

Examination of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

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28 November 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 – Duty to Cooperate

1. We are writing to you following the publication of the written ministerial statement (WMS) of 27 November 2025¹ by Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, providing an update on the implementation of Government reforms to the plan-making system in England, and his letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate of the same date titled Local plan reforms – Update to the Duty to Co-operate².
2. We concluded in our post hearings advice of 23 June 2025 that at that time we were broadly satisfied that to date, the Councils have complied with the legal requirements for plan making, other than the outstanding Habitats Regulations Assessment issues relating to Policy SWDPR 54 Mitton, which have subsequently been addressed.
3. We are therefore satisfied that the legal requirements for plan making, including the Duty to Cooperate have been complied with to date. Whilst the Duty is to be abolished, if this occurs before we bring the examination to a close with the issuing of our report, we will set out in our report our reasoning in respect of whether the Plan is consistent with national planning policy for maintaining effective co-operation as it is a soundness consideration.
4. Do the Councils have any comments on the implications for the examination of the Government's intent to abolish the Duty to Cooperate?

¹ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2025-11-27/hcws1104>

²

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69286415345e31ab14ecf67d/Local_Plans_letter_to_PIN_S.pdf

5. On receipt of this letter, the Councils should make it available to all interested parties by adding it to the examination website. It should also add the WMS and letter to PINS to the examination library. 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