

**Local Plan**  
Publication Stage  
Representation Form

**Ref:**  
  
**(For official use only)**

**Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:**

**South Staffordshire Council Local Plan 2023 - 2041**

**Please return to South Staffordshire Council by 12 noon Friday 31 May 2024**

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

**Part A**

1. Personal Details\*

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

*\*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation (if applicable)*

*boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title	B Wyatt brianwyatt@controlcorrosion.co.uk	
First Name		Brian
Last Name		Wyatt
Job Title (where relevant)		Parish Councillor
Organisation (where relevant)		Acton Trussell, Bednall and Teddesley Hay Parish Council
Address Line 1		
Line 2		
Line 3		



## South Staffordshire Council

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Line 4

Post Code

Telephone Number

07836 247893

E-mail Address

brianwyatt@controlcorrosion.co.uk

(where relevant)

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Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation: Residents of the Parish of Acton Trussell, Bednall and Teddesley Hay, and of the Stafford Borough primarily residents of Weeping Cross and Wildwood Ward and Baswich Ward

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph	Table 8 Page 31 Para 5.28 Page 34. Paras 3.6 & 3.7 page 11.	Policy	DS5 Spatial Strategy	Policies Map	O36c
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4. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

(1) Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Sound	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tick as appropriate

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant (done below) or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate (done below). Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments. NO.

We consider that, in respect of the proposed site allocation reference 036c in the South Staffs Publication Plan (Regulation 19), April 2024, the Plan is unsound and may not be legally compliant.

It has evidently not been the subject of effective 'duty to co-operate' liaison with Stafford Borough Council (SBC) as set out later in this representation and it appears to contrary to National Planning policy by virtue of this lack of this effective cooperation plus inadequate emphasis being given to obligations to maintain natural and local environment and to protect and enhance landscapes.

We ask for site 036c to be deleted, in its entirety, from the Plan.

Our reasons are detailed in a series of Part B submissions:

The site is described as:

Site reference	036c	Village	South of Stafford
Minimum capacity	81 dwellings	Address	Land at Weeping Cross (adjoining Stafford Borough boundary)
Site area	3.85 ha	Proposed use	Housing

The address is misleading. The site 036c is within the Parish of Acton Trussell, Bednall and Teddesley Hay. It is proximate to Wildwood, part of Stafford Borough Council but it is dissociated from the village of Acton Trussell, in the Parish, therefore it is considered an unsustainable location. The proposed allocation is an extension to the urban area of Stafford into the open countryside. Clearly this is at odds with national planning policy where the purpose is to prevent such urban sprawl into the open countryside or fail to prioritise brown field sites before developing on previously undeveloped land such as this.

There is insufficient justification in the local plan evidence base, or though the duty to cooperate with the adjoining Local Planning Authority.

The southern boundary of the proposed site is <500m from the established farmhouse (AG Parrott Farming), but some 1.6km from the Tier 5 village of Acton Trussell.

**LACK OF NEED**

The housing strategy put forward in the Publication Plan Regulation 19), April 2024 (PP) aims to provide for the district’s own housing need by the development of some 4086 dwellings and also some of the unmet needs of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) which cannot be accommodated there, by the development of 640 dwellings.

No allowance is made to accommodate any housing needs of Stafford Borough; their extant and proposed Plans detail that they are over-providing housing needs and actually providing for the needs in South Staffordshire; this is not acknowledged in the SSDC PP.

The SSDC PP total housing target of 4726 is exceeded by the housing proposals set out in the Table 8 on page 31 of the PP. The total housing provided in the Table adds up to 5199. This latter figure is based upon “Indicative minimum dwellings Nos” as set out in the Table.

Historically, the “minimum” housing numbers set out in the SSDC adopted Site Allocations document, have been significantly exceeded as per the following examples:

Site Ref. no. 443 – Billbrook	– Minimum 102	– Actual 164
Site Ref. no. 406 – Codsall	– Minimum 50	– Actual 65
Site Ref. no. 54 – Brewood	– Minimum 53	– Actual 73
Site Ref. no. 136 – Gt Wyrley	– Minimum 35	– Actual 63
Site Ref. no. 86 – Coven	– Minimum 40	– Actual 63
Site Ref. no. 270 – Kinver	– Minimum 30	– Actual 45
Site Ref. no. 379 – Wheaton Aston	– Minimum 15	– Actual 32
Site Ref no. 302 – Wombourne	– Minimum 80	– Actual 90
Site Ref no. 283 – Wombourne	– Minimum 80	– Actual 102

From the above, the minimum capacity was identified as 485 with the actual capacity 697. This is an underestimate of over 40% which will result in an overprovision of housing.

