



Sandwell Local Plan 2024-2041 - Examination

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Examination website
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Wednesday 16 July 2025 starting at 9.30am and continuing at 2.00pm

Hearing Sessions Agenda

Week 1 Day 2

Please Note:

- All participants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the hearing statements (and any relevant evidence) produced by the Council and other parties in respect of the matters to be discussed at this session. These are available on the examination website.
- The relevant Matters, Issues and Questions for this session are attached to this agenda for ease of reference. The discussion will typically follow the MIQs in order, focused on points upon which the Inspector requires further information or clarification. Some questions will require little discussion, and others may require significant discussion. The Inspector is also likely to have additional associated questions relating to the plan's soundness and/or legal compliance.
- Morning hearing sessions will typically finish no later than 1pm and will include a mid-morning break. Afternoon hearing sessions will finish by 5pm, with a mid-afternoon break.

1. Inspector's Opening and Introductions

Matter 2: Vision, Objectives, Sandwell's Housing and Employment Needs, and the Plan's Overall Scale of Growth

2. Issue 2a - Vision, priorities and strategic objectives (Questions 2.1 and 2.2)

Areas for discussion:

- Range/coverage



3. Issue 2b – Housing needs and the plan’s overall scale of housing growth for the settled community (Questions 2.3 and 2.4)

Areas for discussion:

- The assessment of housing needs
- Specialist housing needs
- Capacity and the site selection process
- Consideration of Green Belt
- Unmet needs
- Justification of the plan’s housing requirement figure

4. Issue 2c – Accommodation needs and the plan’s overall scale of growth for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople (Questions 2.5 to 2.7).

Areas for discussion:

- The assessment of accommodation needs
- The site selection process
- Consideration of Green Belt
- Unmet needs
- Justification of the plan’s pitch requirement figure

5. Issue 2d – Employment needs and the plan’s overall scale of employment growth (Questions 2.8 and 2.9).

Areas for discussion:

- The assessment of employment needs
- The site selection process
- Unmet needs
- Justification of the plan’s employment requirement figure

6. Close



MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS (MIQs)

MATTER 2: Vision, Objectives, Sandwell's Housing and Employment Needs, and the Plan's Overall Scale of Growth

Issue 2a – Whether the vision, priorities and strategic objectives have been positively prepared and are justified, effective and consistent with national policy for the achievement of sustainable development.

Q2.1 Are the plan's vision, priorities, and strategic objectives justified, consistent with national policy, and relevant for Sandwell?

Q2.2 In terms of this issue, are any specific main modifications necessary for soundness?

Issue 2b – Whether the assessment of housing needs and the plan's overall scale of housing growth for the settled community are justified, positively prepared, effective and consistent with national policy.

Note: This issue concerns the overall housing needs in the borough, and the housing requirement included in the plan. The soundness of other aspects of Policy SDS1 and the plan's other policies and allocations relating to housing for the settled community will be considered under other Matters.

Q2.3 Is the plan's total housing requirement of at least 10,434 net new homes (which the plan states would result in unmet need for 15,916 homes in the borough over the plan period 2024-2041), justified? Including:

- a) Is the assessment of local housing needs for Sandwell robust, sufficiently up to date, and has the standard method for assessing the minimum local housing need been correctly applied?
- b) Are there any exceptional circumstances that would justify calculating Sandwell's housing need on a basis other than the standard method?
- c) Have the levels of need in Sandwell for affordable housing and other specialist housing needs of particular groups, including for older people and people wanting to build their own homes, been appropriately assessed and considered?
- d) Are the assessments of land capacity for residential development in Sandwell, and the site selection methodology and process used to inform the selection of sites for allocation in the plan, sufficiently robust? Including:
 - i. How have constraints to development in the borough influenced site selection, capacity, and the Plan's overall spatial strategy?



- e) Have potential opportunities for housing development in the borough's area of designated Green Belt been appropriately considered?
Including:
 - i. Is the evidence base relating to the Green Belt sufficiently up-to-date and robust? Is it consistent with relevant national policy?
 - ii. Is the plan's overarching requirement and strategy for housing provision consistent with the evidence base for the Green Belt?
 - iii. Do exceptional circumstances exist that would justify changes to Green Belt boundaries?
- f) Have all potential sources of housing land supply been explored and exhausted such that a housing requirement below the objectively assessed need could be justified?
- g) Overall, is the plan's housing requirement justified and positively prepared?

Q2.4 In terms of this issue, are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

Issue 2c – Whether the assessment of need and the plan's overall scale of growth for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople is justified, positively prepared, effective, and consistent with national policy.

Note: Q2.5 – 2.7 concern the overall level of need and overall amount of accommodation for the travelling community included in the plan (the number of pitches and/or plots), and the soundness of other aspects of Policy SH09 and relevant allocations in the plan will be considered under other Matters.

Q2.5 Does the Black Country Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (HOU 004) provide a robust assessment of accommodation needs in the Sandwell plan area for the travelling community, is it sufficiently up to date, and does it apply an appropriate methodology in establishing the borough's requirement for additional pitches and/or plots?

Q2.6 Does the plan provide for all needs identified in the Black Country Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment? If so, how?

- a) Is the plan's approach justified, positively prepared, and consistent with relevant national policy including Planning Policy for Traveller Sites?
- b) Is the level of need and the plan's requirement for any additional pitches and/or plots clearly set out in the plan?
- c) Should the plan include any additional site allocations to meet the identified needs over the plan period?



- d) Overall, is the plan's requirement for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople justified and positively prepared?

Q2.7 In terms of this issue, are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

Issue 2d – Whether the assessment of employment need and the plan's overall scale of employment growth is justified, positively prepared, effective, and consistent with national policy.

Note: This issue concerns the overall level of need for employment land and the amount of land for employment included in the plan. The soundness of other aspects of Policy SDS1 and the plan's other policies and allocations relating to employment and the economy will be considered under other Matters.

Q2.8 Is the plan's approach of maintaining ongoing provision of around 1,221 hectares of allocated employment land soundly based? Including:

- a) Do the key evidence base documents for economy and employment (ECON 001 to ECON 007 with Topic Paper summary SA/ED18) provide a robust and sufficiently up to date assessment of employment needs in Sandwell over the plan period?
- b) On what basis has the figure of 1,221 hectares been derived and do the evidence base documents justify this level of provision in the plan?
- c) Does the plan include sufficient site allocations to meet its requirement to maintain the ongoing provision of 1,221 hectares of allocated employment land?
- d) Have all reasonable options for meeting the identified need for employment land, and reducing the shortfall over the plan period, been robustly explored?
- e) Overall, is the plan's employment requirement justified and positively prepared?

Q2.9 In terms of this issue, are any main modifications necessary for soundness?