

Examination of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

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7 October 2025

Mr Macloed and Mr Rudge

South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

Dear Mr Macloed and Mr Rudge

Examination of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

1. We are writing further to the hearing held on 4 September 2025 to set out our post hearings advice in respect of the matters considered. In doing so we have had regard to the further written statements, the various documents which have been published on the examination website and all that we have heard at the hearing. We thank the Councils and representors for providing the additional information we have requested to assist us in our examination.
2. However, the examination is not yet concluded and consultation on main modifications is still to take place. Therefore, these comments are without prejudice to our final conclusions on the Plan. We will set out our full reasoning in our report of the examination.

Policy SWDPR 54 Mitton

3. We are now satisfied that the proposed allocation at Mitton can be made sound and legally compliant through main modifications which we will seek to agree with the Councils. The main modifications will be subject to consultation which will provide the opportunity for people to comment on the proposed changes to the Plan, having regard to the latest published evidence.

Whether the Councils' recalculation of local housing need (using the standard method) as set out in EXAM 98A is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and national planning guidance?

4. It is clear from the written statements and what we heard at the hearing, that the recalculation of local housing need has been done in a way consistent with the relevant national policy and guidance. We do not take a different view in regard to local housing need or the housing requirement to that set out in our letter of 23 June 2025 (EXAM 99).

Housing land supply - deliverability of the Worcester South allocation

5. In our post hearings letter, we set out why we considered that there would not be a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against the housing requirement with a 10% buffer on the adoption of the Plan. At that point we found a supply of 5,913 dwellings, against the five year housing land supply (5YHLS) requirement of 6,479 dwellings.
6. Planning permission has since been granted for 70 dwellings under application reference 21/01217/FUL within the Worcester South allocation, whilst planning application reference 22/00714/FUL should add a further 48 dwellings to the 5YHLS. We are satisfied that there is clear evidence for 118 dwellings coming forward from these sites in the 5YHLS.
7. There is no doubt that progress is being made towards the implementation of planning permission reference 13/00656/OUT, which provides for 2,204 dwellings at the Worcester South allocation. Condition 4 of 13/00656/OUT includes that application for the approval of the reserved matters for the first phase of development (subject to condition 6 phasing) has to be made within 3 years of the date of the permission (26 October 2022).
8. The Councils have confirmed that a reserved matters application has now been made and validated (M/25/01398/RM) for site infrastructure which would enable the first phases of development. Would the Councils please confirm whether the receipt of this reserved matters application is sufficient to meet the requirements of condition 4 of 13/00656/OUT in respect of the submission of reserved matters, and that the planning permission would not lapse later this month as a consequence?
9. Given the progress that is being made towards the delivery of 13/00656/OUT, (and on the assumption that it does not lapse) we consider that it would be justified to include a contribution from it in the 5YHLS.
10. Given that there remain a significant number of planning conditions to be discharged, that approval of reserved matters for the necessary infrastructure is needed, and that the submission of reserved matters applications for housing in the relevant sub phases have to be made, we do not agree with the Councils and site developer as to the amount of housing which would come forward in the 5YHLS period. Instead, we consider that 13/00656/OUT would make a more modest contribution in the last 2 years of the 5YHLS period, which when added to 21/01217/FUL and 22/00714/FUL, would provide sufficient dwellings for there to be a 5YHLS on adoption with a buffer of 5%.

11. There is not however the clear evidence for us to find that the Councils can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites through the plan on adoption (which requires a 10% buffer) as per paragraph 74 b of the NPPF.

Next steps for the examination

12. We will continue to work with the Councils to agree the schedule of proposed main modifications for consultation. The main modifications should be subject to sustainability appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment as necessary.
13. On receipt of this letter, the Councils should make it available to all interested parties by adding it to the examination website. However, we are not seeking, nor envisage accepting, any responses to this letter from any other parties to the examination.

Yours sincerely

P Lewis E Worthington

INSPECTORS