

Shropshire Council Local Plan Scoping Consultation

Note of a meeting held in at the Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton, on 7 July 2026 from 6.30pm to 7.40pm

Councillor Mark Redhead, Mayor, Church Stretton Town Council, chaired the meeting, introduced the speaker and oversaw the question and answer session that followed the presentation.

Eddie West, Planning Policy and Strategy Manager, Shropshire Council (SC) gave a slide presentation on the consultation process and timetable (about 35 minutes). This was followed by questions and answers from the audience for about 35 minutes.

Mr West offered to send the slide set to Church Stretton Town Council so it could be accessed locally.

Questions asked and answers given

Question 1 was about connectivity, providing infrastructure such as roads before approving land for housing development and avoiding the proliferation of wind farms or solar farms.

Answer: *SC is obliged to consult many others within and beyond the Council so as to assess if it is realistic for a site to be developed. This will include highways, Environment Agency etc.*

Question 2: It is known that there are capital funds for new provision such as additional drainage. The questioner had been told there were no revenue funds for maintenance – therefore, many local drainage systems are working poorly leading to localised flooding.

Answer: *this is acknowledged. It is a prior requirement on SC to ensure existing systems can take an additional load from new development.*

Question 3: No mention was made in the presentation of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Answer: *there was reference to the Shropshire Hills National Landscape Strategy which is one of the supporting strategies SC must take account of. There was a specific policy in the former draft Local Plan (which had failed at examination). If this consultation gave rise to a request for a specific policy, SC would consider that.*

Question 4: Are the various policies and factors that SC has to take into account ranked?

Answer: *no, there is no ranking.*

Question 5: how will SC conduct community engagement? Not everyone can access online materials - will there be site visits for sites proposed for development?

Answer: *there will not be site visits, but local meetings such as this one tonight will be held.*

Question 6: Under the previous draft Local Plan, SC had consulted with Black Country planning authorities who wished to have part of their housing target met from within Shropshire. With the increased targets for house building, will this happen again and add further pressure on Shropshire?

Answer: *revised planning policy guidance no longer mandates that a Local Planning Authority (LPA) has to consult, but LPAs are still expected to consult and SC will do so.*

Question 7: Given the staffing resource allocated to the development of the Plan as shown in the Project Initiation Document, is the 30-month timescale to produce the Plan realistic?

Answer: *The 30-month timescale is demanding. SC has additional resource coming on stream - a senior planner post is open for application and SC will have planning graduates coming into the team. The current administration at SC regards the Plan as a high priority.*

With these challenges, greater weight is put onto the evidence base for the Plan.

Question 8: It is clear there will not be enough people resource. There is a lot of work needed to review the evidence base much which is out of date and should not be relied upon. Evidence is available from Town Councils – will this be drawn on? Local knowledge is very important.

Answer: *Yes, some of the evidence base is out of date. SC will take a proportionate approach – some evidence has a longer life span than other sources.*

Question 9: Is housing need calculated nationally? Does SC use the Rightmove data which is of questionable reliability?

Answer: *the calculation of housing need has been done nationally for England to a new formula which SC has to accept. The Rightmove data relates to housing demand not housing need - the two have different meanings in planning terms. Warwick University has studied the Rightmove data.*

Question 10: In calculating connectivity for a community, does that take account of changes in provision - for example, a bus service there when the Plan is drafted might be gone in a few years.

Answer: *the regular reviews of a Local Plan - five yearly – allow for this data to be updated.*

Question 11: How does the new house building target for Shropshire compare to the numbers built in the county? Will the new target lead to relaxation of some policies?

Answer: *The average build numbers over 20 years is 1400-1500 PA, so well below the new target of 2,400. Shropshire had an 86% increase in its target some 18 months ago.*

There is no general relaxation of policies, although the current Government has defined “grey belt” as a new designation for England which is a form of relaxation. It is not expected that policies for National Landscapes will be relaxed – the presumption against major development is very likely to stay in place.

How and when to respond

Mr West confirmed that the consultation would close on 15 July 2026; the online Survey Monkey” questionnaire would come down then. Acknowledging that this consultation session was taking place far into the consultation period, residents could still send in comments by other routes but should do so within a week of 15 July.