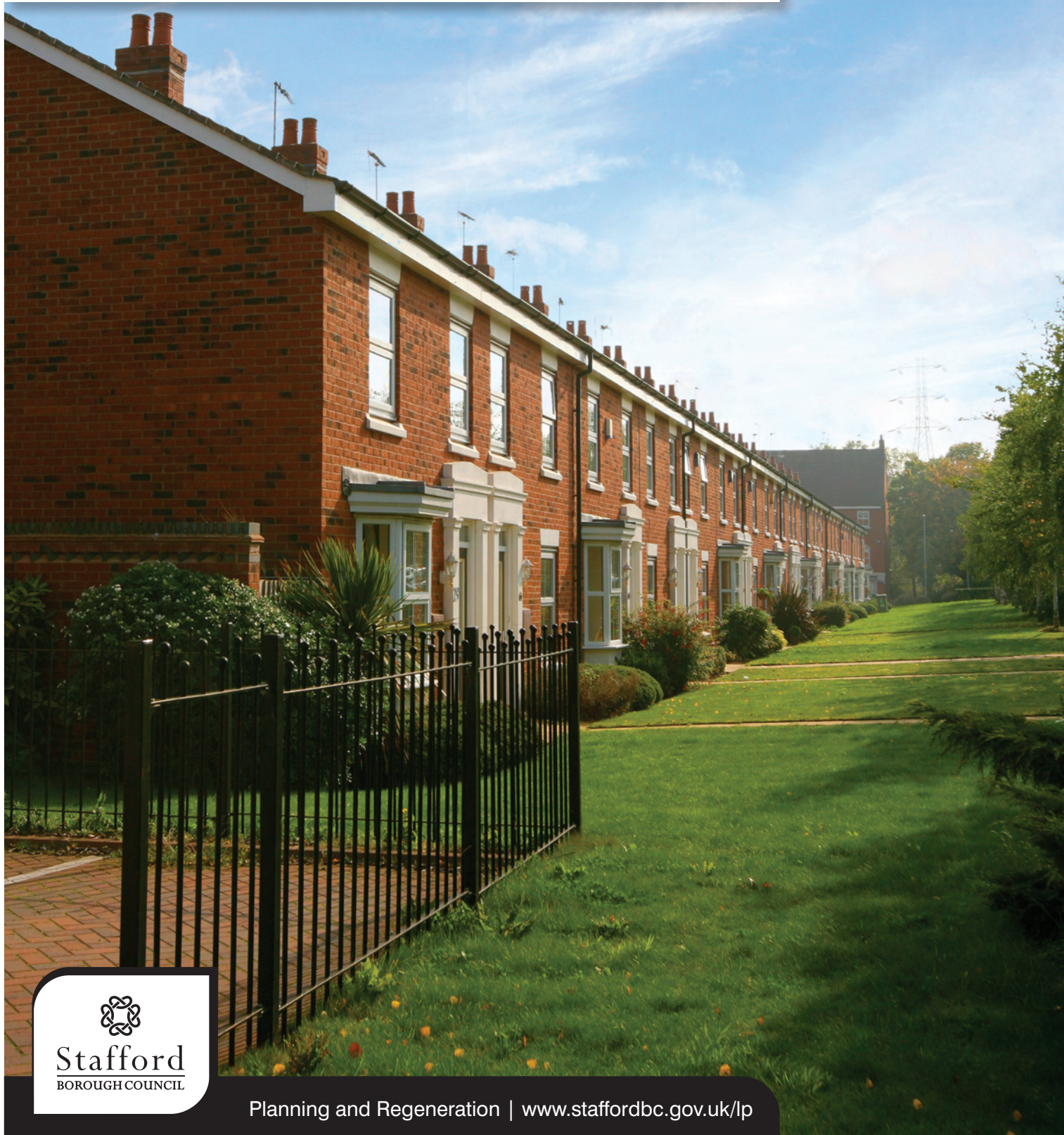


# The Plan for **Stafford Borough**



**Stafford**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning and Regeneration | [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/lp](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/lp)

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# Planning Strategy Statement

## 1 What is the purpose of this paper?

**1.1** This Planning Strategy Statement document has been prepared as the context to an additional statutory consultation on an addendum to the Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report. Following representations received to the Plan for Stafford Borough – Publication regarding the consideration of reasonable alternatives to Strategic Development Locations at Stafford and Stone, this Planning Strategy Statement explains the consideration previously given to the the strategic site options assessed as part of the plan making process, and extends this to embrace consideration of a new site at Clarke’s Farm, north east of Stafford. It takes this opportunity to bring together and explain the analysis of the major development potential of land around Stafford and Stone in a concise statement. It should be noted that this consultation exercise is focused on large-scale development locations as alternatives to the Strategic Development Locations identified in the Plan for Stafford Borough – Publication, rather than amendments to the Stafford and Stone residential development boundaries.

