SHMA (2012) had been prepared as a county-wide housing market area assessment to evidence the production of Local Plans across Worcestershire. Therefore, the South Worcestershire Councils identified the partial revision of SHMA for part of the county as a potential Duty to Co-operate matter and invited the north Worcestershire Councils to prepare jointly the project specification for the updated OAHN. This approach recognised that the update should be prepared in a consistent manner across the county of Worcestershire.
- 5 This resulting specification addresses a number of factors including:
  - The importance of CD 090 and the various underpinning scenarios to the evidence bases for the SWDP and Local Plans for the North Worcestershire Councils
  - Given the pan-County coverage of CD 090 it would be inevitable that the observations of the SWDP inspector would be raised in relation to Local Plans in the north of the County and therefore should be addressed as soon as possible
  - The need to ensure continuing consistency across the neighbouring authorities in light of the plan examination process
  - The need to identify and address any potential cross-boundary implications arising from any updated scenarios, conclusions and recommendations in the report.
- 6 The Northern Districts accepted the invite to commission an update to the OAHN on a full cost-sharing basis. Prior to commissioning the work from Edge Analytics and Amion the Northern Districts were fully involved in the finalisation of the project brief and inception meeting of the study. There has been full co-operation between the

Worcestershire Councils in the production of the updated evidence submitted to the SWDP hearing.

- 7 The work commissioned recognises that demographic and jobs change circumstances in the South and North of the County of Worcestershire vary. There is therefore in-built flexibility in both original and the updated studies to enable different scenarios to be applied on a sub-regional basis whilst employing the same core data and methodologies including sensitivity scenarios.
- 8 The limited window to undertake the partial updating of the SHMA (2012) has meant that updating has necessarily been carried out on a phased basis. At the time of writing the North Worcestershire Councils are finalising the north Worcestershire element of the study.
- 9 The Worcestershire Councils recognise that further work will be required by the South Worcestershire Councils to address any resulting uplift in the South Worcestershire housing requirement. However, there is general agreement that the level of potential of uplift suggested by the evidence submitted by the South Worcestershire Councils is unlikely to give rise to unmet housing need beyond South Worcestershire or any specific requirements for cross boundary development with North Worcestershire. There is however, an on-going commitment from the Worcestershire Councils to identify and address any significant strategic issues, in particular infrastructure requirements, which may arise from an increased housing requirement for South Worcestershire.

#### **Further Work in Bromsgrove and Redditch Districts**

- 10 Whilst the Worcestershire SMHA (2012) was based on the Worcestershire Housing Market Area it is accepted that there is a degree of overlap in North Worcestershire and specifically Bromsgrove and Redditch districts with the Birmingham metropolitan area housing market area.
- 11 Both Redditch and Bromsgrove Districts consider that further additional work will be required to supplement the 2014 Worcestershire study to address the specific circumstances influencing housing requirements in these districts. Specifically, Redditch and Bromsgrove Districts intend to supplement the Worcestershire migration scenarios to consider the implications for housing need arising from internal migration within the Birmingham metropolitan housing market area (which includes Redditch and Bromsgrove Districts) and from potential unmet housing need arising from Birmingham.
- 12 The carrying out of supplementary work in Redditch and Bromsgrove Districts also recognises the participation of these Districts in the Housing Study currently being undertaken by the authorities within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area which will be reporting later in 2014 and its implications for plan making assessed in due course.
- 13 The Worcestershire Councils consider that, until the GBLSEP work is completed (anticipated mid-May 2014), it will not be possible to quantify any implications or any significant strategic issues for Worcestershire as a whole. There is an on-going commitment from the Worcestershire Councils to identify and address any significant strategic issues, in particular infrastructure requirements, which may arise from an increased housing requirement for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area. Any displaced housing need requirement implications for Worcestershire arising from the GBSLEP study will initially fall to those Worcestershire Districts with a primary housing

market relationship with the GBSLEP study authorities. The SWCs (which are defined by GBSLEP as having a secondary relationship) will, through the on-going DtC process, continue to monitor the work being undertaken within the GBSLEP area and options to be generated for accommodating housing needs within that LEP area and exceptionally beyond it.

- 14 The Greater Birmingham and Solihull “Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth” recognises that work on the preparation of individual development plans is at different stages and that there is no intention for the GBSLEP work to undermine local plans already at an advanced stage of preparation. It is understood by the Worcestershire authorities that the GBSLEP Plan, when finalised, will facilitate and accommodate the objectively assessed requirements of both the growing and diversifying economy of that area within the GBSLEP area, or exceptionally, by agreement in neighbouring areas. Consequently, the North Worcestershire Districts, and in particular Redditch and Bromsgrove Districts, will keep the position under review but are not, at present, identifying any additional significant strategic cross boundary issues beyond those already identified in earlier DTC statements submitted to the SWDP Examination.

#### **SWDP Examination implications**

- 15 The Worcestershire authorities believe that there is nothing new arising from the South Worcestershire OAHN that would require any changes to the SWDP Examination Inspector’s Interim Conclusions. They do however recognise, under the Duty to Co-operate, the need for ongoing liaison between relevant authorities regarding the scale and options for any potential unmet need.