

Pattingham site, Wolverhampton Road

Written representations to the South Staffordshire
Publication Plan 2024

On behalf of Mr & Mrs Jeavons

1. Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to make representations to the publication stage of the South Staffordshire Local Plan. For the greater part we find the document to be robust and well evidenced. Our representation focusses on the delivery of future housing in Pattingham, with particular emphasis on the provision of affordable housing for existing and future residents of the village.

2. Housing numbers

The draft Plan advises that there is a requirement for the District to deliver a minimum annual average of 227 dwellings per annum. Covering the proposed plan period that equates to 4086 homes. Adding a further 640 homes to contribute to the unmet need of the wider strategic area brings the total to 4,726 new dwellings as identified in paragraph 5.23 of the publication plan.

Table 8 of the plan shows circa 5,200 homes (including 600 homes on windfall sites). It also shows the proportion split across the settlements; and for Pattingham as one of the Tier 3 village this is only 0.5% (26 homes). Other tier 3 locations are afforded much greater housing delivery; namely Essington (1.2%) Coven (1%) and Featherstone (0.8%).

3. Affordable housing numbers

The publication Plan claims at para 7.2 that 'increasing the provision of affordable housing is a key priority of the Council'. Meanwhile figure 5.2 in the Housing Density Topic Paper sets out the profile and split of new accommodation required in South Staffordshire. The table shows a need for 737 new homes across social and affordable rented tenures, plus a further 338 homes in the shared ownership tenure. This provides a total of 1075 homes outside of the market and first home tenures. Equivalent to approximately 24% of all new homes over the plan period.

To achieve these kind of housing numbers in a rural location requires a strong delivery policy alongside appropriate housing allocations. The proposed affordable housing policy HC3 leaves the majority of the delivery emphasis to major housing development sites. The reality is that developers have a considerable capital burden in delivering major housing sites at scale, and the result is a consistent below policy position delivery of affordable homes. Absent a clear and robust strategy on site allocation for affordable homes the Council will experience under delivery year on year over the plan period.

4. Pattingham

Pattingham has been classified as a Tier 3 settlement suggesting a limited number of services and facilities compared to some other settlements in the district. What is clear from the evidence available is that the village has a population of 1,800 people supported by a variety of services including a range of shops, pubs and restaurants. There is also the St Chad's First School and Nursery providing education for Early Years, Key Stage 1 & 2.

In terms of connectivity the village has excellent links via public transport to both Wolverhampton and Bridgnorth. The 10A service links the village to Wolverhampton, whilst the 9 service connects the village with Bridgnorth. Indeed the short distance to the primary urban area of the West Midlands makes the settlement more sustainable than its Tier 3 classification suggests. We consider that Pattingham should be designated a Tier 2A settlement, recognising that the village is not of the scale of a Tier 2 settlement but that it is strategically more important

than the other Tier 3 settlements identified in the Plan, while at the same time meeting the aims of para 128 of the NPPF.

A single site at Pattingham (allocation 251) has been identified for green belt release. It is felt that there is a real risk of stymying future affordable housing stock by placing all the focus for residential development in the plan period on one site with a capacity of 17 homes. An approach which would meet the tests of soundness and support the future health of Pattingham would be to allocate a further site and (as a minimum) bring the settlement in line with similar tier 3 locations such as Coven (48 homes) and Featherstone (35 homes). This would more likely ensure the effective delivery of affordable housing required by the Local Plan.

5. Site at Wolverhampton Road

The owners of the Wolverhampton Road site have a long term interest in the success and development of Pattingham as a thriving settlement, and have been in control of the land for many decades. The site currently makes a contribution to the countryside through its use as a paddock for equestrian purposes. However the owners, as custodians understand how much more the site can contribute to the social fabric of the village through the provision of affordable housing. In an area where the house price to household earnings ratio has risen to 7.35 (ONS Data) it is more critical than ever for a rural district like South Staffordshire to allocate sufficient land for affordable housing over the Plan period.



(Source Google Maps)

The site is located close to the heart of the village. A short walk from the village centre. The services identified in the preceding section are all within short walking distance of the site, meaning that a reliance on private car ownership is not a central component to a thriving community. Moreover, the Housing Density Topic Paper shows the site within the 800m sustainable travel distance of education and retail.

The site currently shares an access with the adjacent properties to the west. It is recognised that owing to the position and dimensions of the access it would be unsuitable to serve a housing development. The ownership includes the frontage land onto Wolverhampton Road. To deliver a successful development a new vehicular access would be formed from Wolverhampton Road and the existing pavement would be extended to link the site via sustainable means.

The Strategic Housing Land Available Assessment (SHLAA) of 2022 notes that a detailed highways assessment would be required to demonstrate deliverability. Such work can be commissioned to promote the site as a minor modification. The SHLAA also noted that the site has a net developable area of approximately 2.1ha. The owners consider that allowing for on-site biodiversity net gain requirements combined with on-site sustainable drainage the land could deliver approximately 60 new affordable homes for the community.

In releasing the site from the green belt and including it within the quantum of safeguarded land the Local Authority can define the eastern boundary of the site through the use of the existing dwelling immediately to the east together with the curtilage of that property. To the west the allotments and edge of the existing settlement afford a clear boundary. Whilst to the north boundary trees present a definition that can be protected.

In terms of other constraints, the existing access to the site forms part of the village conservation area, plus the grade II listed buildings of Highgate House and the adjoining property (15 Wolverhampton Road). It is considered that with the introduction of a new vehicular and pedestrian access from Wolverhampton Road the heritage assets in proximity of the site can be appropriately protected. Indeed, the layout of development within the site will ensure that a buffer area of land is set out between the affordable housing and setting of the conservation area.

The size of the site at 2.1ha means that a range of housing types and tenures can be delivered. A smaller site is likely to be limited to predominantly market housing with a modest offer of affordable homes and shared ownership. The custodians of the site recognise that delivering shared ownership, social rent and affordable rent homes for families (in partnership with a housing association) will support the health and growth of Pattingham without simply focussing on market housing. It is noted that the publication plan refers to a demographic imbalance in the District with a higher than average proportion of residents aged 65+. The Council needs to make meaningful housing allocations to avoid exacerbating this phenomenon.

The site is relatively level and has two modest agricultural buildings which are used in association with the equestrian activity. Mature hedgerows provide screening and site containment for a future development. Sustainable living principles can be further achieved with the use of the adjacent allotments allowing future residents to grow their own produce and not rely upon more carbon intensive methods for food.

6. Conclusion

It is apparent from the publication plan that South Staffordshire has an overriding need for affordable housing and has one of the highest affordability challenges in the West Midlands. Ignoring these factors will simply contribute to the ongoing challenges rather than addressing them. We propose the inclusion of the Wolverhampton Road site to support the community of Pattingham and make a meaningful contribution to alleviating the housing challenge within South Staffordshire. We consider that though the use of the minor modifications process the

site should be added to policy SA3 Housing Allocations and shown on Inset Plan 26 (Pattingham) to enable its delivery during the plan period.