## 2 Sustainability Appraisal

**2.1** The Council is required to ensure that documents prepared for the new Local Plan are subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, which incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment. The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal is to help establish the best approach amongst all reasonable alternatives by appraising the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies in the new Local Plan. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with the principles of sustainable development.

**2.2** A Sustainability Appraisal framework was prepared in 2007, which identified relevant sustainability objectives for the Borough and provided an assessment throughout the preparation of the Plan for Stafford Borough, through a series of Sustainability Appraisal reports. The Sustainability Appraisal has therefore informed the spatial strategy, vision, objectives and policies of the plan. Further information can be found at [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sustainability-appraisal](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sustainability-appraisal)

## 3 Stafford Town – Other 'Reasonable' Alternative Locations

**3.1** Through the Plan for Stafford Borough – Publication, Stafford town is to provide approximately 5,500 new homes and 90 hectares of new employment land on Strategic Development Locations over the Plan period to 2031.

**3.2** Through the plan making process a range of alternative strategic locations and directions of growth have been considered to deliver new development at Stafford town, including areas of land promoted by landowners and developers. At an early stage land west of the M6 motorway was considered for new development but discounted due to the M6 motorway being a physical barrier to the west of Stafford town with the extensive rural open countryside beyond including the villages of Hyde Lea, Derrington and Creswell. These conclusions however were not fully addressed in the Sustainability Appraisal at that time. That omission is now rectified in the Sustainability Appraisal Addendum which this Statement accompanies.

**3.3** Recognising the constraint of the M6, directions of growth were then considered through the Plan for Stafford Borough – Issues and Options consultation document to the north, south, east and west. Following an assessment of environmental constraints, new development to the north, west and east were identified as deliverable in planning terms for large-scale new development. The southern direction of growth for Stafford town, including south and east of Walton-on-the-Hill, was identified as having significant environmental constraints, being close to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and having access issues. As part of this area lies within South Staffordshire District Council, this view was reached in discussion and co-operation with that Council.

**3.4** Turning to the three directions of growth for Stafford town, the appropriate extent of development was then considered. New development west of Stafford is constrained by the M6 motorway as a physical barrier and needs to take account of the setting of Stafford Castle but nonetheless can deliver a new Strategic Development Location. New development east of Stafford can deliver a Strategic Development Location as

