

Response to Draft Dudley Local Plan 2023

Cllr Adam Davies & Cllr Wayne Little

Brierley Hill & Wordsley South Ward

22nd December 2023

Please find our response and observations following the publication of the Draft Dudley Local Plan.

We recognise the importance of planning to provide for the future housing needs for the whole of Dudley borough. We welcome the opportunity to comment and share our observations, which we will do on behalf of the residents and stakeholders of Brierley Hill & Wordsley South specifically.

We are also members of Brierley Hill Community Forum (BHCF) which has submitted a separate response with further technical details and comments. We fully endorse the response provided by BHCF.

We believe that the type of housing and housing density plays a pivotal role in how the future growth and cultural development of Brierley Hill will impact the quality of life for residents living in the ward.

In addition to the response by BHCF, we wish to highlight our three main concerns;

- Housing type
- High street housing and control
- Connecting infrastructure

Housing Type (Bedrooms)

Evidence shows that Brierley Hill has a disproportionately high number of one and two bedroom flats when compared to other areas of the Dudley borough. This starkly contrasts with the immediately surrounding areas such as Kingswinford, Wordsley and Stourbridge.

We strongly believe that the housing need in Brierley Hill is for more family homes (typically three and four bedrooms) not more flats (typically one/two bedroom). The document proposes to build almost a thousand more flats within the Brierley Hill area over the next 20 years.

We see that this type of housing results in a higher level of transient population, who tend to only reside in the area for a shorter period of time.

Whereas a more settled community, with families laying down roots and investing their children's future in the area, builds a stronger, healthier and more economically resilient community.

We would therefore like to see the plan include an increase in the number of houses with three and four bedrooms, which will allow growing families to remain in the area of Brierley Hill, continuing to positively contribute to the economic and social outcomes of the area.

We feel this needs to be considered as a priority when planning the future allocation of housing, so this imbalance can be improved.

High Street Housing and Control

We would like to see stronger control and regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) in the High Street. Issues of waste disposal, access and car parking are already evident and we do not wish to see this increase.

With the potential for continued investment through the recently announced Growth Zone business rate retention scheme, long term planning and regeneration of the High Street needs to take into account the type and quality of retail and housing along the high street.

Connecting Infrastructure

As the strategic centre for the Dudley Borough, Brierley Hill comprises of three core economic locations;

- High St
- Waterfront
- Merry Hill Centre

At present they are poorly connected, particularly for pedestrians.

Earlier this year, we were really pleased to secure Levelling up Funding to help address these 'severance' issues.

We would therefore like to see The Plan specifically include details of how the connectivity and 'severance' issues will be improved.

We believe this will result in a better connected Strategic Centre, which will increasingly encourage people to want to live, work and visit the area, supported by the arrival of The Metro.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Adam Davies & Cllr Wayne Little