



## **Sandwell Local Plan 2024-2041 - Examination**

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Tuesday 30 September 2025 starting at 9.30am

### **Hearing Sessions Agenda**

Week 3 Day 1 (morning session)

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 (SA/ED59) 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 4: Natural and Historic Environment Policies**

### **2. Issue 4 – Whether the plan's policies for the natural and historic environment are sound (Questions 4.1 to 4.7)**

Areas for discussion:

- Policy SNE1
  - Specific criteria
- Policy SNE2
  - BNG requirements



- Biodiversity units / habitat bank sites
- Policy SNE3
  - Tree retention/replacement
  - Landscaping buffers
- Policy SNE4
  - Heritage assets
- Policy SNE5
- Policy SNE6
- Policies SHE1 to SHE4
  - Terminology
  - Conversions and new uses
- Any main modifications necessary

### **3. Close**



## **MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS (MIQs)**

### **MATTER 4: Natural and Historic Environment (Policies SNE1-SNE6 and SHE1- SHE4)**

**Issue 4 – Whether the plan is positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy in relation to its policies for the natural and historic environment (policies SNE1 – SNE6 and SHE1 – SHE4).**

**Q4.1** Are the requirements of policy SNE1 clear and consistent with national policy? Including:

- a) Would they be effective?
- b) Is criterion 1 necessary for soundness?
- c) For soundness, should criterion 5 include a more specific requirement for enhancements to wildlife corridors?
- d) Is criterion 7 sufficiently flexible to address changes over the plan period?

**Q4.2** Is policy SNE2 clear and is it consistent with national policy and mandatory requirements in relation to biodiversity net gain? Including:

- a) How have the sites identified in SNE2(6) as suitable for the provision of 'biodiversity units' been selected and is this justified? Are they deliverable?
- b) For soundness, is it necessary for any additional or alternative 'biodiversity units' sites to be included?

**Q4.3** Are the requirements of policy SNE3 clear and consistent with national policy? Including:

- a) Would they be effective, including sufficiently flexible?
- b) For soundness, should the policy be clearer on tree retention and replacement?
- c) Are the specified buffers justified?
- d) Does the policy appropriately address the protection of irreplaceable habitats including ancient and veteran trees in a manner consistent with national policy?

**Q4.4** Are the requirements of policies SNE4, SNE5 and SNE6 clear, justified, consistent with national policy, and will they be effective?



- Q4.5** Are the requirements of policies SHE1, SHE2, SHE3 and SHE4 clear and consistent with national policy, including in relation to the requirements for the assessment and understanding of significance? Including:
- a) For soundness, should criterion 4 of policy SHE1 refer to significance?
  - b) Do the policies set out effective requirements for the reuse of heritage assets?
  - c) Should policy SHE3 cover the full range of non-designated heritage assets?
- Q4.6** Are the plan's policies for the natural and historic environment compatible with each other and, taken together, is it sufficiently clear for plan users what is expected?
- Q4.7** In terms of this issue, are any main modifications necessary for soundness?