

Statement of Common Ground  
between Lichfield District Council  
and Tamworth Borough Council  
Lichfield District Local Plan 2040  
September 2022



## Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Tamworth Borough Council

### Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Tamworth Borough Council (TBC), hereafter referred to as “the parties” to inform the submission of the Lichfield Local Plan 2040 (LP2040).
2. This SoCG has been prepared in accordance with national guidance and is intended to cover matters of strategic importance relevant to the parties. It documents those matters agreed by the parties regarding the LP2040 and any areas which remain subject to further discussion and therefore will be updated accordingly. This Statement of Common Ground covers the following matters:
  - Housing (including housing needs across the GBBCHMA);
  - Gypsy and traveller accommodation;
  - Employment land;
  - Transport and infrastructure matters; and
  - Natural and historic environment including designated sites.

### Geography covered by Statement of Common Ground

3. This SoCG covers the Local Planning Authority areas of Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council.
4. These authorities are both within the Greater Birmingham & Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA). The GBBCHMA is made up of 14 authorities including Birmingham City Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, North Warwickshire District Council, Redditch District Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Stratford upon Avon District Council, Tamworth District Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Wolverhampton City Council.

### Key Strategic Matters

5. The parties have had on-going dialogue on cross-boundary planning issues over the course of many years, discussing a broad range of planning issues including strategic matters. The key strategic matters of discussion between LDC and TBC pertain to housing provision, (including housing needs across the GBBCHMA); gypsy and traveller accommodation; transport and infrastructure matters; and matters relating to the natural and historic environment including designated sites. These discussions have informed the development of adopted plans and other related documents.
6. The following issues are considered to be the key strategic matters with regards to on-going plan making, although there are other issues which may have cross boundary impacts. Both authorities are committed to further dialogue moving forward, not just limited to the periods of plan preparation.

## Housing

7. It is common ground that the adopted Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy provided 500 dwellings to assist TBC with meeting the housing requirements within the adopted Tamworth Borough Council Local Plan 2006-2031 (adopted Tamworth Local Plan) and that this formed part of the wider GBBCHMA unmet need as detailed in the GBBCHMA Position Statement. This agreement was confirmed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the authorities and North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) in October 2014 (**Appendix A**). This was supplemented by a SoCG (dated September 2018) between LDC, TBC and NWBC regarding housing and employment arising from Tamworth (**Appendix B**). The SoCG confirmed that any further dwellings to meet TBC need would be considered through the review of the LP2040. Both the MoU (2014) and SoCG (2018) relate to the adopted Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough Local Plans.
8. It is common ground that TBC have not, at the time of this statement, identified a requirement for assistance to meet their housing need within their emerging Local Plan and have not approached LDC in this regard.
9. LDC along with TBC have been active members of the GBBCHMA Technical Officers Group since it was established and both authorities have contributed to discussions relating to the delivery of unmet housing need within in the HMA.
10. The GBBCHMA authorities published a position statement in 2020 and addendum in December 2021 in respect of housing needs. This position statement details the need arising from the GBBCHMA and in particular Birmingham City and how this need has primarily now been met. Additionally, further emerging unmet need arising from the Black Country authorities is detailed within the position statement, this emerging need has yet to be tested at Examination.
11. LDC as part of the LP2040 are proposing to contribute 2,665 to the HMA shortfall from 2027. Of the 2,665 homes, a capped contribution of 2,000 is to be made for the Black Country authorities'. This contribution is considered by LDC to be appropriate and deliverable within the District in addition to LDC's Local Housing Need (LHN) of 7,062 dwellings between 2018 and 2040. TBC are broadly supportive of LDC's approach towards their housing provision within the HMA. TBC agree that LDC have satisfied the legal duty to cooperate test.
12. It is acknowledged that Lichfield District Council published consultation material and invited comments relating to its Local Plan 2040 process at the following stages:
  - Scope, Issues and Options – April to June 2018
  - Preferred Options and Policy Directions – January to March 2020
  - Preferred Options – November 2019 to January 2020
  - Publication Version – July to August 2021
13. At each stage TBC have been consulted on these documented and responded as they considered appropriate.
14. LDC wrote to neighbouring authorities including TBC in 2020 to ascertain if sites beyond the Green Belt in neighbouring authorities were available and able to assist LDC in meeting its housing requirements outside of the Green Belt. TBC confirmed that no such sites were

available due to its own identified shortfall in the adopted Tamworth Local Plan and so TBC would be unable to make a contribution towards meeting LDC's housing requirements.

