



**Statement of Common Ground between Lichfield
District Council and Cannock Chase District
Council**

Cannock Chase Local Plan (2018-2040)

September 2024

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC)

Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC), hereafter referred to as "the parties" to inform the submission of the Cannock Chase Local Plan (2018-2040).
2. This SoCG represents the position at 1 July 2024 prior to the UK General Election and subsequent announcements made by national government.
3. 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 with regard to the Cannock Chase Local Plan and any areas which remain subject to further discussion. This Statement of Common Ground covers the following matters:
 - Housing (including housing needs across the GBBCHMA);
 - Gypsy and traveller and travelling show persons accommodation;
 - Employment land;
 - Transport and infrastructure matters; and
 - Natural and historic environment including designated sites.

4. LDC and CCDC have been maintaining dialogue throughout the production of the Cannock Chase Local Plan and the Lichfield Local Plan 2040. However, there have been two notable developments which have implications for this final statement; the withdrawal of Lichfields emerging Local Plan from examination and the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework in December 2023.
5. At a meeting of full council on 17 October 2023 Lichfield District Council made the decision to withdraw its proposed Local Plan 2040. The withdrawal of the Local Plan 2040 does not affect the adopted local plan for the district which remains in place. Lichfield published a new Local Development Scheme in March 2024 which sets the timetable for producing its new Local Plan. This SoCG references topics and emerging policy discussed during the time of production of the Lichfield Local Plan 2040 as these formed the basis of cooperative work during the period of production of the emerging Cannock Chase Local Plan 2018-2040. Both Local Authorities will continue to work cooperatively on cross boundary matters whilst acknowledging that they are focused on different stages in the plan making process.
6. The revised NPPF was published on December 19 2023. In addition to some significant amendments which will influence plan making, there is now a key difference in how the Cannock Chase Local Plan will be examined. Cannock Chase Local Plan Publication Reg 19 was subject to public consultation from 5th February 2024 - 18th March 2024. In line with para 203 of the revised NPPF (published 19th December 2023), the Cannock Chase Local Plan will be examined under the relevant previous version of the Framework (last substantively revised in 2021 with an update relating to renewable energy in September 2023). Lichfield will be developing their new local plan strategy in light of the revised NPPF.

Geography covered by Statement of Common Ground

7. This SoCG covers the Local Planning Authority areas of Lichfield District Council and Cannock Chase District Council.
8. 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 Borough 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

9. The local authorities 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 CCDC pertain to housing provision, (including housing needs across the GBBCHMA); gypsy and traveller accommodation; employment land; transport and infrastructure matters; and matters relating to the natural and historic environment including designated sites and retail and neighbourhood centres. These discussions have informed the development of adopted plans and other related documents.
10. The following issues outlined below 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

11. It is common ground that the adopted Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy provided 500 dwellings to assist CCDC with meeting the housing requirements within the adopted CCDC Local Plan and that this formed part of the wider GBBCHMA unmet need as detailed in the GBBCHMA Position Statement.
12. LDC along with CCDC 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 the HMA. The GBBCHMA authorities commissioned the Strategic Growth Study which looked at options to address the housing shortfall within the HMA collectively. This evidence has been used to inform the Cannock Chase Strategy as it developed and led to the proposed contribution of 500 dwellings towards the unmet needs of the HMA through the Cannock Chase Local Plan.
13. The GBBCHMA authorities published a position statement in 2020 and addendum in December 2021 in respect of housing needs. This position statement detailed the unmet need arising from Birmingham relating to the adopted 2017 Birmingham Local Plan and records contributions towards the shortfall from authorities in the HMA. Additionally, further emerging unmet need arising from the Black Country authorities is detailed within the position statement. The emerging unmet need from the Black Country has yet to be tested at Examination and is likely to alter from the position statement following the decision to cease work on the joint Black Country Local Plan in favour of producing individual local plans in October 2022, as well as due to the revised NPPF.
14. Originally, LDC as part of the Local Plan 2040 were proposing to contribute 2,665 to the HMA shortfall from 2027. Of the 2,665 homes, a capped

contribution of 2,000 was proposed to be made for the Black Country authorities' needs starting after 2027 to assist with their identified shortfall up to 2040. This contribution was in addition to Lichfield District Councils Local Housing Need (LHN) of 7,062 dwellings between 2018 and 2040 and the existing contribution made through the adopted Lichfield Local Plan (meeting Cannock and Tamworth's needs). CCDC were broadly supportive of LDC's approach towards their housing provision within the HMA.