The evidence, therefore, is that not only is the PP overproviding to meet the housing target but that its identified capacity for each allocated site is a significant underestimate. There is insufficient justification for the inclusion of site 036c in the SSDC 2024 PP.

In relation to site allocation ref. 36c, the justification for the proposal appears to be principally that the site is not in the Green Belt.

It is not, however, justified by the housing needs of SSDC, and is definitely not required by any needs of Stafford Borough Council (who strenuously opposed it in 2022 and are understood to have done so again in 2024) or the GBBHMA, as the site is the furthest possible distance from them.

Stafford Borough has and can meet its own housing requirement and within its "*preferred options*" consultation in 2022, the proposed development strategy provides for 2,000 dwellings over the plan period (to 2040) to meet the unmet needs of other authorities in the region. SSDC has acknowledged the "*lack of unmet housing need*" in Stafford and the fact that the proposed allocation is "*remote from unmet need*" and that Stafford Borough is in a separate housing market area – para.5.27.1 of Housing Selection Topic Paper.

Further, the ONS advises that between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of South Staffordshire increased by 2.2%, from just over 108,100 in 2011 to around 110,500 in 2021.

The population here increased by a smaller percentage than the overall population of the West Midlands (6.2%), and by a smaller percentage than the overall population of England (up 6.6% since the 2011 Census).

In 2021, South Staffordshire was home to around 1.9 people per football pitch-sized piece of land. This area was among the lowest 30% for population density across English local authority areas at the last census.

This ONS data is not reflected in the SSDC PP and it further undermines the justification for over-provision of housing and any need for development on site 036c.

Stafford Borough Council's response in the SSDC 2022 PP consultation to the identical proposed housing allocation on its border considered that it did "...not accord with Strategic Objective 2 of the New Local Plan Publication as a sustainable approach to meeting the needs of the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area. In particular it is considered that this location is less sustainable and deliverable than other sites in South Staffordshire adjacent to or in close vicinity to the Black Country authorities where housing need is originating". [A copy of the SDC response to the SSDC 2022 PP consultation is submitted with this objection; we have been provided this by SBC but there appears to be some uncertainty that it was ever registered with SSDC in December 2022.]

The site's location remote from any settlement in South Staffordshire must mean that the proposal does not assist in meeting the needs of South Staffordshire residents. These are being met elsewhere in the SSDC region by the other allocations, including on non-green belt sites, and which are particularly focused on the district's most sustainable larger settlements. The site is disassociated from Acton Trusell and the other villages in the Parish, all Tier 5; this is contrary to the declared objective of the PP as detailed below.



**The site allocation is therefore not needed to achieve the housing target and is in the wrong location to meet the needs of either the local population or the unmet need of the GBBCHMA. There is no unmet need in the adjacent SBC authority.**

**Unsound? COMPLIANT WITH DS5?**

**DS5 states:** *The district's Tier 5 settlements are set out in the Rural Services and Facilities Audit 2021. These settlements are not intended to experience further housing or employment growth, owing to their poorer sustainability credentials, poorer public transport links and lack of services and facilities relative to other settlements within the district. New development in these locations will be limited to the conversion and re-use of redundant rural buildings to appropriate uses, in accordance with other development plan policies. On a case-by-case basis, the very limited redevelopment of previously developed land for housing may also be supported within these settlements where this would not increase unsustainable transport movements from the settlement in question and would not conflict with other Local Plan policies. Limited affordable housing to meet specified local needs in accordance with relevant Local Plan policies may also be supported.*

**It is evident that the proposed development does not comply with these requirements within DS5. Acton Trussell is a Tier 5 settlement**

**Further within DS5 is the statement: 'The district's wider rural area:**

*In the rural area outside of the district's existing settlements, the objective of the Spatial Strategy is to protect the attractive rural character of the countryside. To deliver this, new development will be restricted to particular types of development to support biodiversity, carbon sequestration, renewable and low carbon technologies, tourism, sport and recreation and the local rural economy and rural diversification, where this is consistent with other Local Plan policies. Other than the forms of residential development identified as being acceptable in rural areas in the NPPF, isolated housing growth away from the district's settlements will not be supported.'*

**The site 036c is a part of the 'attractive rural character of the countryside', it is productive Grade 3a farming land.**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that planners should make decisions about the natural and local environment to protect and enhance landscapes, biodiversity, geology and soils, recognise soils as a natural capital asset that provide important ecosystem services, to consider the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land, and try to use areas of poorer quality land instead of higher quality land in any developments.

