



Pennwood Farm (Seven Cornfields)

Frequently Asked Questions

- **There is no current planning application for large scale development at Pennwood Farm (Seven Cornfields). This is a large area of land east of Penn Common up to Goldthorn Park.**
- **At this stage, no sites have been chosen for South Staffordshire's Local Plan.**

Why has land at Pennwood Farm hit the headlines?

Planning agents acting on behalf of the landowners responded to a consultation South Staffordshire Council's Local Plans Team was carrying out in 2018 as part of an earlier stage of our Local Plan review. In addition to commenting on the issues facing South Staffordshire, the agent took the opportunity to promote this area of land and included details of how they saw the land being developed. The land had also been suggested to City of Wolverhampton Council as being available for development. Neither South Staffordshire Council, nor the Combined Authority, has endorsed the site, however, it would appear the representation made by the agents has been incorrectly interpreted as being given the go-ahead. To be clear, the site does not form part of our Local Plan review as has been reported in the press.

What is the current status of the land?

The majority of the land lies within South Staffordshire and is designated as Green Belt. For land to be removed from the Green Belt and developed it would need to be considered through the review of our Local Plan. We are committed to the protection of the Green Belt, as are all local planning authorities, and we are undertaking a Green Belt Study which helps us to identify the most sensitive areas of Green Belt.

What is a Local Plan?

Every local planning authority has to produce a Local Plan which sets out the planning framework for their area. It contains the amount of housing and employment growth being planned for in the next few years and where that growth will be located. It also contains policies which will be used to decide planning applications.





What is happening with South Staffordshire's Local Plan?

We have begun our review of the Local Plan and held a public consultation for eight weeks in October/ November 2018 on the issues facing us and which set out some possible solutions. We have read through all the comments made to the consultation, and we have been gathering evidence, such as our Green Belt Study, which has enabled us to prepare the next stage of consultation. This is planned to go ahead later in 2019 when our Councillors have discussed and agreed the final consultation documents. It will look at broad locations for housing growth but not specific sites. **Therefore, at this stage of our Local Plan review, no sites have been selected.**

When will sites be selected?

We are aiming to consult on sites for housing in summer 2020 once the broad locations for growth have been agreed. We will carry out full public consultation on the preferred sites and people will have the opportunity at that time to make comments.

Why were details of the land sent to South Staffordshire Council and City of Wolverhampton Council?

The Government expects councils to keep a record of all land that is available for future development. This is recorded in a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, or SHELAA. Any land can be put forward by anyone for the SHELAA, including land in the Green Belt, or land which has environmental protection. Councils use the SHELAA as the starting point when they are looking for land for development in their Local Plans. The Black Country is also preparing a new Local Plan for the four Black Country Authorities of Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell and the details were sent to them as some of the land lies within Wolverhampton.

Does this mean the Black Country can give the go-ahead for development?

No; decisions about housing development on land in South Staffordshire rests with our Councillors. But, we do have to work with our planning neighbours under the legal Duty to Cooperate. This means we have to engage 'constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' with our neighbouring authorities over matters which cut across administrative boundaries. The matters include meeting unmet housing and employment needs. The Black Country currently has a high need for new housing and a lack of suitable land for development and they are asking their neighbours to see whether they can help to meet some of the housing shortfall.





If the land is in a SHELAA does it mean it will definitely be developed?

It is really important to distinguish between the way that land is allocated through a Local Plan, from the SHELAA which is a source of evidence. The SHELAA contains details of **all** sites suggested to us so that information about available land is in the public domain and that all land is assessed on an equal basis as part of plan preparation. There are over 600 sites in our SHELAA, however, not every site suggested to us will be suitable, but it has to be recorded. Being included in the SHELAA is **not** a green light for development.

Can I be involved in the South Staffordshire Local Plan?

Yes, we welcome comments and information to our consultations from anyone who has an interest in the future planning of the district.

How can I do this?

The best way is to let us have your email contact details and we will add you to our Local Plan Register. We will then write to you automatically with updates on the progress of the Local Plan and any consultations we carry out. Send your name and email address to localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk or register online at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/localplanupdates

Want to know more?

You can see more information about the Local Plan review, including responses made to our Issues and Options consultation last year here: www.sstaffs.gov.uk/localplanreview



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