15. LDC wrote to neighbouring authorities including CCDC 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. CCDC confirmed that no such sites were available to meet wider need but CCDC were testing options to make a contribution toward GBBCHMA need within their Local Plan. LDC wrote to neighbouring authorities, including CCDC, during the preparation of the withdrawn Local Plan 2040 to ascertain whether there was any capacity to assist in meeting its needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. CCDC confirmed they were not able to accommodate this shortfall. In 2021, CCDC wrote to neighbouring authorities, including Lichfield requesting whether there was capacity to accommodate any of Cannock's need for housing, employment and Gypsy and Travellers within neighbouring authority boundaries. LDC confirmed that they were not able to accommodate any of the CCDC local housing need shortfall.
16. Following withdrawal of the Lichfield Local Plan 2040 in October 2023, LDC is in the early stages of working on a new local plan. There is therefore no stated position on the provision of housing at this stage until the plan is developed to the point of Reg 18 consultation. CCDC is open to discussion with LDC regarding housing provision as their plan develops and had worked cooperatively with LDC on housing issues through the production of the now withdrawn plan.
17. The Cannock Chase Local Plan contains one cross boundary site allocation at the former power station site in Rugeley. This site has been in development for several years and already benefits from planning permission, guided by a joint development brief which was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by Lichfield in 2018. Both Councils continue to cooperate through the planning application process to deliver the full potential of the site for housing, employment and infrastructure.
18. There are two strategic housing sites proposed on Green Belt land at Heath Hayes, Cannock in the Cannock Chase Local Plan at land east of Wimblebury Road and at land south of Cannock Road. The site at Wimblebury Road is relatively close to the boundary with Lichfield at Burntwood, but separated by undeveloped land. In addition, further land in this location is proposed to be safeguarded if required beyond the plan period which is functionally linked to the Wimblebury Road site and will form part of the land required for the proposed Wimblebury Road Relief Road. The proposed housing sites are functionally linked to infrastructure in Cannock and therefore it is not considered that there are any cross-boundary issues in relation to these sites.

Other Strategic Matters/ Cross Boundary Matters

Employment

19. CCDC commissioned the Employment Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) in 2019 which has been subject to updates in 2020 and 2024. The EDNA identifies employment land need in terms of a range based on different modelling scenarios using Experian forecasts.
20. Cannock Chase Local Plan proposes 74ha of employment land and identifies 2 strategic employment sites which will result in Green Belt release. Both sites are extensions to existing business parks at Kingswood Lakeside, Blakeney Way, Cannock and at Watling Street Business Park, A5. Neither allocation is considered to result in any cross boundary issues in relation to Lichfield District.
21. The withdrawn Lichfield District Local Plan 2040 proposed to deliver approximately 85 hectares of land for employment uses to meet its own employment land requirements. At the time, the evidence demonstrated that beyond the land proposed for allocation there is a limited supply of potential further options for employment growth within Lichfield District. LDC will update their evidence on employment to support their new local plan. At this stage there is no published position in relation to emerging employment need.

Transport

22. LDC and CCDC 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.

Gypsy & Traveller Provision

23. CCDC published the Cannock Chase Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in 2019 which set out a need for 25 pitches across the original plan period (2038) as well as 0-4 to meet undertermined households and 10 plots to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople. It did not identify any need for transit sites and considered the issue of need to be self-contained within Cannock District, however noted the general desire for Gypsy and Travellers to locate close to the A5 strategic road network which runs through the authority areas of South Staffordshire, Cannock and Lichfield.
24. CCDC has not been able to identify sites to meet the need in full and wrote to neighbouring authorities in 2021 asking if any unmet need could be met in neighbouring authority areas. All responses received indicated there was no spare capacity for plots or pitches in adjoining authority areas, including in

Lichfield and therefore CCDC undertook further work to identify additional capacity within the authority area in preparation for the final Reg 19 stage.

25. LDC were seeking 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 Local Plan 2040 did not identify sufficient sites to meet these requirements.
26. LDC has previously written to neighbouring authorities including CCDC to ascertain if authorities were able to assist Lichfield District Council in meeting the unmet need in relation to accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. CCDC confirmed they were unable to assist in meeting this unmet need, during production of the Lichfield Local Plan 2040. Following withdrawal of the 2040 plan, LDC will be reviewing evidence in relation to Gypsy and Travellers for their new plan, and at this stage the need and supply position have not been confirmed.
27. LDC and CCDC will continue to cooperate with neighbouring authorities within the HMA area in relation to housing matters, including gypsy and traveller accommodation provision.

Centres and Retail Provision

28. With regard to Cannock Chase Local Plan, there are no proposals for retail or centres which are likely to result in any cross-boundary issues. The Local Plan continues to support the existing established main centres of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford as well as the smaller neighbourhood and village centres. The plan will support existing work to regenerate Cannock Town Centre following receipt of Future High Street Funds.
29. LDC noted earlier representations raised by CCDC with regards to centres when developing the Lichfield Local Plan 2040, specifically in relation to Burntwood Town Centre. CCDC supports the expansion of the centre of Burntwood to meet the needs of its residents.

Natural and Historic Environment

30. Both LDC and CCDC acknowledge the need for both authorities to continue working collaboratively with Natural England in relation to visitor impacts from the residents of new development within 15 km of the Cannock Chase and Cannock Extension Canal SACs and in relation to air quality impacts from new development and associated commuting on the SACs.
31. LDC and CCDC are committed to continue working together as part of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Partnership with the aim of ensuring that the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC is protected and that appropriate mitigation measures are secured in order to ensure development does not have adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC.
32. LDC acknowledged CCDC comments with regards to the reference of the Cannock Extension Canal SAC within the Local Plan 2040 and the potential impact development may have on this SAC due to its hydrological links to the

Southern Staffordshire Coalfield Heaths SSSI and Chasewater. CCDC previously supported the policies and approach taken within the emerging Lichfield Local Plan 2040 with regard to the Cannock Chase SAC and will continue to work with LDC as they develop a new plan, following withdrawal of the 2040 plan.

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 Cannock Chase District Council. The authorities will continue to work together to address cross-boundary issues.

Lichfield District Council

Name: Alex Farrell

Position: Cabinet Member for Housing and Local Plan

Signature: 

Date: 11/9/24

Cannock Chase District Council

Name: Dean Piper

Position: Head of Economic Development and Planning

Signature: 

Date: 01/10/2024