## Other Strategic Matters / Cross boundary matters

### Employment

15. It is common ground that the adopted Lichfield District Local Plan Allocations (at paragraph 6.5) provides for 6.5 hectares of employment land to assist TBC with meeting the requirements within the adopted Tamworth Local Plan as set out within the SoCG between LDC, TBC and NWBC dated September 2018.
16. The LP 2040 proposes to deliver approximately 85 hectares of land for employment uses to meet its own employment land requirements. The LP 2040 (at paragraph 9.5) notes that evidence demonstrates that beyond the land proposed for allocation there is a limited supply of potential further options for employment growth within Lichfield District.
17. It is agreed by the parties that LDC has not approached TBC for assistance in accommodating employment land need. It is agreed by the parties that TBC has not approached LDC for assistance in accommodating employment land need beyond that set out at paragraph 15.
18. It is agreed by the parties that the LP 2040 does not seek to provide employment land for potential wider unmet needs and that limited options are available to meet employment land needs beyond those identified within the Local Plan 2040.

### Transport and infrastructure

19. LDC and TBC are committed to continue working together in partnership, with the aim of ensuring the necessary transport and highways improvements to support sustainable growth across the housing market area. Both parties will keep each other fully informed of any changes to highways improvements and will continue to liaise on this matter where appropriate.
20. Representations made by TBC considered that the LP 2040 was not justified as highways evidence was not available at the time of the LP 2040s publication and such evidence is of particular importance for sites adjacent to Tamworth where highways capacity is a concern for TBC members. TBC notes that the reasons for the delay in obtaining this evidence were beyond the control of LDC and is content that Highway evidence continues to be progressed as expediently as possible. It is agreed by both parties that the highways evidence is a matter of soundness rather than a failure to comply with the legal duty and will be tested through the LP2040 examination.
21. Within representations to the LP 2040 TBC stated that it was considered the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) had not been complied with. Representations stated TBC acknowledged regular meetings take place between officers under the DtC do discuss strategic cross-boundary planning matters, but that issues related to the permitted development at Arkall farm have yet to be resolved. The parties agree that the matter of mitigation of cross border impacts of that particular development have yet to be resolved following the public inquiry, and remain committed to working together on such issues in line with the 2018 SoCG. The parties also agree that the specific issue of Arkall Farm relates to the adopted plan and should not unduly delay the examination in public of the LP 2040. Issues relating to cross boundary infrastructure associated with LP 2040 are covered in the following paragraph.

22.

Representations made by TBC state it is considered the LP 2040 is not effective as further work is required to ensure that cross-boundary issues are dealt with through the plan-making process and are not deferred until a planning application is submitted. TBC's representations seek assurance that appropriate infrastructure will be provided to mitigate potential impacts. TBC are of the view that the approach used for the previously adopted Lichfield Local Plan creates difficulties for them and are seeking a mechanism within the LP 2040 to ensure appropriate mitigation is secured. LDC consider the LP 2040 contains sufficient policies to ensure appropriate infrastructure is delivered as part of development within the Local Plan. Both parties acknowledge the other's position and agree that, as a matter of soundness, this will be tested through the LP2040 examination.

### Gypsy & Traveller Provision

23. LDC will support the delivery of a minimum of seven residential pitches to meet the identified needs of gypsies and travellers to 2040 including meeting the identified need for four of these pitches by 2024. The LP2040 does not identify sufficient sites to meet these requirements.
24. LDC has previously written to neighbouring authorities including TBC to ascertain if authorities were able to assist in meeting the unmet need in relation to accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. TBC confirmed they were unable to assist in meeting this unmet need.
25. LDC and TBC will continue to cooperate with neighbouring authorities within the HMA area in relation to housing matters, including gypsy and traveller provision.


### Signatures

We confirm that the information in this Statement of Common Ground reflects the joint working to address identified strategic matters that has been undertaken between Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council. The authorities will continue to work together to address cross-boundary issues

**Lichfield District Council**

**Name: Councillor Iain Eadie**

**Position: Deputy Leader**


**Signature:** 

**Date: 29/06/2022**

**Tamworth Borough Council**

**Name: Councillor Stephen Doyle**

**Position: Portfolio Holder for Skills, Planning,  
Economy & Waste**

**Signature:** 

**Date: 29/09/2022**