

Statement of Common Ground between Lichfield District Council and Birmingham City Council

Lichfield District Local Plan 2040

June 2022

# Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Birmingham City Council

## Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Birmingham City Council, hereafter referred to as “the parties” to inform the submission of the Lichfield Local Plan 2040.
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 Lichfield Local Plan 2040 (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);
	* Employment land (including employment land needs across the GBBCHMA); and
	* Transport and infrastructure matters.

## Geography covered by Statement of Common Ground

1. This SoCG covers the Local Planning Authority areas of LDC and Birmingham City Council.
2. 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, LDC, 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

1. 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 BCC 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, These discussions have informed the development of adopted plans and other related documents.
2. The following issues outlined below are considered to the 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

1. LDC along with BCC 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.
2. The GBBCHMA authorities published a position statement in 2020 and addendum in December 2021 in respect of housing needs. This position statement details that the unmet need within the GBBCHMA has reduced significantly to 6,302 dwellings. Lichfield District has directly contributed to this reduction through the provision of homes to meet unmet need within its adopted Local Plan (Strategy and Allocations documents). 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.
3. LDC as part of the Local Plan 2040 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 LDCs Local Housing Need (LHN) of 7,062 dwellings between 2018 and 2040. BCC notes LDCs contribution to the HMA shortfall and the proposed split between the Birmingham and Black Country authorities.
4. BCC have concerns about the split of the housing contribution between Birmingham and Black Country Authorities because a housing shortfall to 2031 remains and that the housing shortfall beyond 2031 in Birmingham is likely to be very significant. LDC acknowledge BCC’s view in this regard whilst noting that evidence demonstrating any shortfall beyond 2031 is yet to be tested. BCC considers that any numerical split should consider the functional relationships between Lichfield, Birmingham and the Black Country Authorities. Additionally BCC considers if evidence relating to transport and connectivity were taken into consideration it would lead to a split in favour of Birmingham. LDC considers that in the absence of further evidence and the latest Position Statement advising that the Birmingham shortfall had significantly reduced without further indication of likely future need, that the shortfall contribution and its split is appropriate and deliverable within the District.
5. BCC note that the housing buffer is required for providing flexibility in housing supply across the plan period, however consider the buffer to be excessive and considers a proportion of the buffer could be used to further offset the GBBCHMA housing shortfall. LDC considers that the buffer is appropriate due to the SHA1 Allocation to the North of Lichfield is not expected to be delivered in full before the end of the plan period. A footnote is to be included within the plan to note that 10% of the buffer will not be delivered in the plan period.
6. It is agreed by the parties that the reasons noted at paragraph 9, 10 and 11 amount to issues of soundness of the Local Plan 2040. BCC agrees that LDC has satisfied the legal duty to cooperate test.
7. It is acknowledged that LDC 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
8. At each stage BCC have been consulted on these documents and responded as they considered appropriate.
9. LDC considers the proposed contribution of 2,665 dwellings within the Local Plan 2040 to be appropriate and deliverable within the plan period and supported by evidence. LDC considers this to be a significant and proportionate contribution to unmet needs, equating to an additional 37.7% on the District’s LHN. LDC consider it appropriate to include a ‘buffer’ in respect of housing supply to ensure that the LP2040 is flexible and deliverable across the plan period.
10. LDC wrote to neighbouring authorities including Birmingham City Council 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. Birmingham City Council confirmed that no such sites were available to meet wider need and that the Birmingham City Council would not be able to meet their own housing requirements within their administrative boundaries.

## Other Strategic Matters / Cross boundary matters

### Employment

1. Lichfield District Local Plan 2040 proposes to deliver approximately 85 hectares of land for employment uses to meet its own employment land requirements. The Local Plan 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.
2. It is agreed by the parties that the Lichfield District Local Plan 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

1. LDC and BCC 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.

### Infrastructure

1. Lichfield District Council and BCC are committed to continue working together in partnership, with the aim of ensuring the necessary infrastructure improvements to support sustainable growth across the housing market area. Both parties will keep each other fully informed of any changes to infrastructure matters and will continue to liaise on this matter where appropriate

### Gypsy & Traveller Provision

1. 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.
2. LDC has previously written to neighbouring authorities including BCC to ascertain if authorities were able to assist Lichfield District Council in meeting the unmet need in relation to accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. BCC confirmed they were unable to assist in meeting this unmet need.
3. LDC and BCC 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 Birmingham City 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**

**Birmingham City Council**

**Name: Councillor Ian Ward**

**Position: Leader**

**Signature: **

**Date: 28/06/2022**