The site 036c is Open Countryside, albeit abutting the border of SBC, and forms a route for wildlife from the Cannock Chase AONB area to the valley of the River Penk.

**Again, the SSDC 2024 PP is proposing this development contrary to DS5.**

**Quoting from the Plan page 24 Clause 5.2.8**

*'This location will not be a focus for larger-scale housing growth.'*

This is the SSDC's statement now, but IF this development is built, the same developer has previously submitted plans for 200 dwellings, then 155 (withdrawn in the face of opposition and a unanimous vote of SSDC Councillors in 2017).

It is known that they have options from the owner for all the land to the boundary of Acton Trussell. In the SSDC's own current 'URBAN EDGE SITES AND POTENTIAL NEW SETTLEMENTS' document is an entry:



036a	Land South of Stafford	Acton Trussell	AC	Gladman Developments Limited	5b	134.46	80.68	2823
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In the table above, 2823 is the 'Capacity - using SHELAA assumptions', i.e. the number of dwellings proposed by the same developer, Gladman, who has prompted the site 036c 81 house development included in the 2024 SSDC PP. In the future, despite the present assurances of SSDC, there will be a reduced ability to resist development on site 036a, if the similar but smaller site 036c has been developed.

**Quoting again from the SSDC PP in respect of site 036c:**

*This recognises the sensitive landscape and potential highways concerns that larger scale growth in this location could cause, as well as the lack of unmet housing needs in Stafford and the location's remoteness from areas where unmet needs are generated. It does not; it permits the proposed development of 81 dwellings, for which a need has not been demonstrated within the SSDC Plan and has actually been surpassed in provisions, under the Duty to Cooperate provisions by SBC.*

*Instead, a smaller scale extension to the adjacent town of Stafford will be delivered in this area, which will ensure the sustainable delivery of non-Green Belt housing land in the district.*

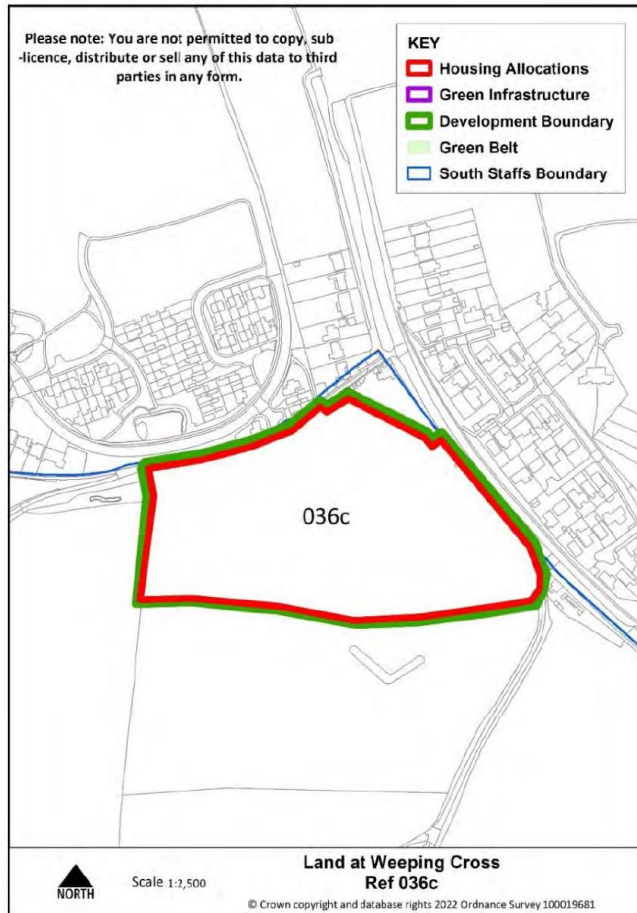
**But it will consume Open Countryside, a wildlife link to Cannock Chase, Grade 3a productive farming land and takes no account of the Cannock Chase SAC. The development would conflict with SSDC's justification/description of it. The argument that development is appropriate here because it is not on Green Belt is rendered nugatory by the lack of demonstrated need for additional housing on the border of SBC which has generously over-provided housing, including what might be considered ca. 2400 houses for South Staffordshire (see below for SBC provisions).**

