

GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION

1. EMERGING SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

The Emerging Shropshire Local Plan, now at an advanced stage and developed through rigorous assessments, should carry significant weight in planning decisions. Local plans are meant to provide a positive vision for the future, balancing the area's economic, social, and environmental priorities.

The Applicants' proposed development does not align with the strategic priorities of the local development plan, particularly regarding the preservation of the Green Belt and the promotion of sustainable growth patterns, as emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Chapter 3, Paragraph 15.

- a) **Plan-Led Development (not Developer led)** is important to ensure that development aligns with the broader public interest and sustainable growth objectives. In the context of the Shropshire Local Plan, a plan-led approach prioritises the strategic needs of the community, including environmental, conservation, housing needs, considering economic, social, and environmental priorities and infrastructure development, as outlined by local authorities.

This contrasts with a Developer-led approach, where decisions are often driven by market opportunities, which may not always align with community goals or long-term planning strategies. By adhering to a plan-led framework, Shropshire can better manage growth, protect valuable landscapes, and ensure that new developments contribute positively to the local area.

- b) **Not in the Shropshire Local Plan** - which has been democratically developed by the people of Albrighton and Shropshire. There are many more sites in the Shropshire Local Plan that are more suitable than this for housing or for the Black Country unmet need. The site (P36A&B) has already been reviewed in the Shropshire Local Plan and confirmed as being unsuitable for housing. Further detail of this have been brought together by AVAG for the benefit of the local community, and are shown in the Community, Cohesion and Goodwill section of this document.

This is a speculative development to turn Green Belt agricultural land into profit for the Applicants' shareholders and not for the benefit of the people of Shropshire or Albrighton.

- c) **The Applicant Boningle Homes has previously** made comments on the record with Shropshire Council that the current proposed site on Cross Roads is unsuitable for development when compared to Shaw Lane and Harp Lane.

We agree with the Applicant on this issue and are confused as to why they have now changed their mind and now wish to build on the land. This appears to be a commercial, profit driven decision and is clearly not in the best interests of the people of Albrighton or the wider public.

Refer to extracts below from the Applicants' previous comments in documents including the following: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/19308/a0008-boningle-homes-ltd.pdf>:

- *“Obj. No. 1311; Policy omission ALB 1A - objection to the identification of land at Cross Roads for residential development and for its future development potential as safeguarded land (as referred to under the objections submitted under Policy S5)”*
- *“Shaw Lane - more sustainable”*
- *“Green belt boundaries need to endure in the long term. No guarantee that Cross Road field boundaries will be sustainable in the long term.”*
- *“Conversely - the land at Shaw Lane is clearly defined by the railway line to the north and east and by Kingswood Road to the south. The site is contained within this envelope and it would be entirely inappropriate to develop beyond these limits. The site is however of sufficient scale to ensure the Green Belt would endure around Albrighton for a significant period”*
- *“Conversely, residents of the proposed development site at Cross Road would use Station/Cross Road which passes directly through the High Street”*
- *“Cross Roads at other end of village - away from Station and poorly served by bus service.”*



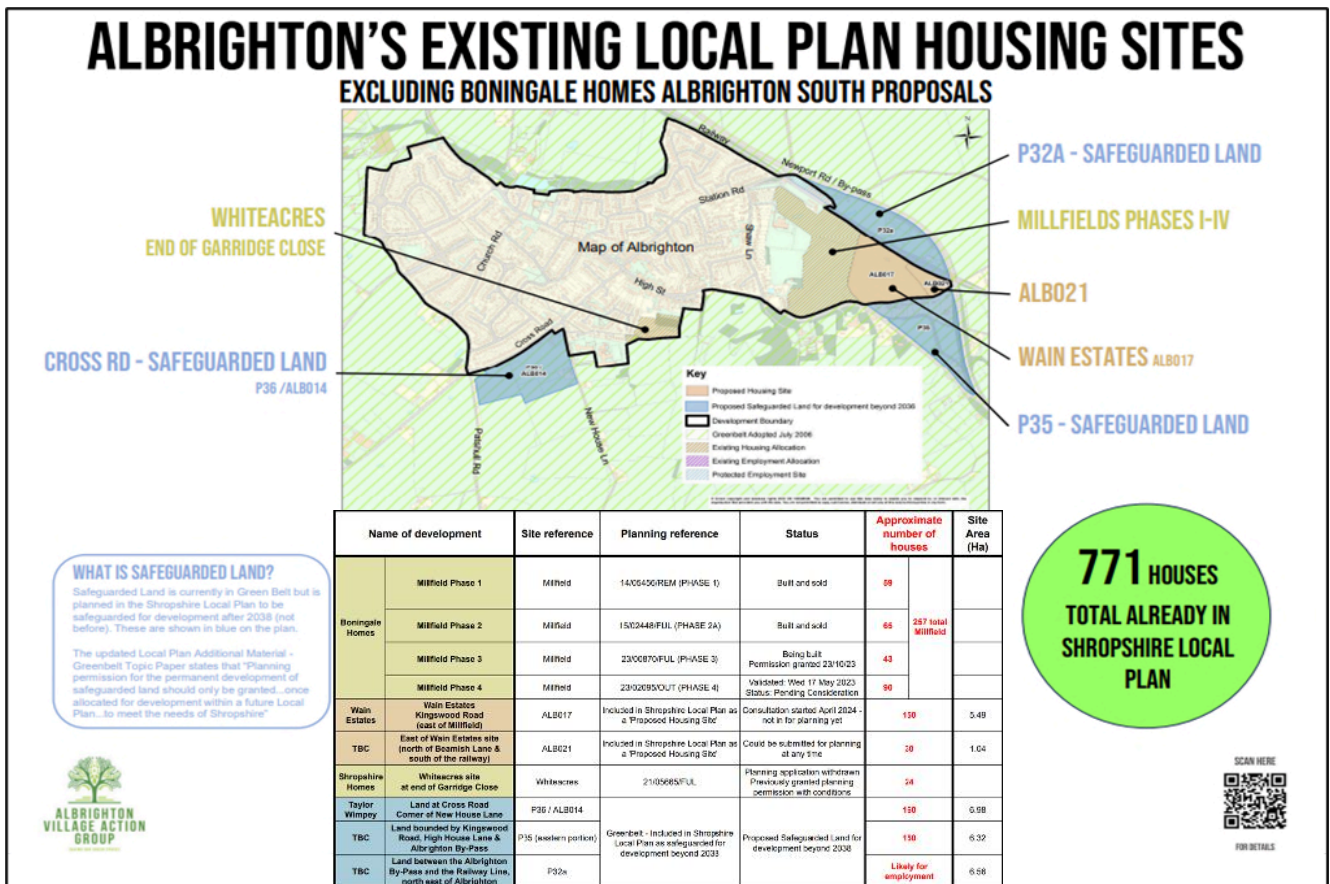
- "Land at Cross Road protrudes into the open Green Belt and does not comprise a logical extension to the settlement boundary in this location."

