



SHENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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Draft report of Public Meeting to discuss Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Strategic Growth Study and Lichfield District Council's Local Plan Review 2020-2036.

Shenstone Village Hall Tuesday 5th June 7.45pm

David Salter, Chairman of Shenstone Parish Council & District Councillor for Shenstone, chaired the meeting with representation from David Thompson, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Planning & Property Committee Shenstone Parish Council, County Councillor David Smith, District Councillor Elizabeth Little, Senior Officers from Lichfield District Council Ashley Baldwin & Maxine Turley, Lichfield District Councils Leader Mike Wilcox & Ian Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Development Services).

Over 150 residents were present as well as eight members of the Parish Council & the Clerk.

Cllr Salter began: The reason for the meeting was to allay the concerns and clear the confusion and misunderstanding following three, seemingly related documents becoming available in the public domain.

- 1- Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area Strategic Locations Study 2018.
- 2- Lichfield Local Plan Review Consultation
- 3- A speculative marketing document prepared by an Estate Agent proposing housing developments south of Fotherley.

Ashley Baldwin made a presentation explaining that the Local Plan has to be reviewed every five years but that the review has begun looking at housing requirements, economic growth including jobs, maintaining & protecting the environment and infrastructure.

Birmingham has a significant shortfall in housing and this has been a significant push factor for looking at the Local Plan early as Lichfield, as a neighbouring authority, has a duty to co-operate. A study has been prepared- The Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study- covering 13 local planning authorities to identify potential sites for development. Each site is categorised based on various factors, as red, amber or green- green being a site offering the most opportunity for development. "Around Shenstone" is shown as green.

It was stressed that at this stage all LDC are doing is looking at the plans- they are not proposals- and their duty is to assess not agree. The preferred option consultation is scheduled for Jan 2019.

Cllr David Thompson asked for much more clarity from the review. **The evidence base needs to clearly distinguish between the needs of the LDC population and the contribution to be given to the needs of the Birmingham or Greater Birmingham populations. There is real ambiguity which is confusing at best & conspiracy at worst. He also asked why the review is happening now when one was completed recently & already identified all urban supply sites.**

The Birmingham Strategic Locations Study (BSLS) has over 20 alternative supply sites identified and evaluated and none of those is cross-compared to the LDC proposed growth options. The collaboration approach needs to extend to the assessment and prioritisation of the alternative sites in other local authority areas.

The Shenstone Area New Settlement should be omitted as it is (a) the only new settlement option of three in the Green Belt (b) is the only new settlement option breaching the safeguarding from encroachment policy (c) is the only new settlement option breaching Strategic Separation policy and (d) is the only new settlement option breaching Local Separation policy. These are designations made clear in the GBHMA, there is no reference or impact assessment of these designations in the LDC review.

Cllr Thompson also highlighted his significant concern over the existence of the speculative marketing document prepared by an Estate Agent proposing housing developments around Fotherley. Mr Baldwin responded that it is a fishing document which has not even been submitted to the authority. He stated that it would be remiss to not look at Birmingham's needs now. Also, all other options have to be exhausted before any consideration to develop on greenbelt land so objections on these grounds are very strong.

County Councillor Smith also requested much more clarification in data as well as being appalled at the quality of the consultation and that the consultation period itself should be extended.

He also voiced significant concerns about the sustainability of any plan as there is not the infrastructure to support it.

Cllr Salter expressed the importance of any developments being as distant as possible from the existing Birmingham boundary to prevent the possibility of any of Lichfield's land, having Birmingham's housing on it, being absorbed into Birmingham at a future Boundary Review

There then followed a number of questions and comments from the public. These were predominantly focused on the poor communication of the consultation and repeated requests for the consultation period to be extended. Comments included:

- Consultation needs to be proactive not reactive.
- The Council must be in breach of its communications policy
- The information is not easily accessible
- It is impossible to comment without knowing more detail
- Birmingham should take care of themselves
- Not in my back yard

A resident has been in touch with the Campaign for Rural England who are very concerned about possible developments.

Richard Smith spoke on behalf of "Save our Shenstone" & encouraged everyone to participate in the consultation. All details and links will appear on the SOS Facebook Page & on the Parish Council website. Hard copies will be available in the Parish Council office for anyone without IT access.

Ashley Baldwin, when asked what the checkpoints are between now & the preferred option deadline of Jan 2019, stated that they are happy to come back with updates if invited by the Parish Council.

Cllr Salter thanked everyone for attending & the meeting closed at 9.25.