To put the location into context, from the SSDC 2024 PP, it is shown as:





Site reference	036c	Village	South of Stafford
Minimum capacity	81 dwellings	Address	Land at Weeping Cross (a Stafford Borough bounda
Site area	3.85 ha	Proposed use	Housing



Site 036c



Site 36c is ca. 2km from the Cannock Chase AONB and is in a section of open countryside that links the AONB to the Staffs and Worcester Canal and the valley of the Penk



Furthermore, the DEFRA Magic Map clearly shows this site is within the SSSI impact zones for both Baswich Meadows SSSI and Milfield Quarry SSSI. There appears to be no consideration of these impacts within the site assessment.

The DEFRA map also shows the site entirely within the Nitrate Vulnerability Zone and adjoining priority woodland.

### **LEGALLY COMPLIANT WITH DUTY TO COOPERATE?**

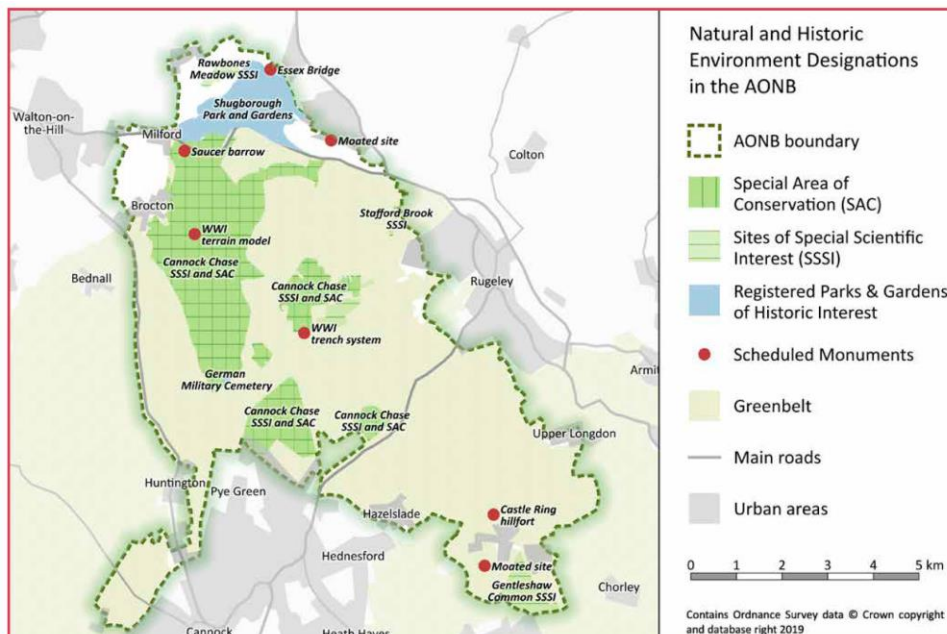
It is noted that Clause 3.6 of the present SSDC Plan makes clear that there is a legal obligation for a duty to cooperate:

*'Local Planning Authorities have a legal duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.'*

in respect of Duty to Cooperate:

1. There is little evidence of cooperation with Stafford Borough Council in the SSDC Duty to Cooperate Topic Paper dated April 2024:
  - a) The only evidenced cooperation is in participation in the Cannock Chase SAC 15km Zone of Influence. However, the planned development is within the Zone of Influence of the SAC and there is no evidence that this has been taken into account by SSDC.
  - b) It is evident from the SDC objection to the SSDC 2022 PP consultation [attached as noted above] that SDC do not consider that any 'Duty to Cooperate' function has been effective in respect of site 036c.