Site not previously put forward in the "Call for Sites". Boningale Homes also did not put the site forward previously in the Call for Sites process; likely due to their previously held views explained above.

It is therefore unreasonable and hypocritical for the Applicant to attempt to put forward the proposed site now (years later) and circumvent the plan-led process that they have previously followed. This site is being put forward in an inappropriate timescale and should therefore not be retrospectively considered for development. The Applicants' proposals undermine the integrity of the emerging Local Plan and it would set a damaging precedent if this was granted planning permission.

It is important that planning decisions respect the plan-led policy framework (previously also respected by the Applicant). Whilst this argument may not be a material consideration; these factors should be clear to the Planning Authorities in their decision making process.

- d) **Existing Housing Developments in Albrighton** are already providing 771 new houses in the Shropshire Local Plan and future safeguarded sites - refer to the AVAG display below. Shropshire and Albrighton are already providing the pro-rata equivalent of the Labour Party manifesto promise of 1.5 million homes over 5 years. This development is therefore not required.



- e) **Emerging Local Plan at an advanced stage.** The Applicants' special circumstances revolve around

County council will not need to plan for housing increase

Shropshire Council will not need to find hundreds more homes to add to its local plan despite the new government's drive to increase targets.

The new Labour Government wants councils to provide an extra 1.5m homes over the course of the next parliament as part of a manifesto pledge to "get Britain building again".

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Council planning inspectors carrying out the much-delayed examination of the authority's local plan say that there is no need to change its targets.

It means the authority can stick with its proposal for 31,500 homes being built between 2026 and 2036 - along with the creation of 326 hectares of employment land.

signed off by inspectors. It is crucial for authorities to have a local plan in place, to allow councils to build out which sites are used for development.

In a letter to the council last week the planning inspectors reviewing Shropshire Council's Local Plan, Louise Croxby and Elaine Wootton, said the authority was proceeding without increasing its targets.

They said that altering the proposals would further delay the plan, which has already had major delays.

cause further significant delays. One of the Government's goals is to ensure that as many local authorities have an up-to-date plan.

"Indeed, the written ministerial statement (WMS) says that where plans are already at examination they should be allowed to continue, although where there is a significant gap between the plan and the new local housing need figure that they will expect authorities to begin a plan immediately in the new system."

"So, based on the WMS it will be



objections to the age of the Shropshire Local Plan, arguing that it is outdated and therefore not valid. However, this claim overlooks the fact that the emerging plan has undertaken Regulation 19 consultations and is at an advanced stage about to undergo its second hearing. This means that the policies and protections to the Green Belt are relevant, hold significant weight and should be upheld.

The emerging plan's progress further underscores the need to adhere to existing guidelines and not rush into developments that could permanently worsen the region's landscape and character.

The Applicant has also introduced an argument that the new 2024 NPPF proposals should be taken into consideration in the Planning Inspectorate's decision on adoption of the emerging Local Plan. However, the importance of the advanced status of the Shropshire Local Plan was reiterated in the Shropshire Local Plan Examination Inspectors' Note ID44 on 19th August 2024, which stated:

"To be clear, this plan has been in examination for a significant period of time, and we do not intend to require any additional work linked to a change in housing numbers as this would be likely to cause further significant delays. One of the Government's goals is to ensure that as many local authorities have an up-to-date plan. Indeed, the WMS says that where plans are already at examination they should be allowed to continue, although where there is a significant gap between the plan and the new local housing need figure that they will expect authorities to begin a plan immediately in the new system. So, based on the WMS it will be for a future plan to grapple with the potentially higher housing need."

ID44 was reported in the Shropshire Star on 22nd August 2024 - see image above.

In summary, to preserve emerging Local Plans' functionality, it is critical that this planning application is not awarded planning permission.