

**WYRE FOREST LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**  
**MATTER 10 – DESIGN, OPEN SPACES & WATER MANAGEMENT**

**Inspector’s issues and questions in bold type.**

This Hearing Statement is made for and on behalf of the HBF, which should be read in conjunction with our representations to the pre submission Local Plan consultation dated 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018. This representation answers specific questions as set out in the Inspector’s Matters, Issues & Questions document

**10.1 Does the Plan as a whole set out a clear design vision and expectations to create and protect distinctive places, including provision for inclusive design and accessible environments?**

The Council’s proposed Main Modifications (MM) to Policies 11A and 27A as set out in the Table of Modifications for consideration by the Planning Inspector (SD12) address objections raised in the HBF’s representations to the pre-submission Local Plan consultation. These MMs are :-

Policy 11A - Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness

**MA/11ABCF.1 Guidance is provided in the District’s Adopted Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document of 2015.**

~~MA/11ABCF.2 DELETE ENTIRE PARAGRAPH: C. Design Supplementary Planning Document Proposals for new development must demonstrate a regard for the overarching vision and design objectives, the District’s local character and identity and the design processes set out within the latest adopted Design SPD~~

Policy 27A Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness

~~MA/27.2 Applications should demonstrate, through a Design and Access Statement or other supporting evidence, how the objectives outlined in criterion A have been addressed, and demonstrate consistency with the Adopted Design Guidance SPD and subsequent revisions. They will also need to address the following matters:~~

**MA/27.5 NEW PARAGRAPH to be inserted between 27.12 and 27.13 as follows: This policy is underpinned by the Council’s Adopted Design Guidance SPD 2015. This SPD will be updated following adoption of the Local Plan.**

However, the HBF have remaining concerns about the precise wording of the new paragraph as set out in MA/27.5, which will be inserted into the supporting text of Policy 27A. The proposed word “underpinned” in MA/27.5 is not considered appropriate. National policy clearly defines the scope and nature of an SPD in the planning process as providing more detailed advice and guidance on adopted Local Plan policies. The proposed wording elevates

the status of the SPD beyond guidance. It is suggested that MA/27.5 repeats the same wording as set out in MA/11ABCF.1 as follows :-

MA/27.5 NEW PARAGRAPH to be inserted between 27.12 and 27.13 as follows: ~~This policy is underpinned by the Council's Adopted Design Guidance SPD 2015.~~ Guidance is provided in the District's Adopted Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document of 2015. This SPD will be updated following adoption of the Local Plan.

**10.3 (iv) Taken together, what modifications may be necessary for Policies 14, 20B and 20C to provide clear, consistent and justified requirements for the protection and provision of green infrastructure, open space and for outdoor sports facilities in residential developments?**

As set out in the HBF's pre-submission Local Plan consultation representations, under **Bullet Point (iii) of Policy 20C** it is inappropriate for the Council to require development to correct existing local deficiencies in existing open space provision. The Council should only seek contributions to meet requirements originating from new development. It is recommended that **Bullet Point (iii)** is amended as follows :-

iii. Contributions towards the enhancement and creation of new areas of open space and / or sports facilities where ~~a local deficiency has been identified and/or where~~ the development will lead to a deficiency ;

**10.5 (i) Is the Plan's approach to water management sound?**

The Plan's approach is not sound.

**(ii) Is the requirement in Policy 15a for a water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day justified, and how should the policy be modified for clarity?**

The requirement for a water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day is not justified

Under Building Regulations, all new dwellings must achieve a mandatory level of water efficiency of 120 litres per day per person, which is a higher standard than achieved by much of the existing housing stock. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that where there is a "*clear local need, Local Planning Authorities (LPA) can set out Local Plan Policies requiring new dwellings to meet tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres per person per day*" (ID : 56-014-20150327). The NPPG also states the "*it will be for a LPA to establish a clear need based on existing sources of evidence, consultations with the local water and sewerage company, the Environment Agency and catchment partnerships and consideration of the impact on viability and housing supply of such a requirement*" (ID : 56-015-20150327). Furthermore, the Housing Standards Review was explicit that reduced water consumption was solely applicable to water stressed areas.

The Council's evidence to justify the requirement of Policy 15A is set out in The Wyre Forest District Council Water Cycle Study Final Report dated May 2017 (FR03), which is a study carried out in cooperation with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water. This study confirms that *“Overall, there are no major identified issues which indicate that the planned scale, location and timing of planned development within the District is unachievable from the perspective of supplying water and wastewater services and preventing deterioration of water quality in receiving waters”* (para 10.1). Wyre Forest is not identified as a water stress area. The Water Cycle Study Addendum 1 (FR04) and Addendum 2 (FR05) confirm that the conclusion from the 2017 Water Cycle Study remains unchanged.

Furthermore, the additional cost of achieving the standard is excluded from the Council's Local Plan Viability Assessments (IFT05 & IFT06).

In the absence of robust evidence of need and the lack of viability testing, the requirement for the optional water efficiency standard should be deleted from Policy 15A.