The Cannock Chase AONB boundary is:

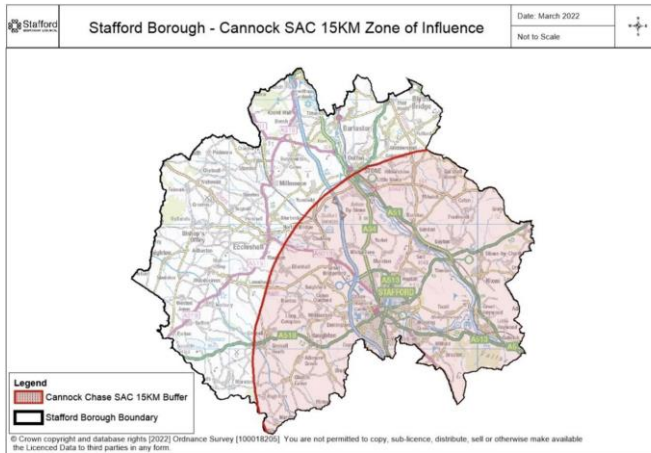


**Site 036c is within the SAC Zone of Influence**



From STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING GUIDANCE TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON CANNOCK CHASE SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC) (JUNE 2023)

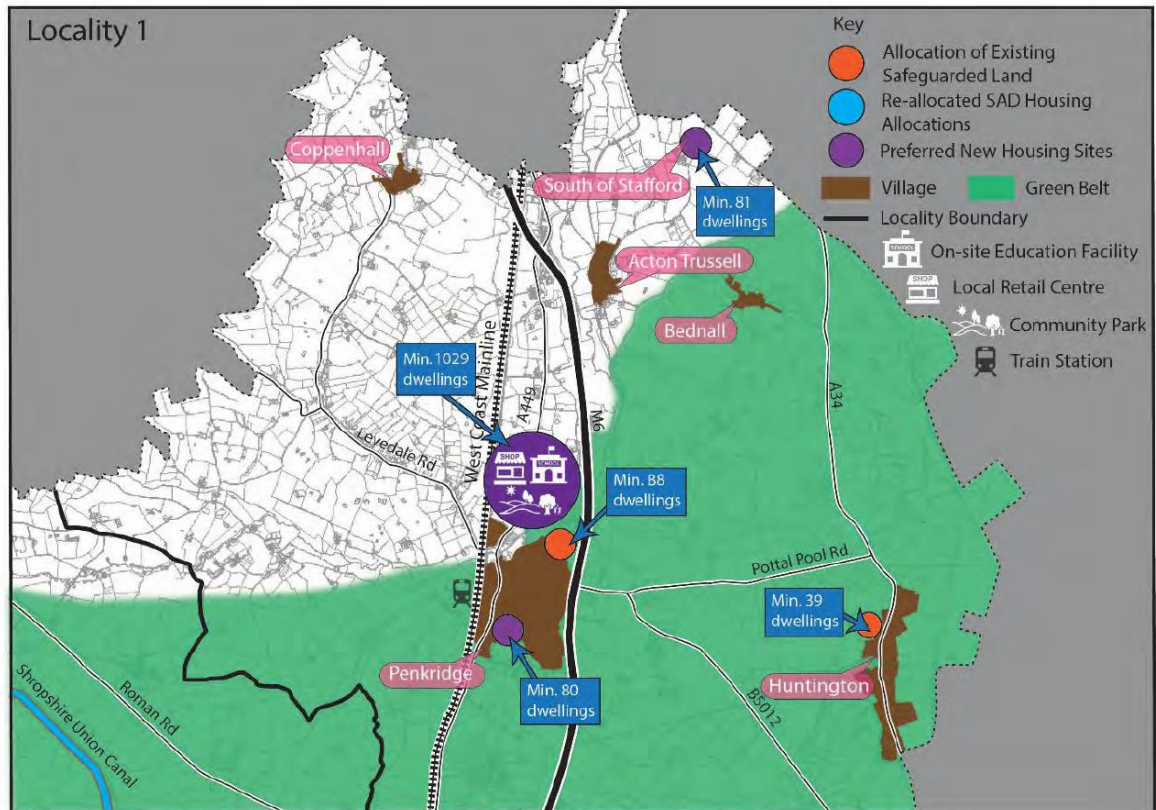
Map 1. Map of Cannock Chase SAC 15 km Zone of Influence in Stafford Borough



The development is within the SAC Zone of Influence.

From the SSDC 2024 PP site 036c is evidently dissociated from Acton Trussell and any other significant habitation in South Staffordshire, contrary to the Policy DS5:

5.25 The diagram below summarises where new housing growth will be delivered in Locality 1 (the north of the district).





b) **It is evident that Stafford Borough Council has made generous provision for additional housing to meet the needs of South Staffordshire** See Paragraph 6.12 of the Adopted Stafford Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 which states: Paragraph 6.12 *'It should be noted that the household projection figure is made up of 'local need' (i.e. natural change: the balance of births over deaths and reduction in average household size) and 'in-migration' elements, with the split for Stafford Borough being approximately 30% local need and 70% in-migration mainly from surrounding areas, the majority being from Cannock Chase District, South Staffordshire District and the City of Stoke on Trent...'*

The SBC Plan declares a projected build of 11,523 dwellings to 2033 (it is understood that this target has been exceeded). The Plan declares that 70% are allocated to 'in-migration'. This 70% of 11,523 = 8066.

It might be reasonable to assume that of this 8066, shared between 3 adjoining authorities, some 30% should have been allowed for in the South Staffs 2024 PP. Irrespective of quantum, there is no such allowance.

It is evident from the Stafford Borough "preferred options" consultation in 2022, that SBC intend to continue with this policy. Their proposed development strategy provides for 2,000 dwellings over the plan period (to 2040) to meet the unmet needs of other authorities in the region.

There are extensive recent and in build housing developments between Wildwood and Stafford, fully meeting the declared Stafford Borough Council and SSDC needs in this area. The closest to site 036c are at the previous Staffordshire Police HQ site, actually at Weeping Cross, (142 houses ca. 1.2km from the 036c location, recently completed) and the large ex GEC site (500 houses ca. 2.7km from the 036c location, in build). These entirely negate the need for 81 houses at site 036c.

From Paragraph 3.12 of the extant SBC Local Plan document: *Furthermore, land south of Stafford was identified as a cross border issue to be considered by Stafford Borough Council and South Staffordshire District Council when preparing their new Plans. The West Midlands RSS review process stated that "Dependent upon the outcome of local studies, some of the Stafford town allocation could be made, adjacent to the settlement, in South Staffordshire District."* Both Councils have been in dialogue concerning future development south of Stafford and a number of evidence based studies have been carried out as well as meetings with relevant landowners and developers. **The Plan for Stafford Borough is based on the clear conclusion that development in this location is both less practical and less sustainable than at other locations around Stafford town, and it is therefore not proposed to identify significant development south of Stafford in the new Plan.'**

**This expressed joint conclusion has not been taken into account in the 2024 SSDC Plan. The objections from SBC arising from the 2022 PP have evidently been ignored.**

**Whilst it is anticipated that SSDC will be able to demonstrate some degree of documentation inferring that there has been cooperation with SBC, it is 100% clear that this SSDC Plan does not take account of the Adopted Stafford Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031, and their Local Plan 2020 – 2040 preferred option as noted above, or the joint assessment that development south of Stafford is less practical and less sustainable than other locations.**

**It is assumed that the legal obligation is for effective cooperation. The failure to acknowledge the generous provision of housing SSDC in the SBC Plan:**



- a) **Is possibly in breach of the legal obligation which we ask the Inspector to assess**
- b) **Renders the proposed site 036c unnecessary and superfluous in view of its intimate proximity to extant and ongoing new housing developments within SBC.**

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

**Delete, in its entirety, the planned development at location 036c for the reasons above.**

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

**Please note:** In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

**After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.**

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

**No**, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

YES

**Yes**, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:





For the transparency of process and the ability to actively participate in the process of plan making.

The very significant numbers of residents who have signed to support these objections / representations and have provided financial support for expert opinion, anticipate having expert professional opinion to support their participation at the hearing by the Planning Inspectorate to ensure that the lack of need and breaches of Policy are brought to the attention of the Inspector.

We have names and addresses of those who have supported this and the related other Part B submissions. We submit these to SSDC but have request that SSDC do not release the full details to the public. We have retained all in hard copy and electronically in case the Inspector wishes to view them.

**Please note** the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

**Representations cannot be kept confidential and will be available for public scrutiny, including your name and/or organisation (if applicable). However, your contact details will not be published.**

#### **Data Protection**

Your details will be added to our Local Plans Consultation database so that we can contact you as the review progresses. South Staffordshire Council will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Our Privacy Notice can be viewed at [Data Protection \(Strategic Planning\) | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](#)

Please return the form via email to [localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk) or by post to South Staffordshire Council, Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire WV8 1PX