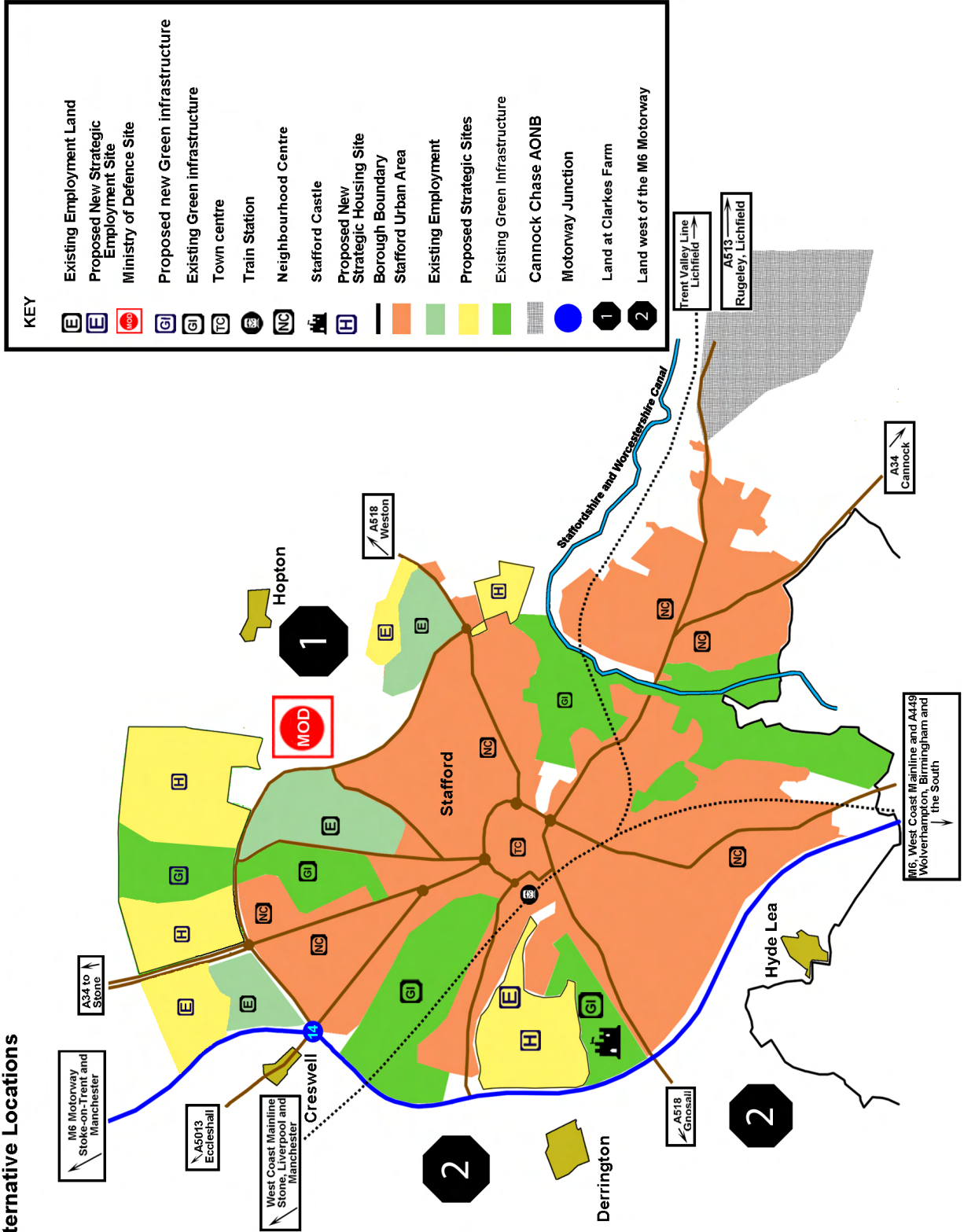
## Planning Strategy Statement

a logical extension towards Blackheath Lane both north and south of Tixall Road. However, further away from Stafford, the open countryside beyond Blackheath Lane is a prominent landscape including views toward the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, historic character, undulating high topography as well as being close to the Branscote Sewage Treatment Works. New development north of Stafford can deliver a Strategic Development Location beyond the Beaconside Road from M6 motorway and A34 through to the Ministry of Defence land. Introduced subsequent to the earlier plan-making process, the route of the recent proposal for the High Speed 2 railway will now provide a future physical barrier to new development to the north and east of this Strategic Development Location. Beyond the area now advanced as a Strategic Development Location, the land is less suitable for development since it generally rises upwards towards Marston and Whitgreave, and is prominent when viewed from the town and the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty beyond.

**3.5** A number of alternative strategic locations around Stafford have also been considered during the Plan making process (refer to the Stafford Town plan below). The Ministry of Defence land east of Stafford could potentially have been used for a Strategic Development Location. However, the Ministry of Defence have clearly stated that there are no plans for site disposals at Stafford and additional personnel will be based at the town from 2015 onwards. Land promoted through representations to the Plan for Stafford Borough – Publication at Clarke’s Farm to the east of Stafford is beyond the main Ministry of Defence site and would therefore be separated from the urban area of Stafford, and would present access issues. Clarke’s Farm is on a prominent area of high land between Stafford and Hopton village, beyond a new employment allocation east of the town. Furthermore, the currently identified route of the High Speed 2 passes close to the northern part of the land being promoted for development with few details provided in terms of delivery, constraints and new infrastructure requirements. For these reasons, the Clarke’s Farm area is not considered appropriate for development compared to the three proposed Strategic Development Locations already identified.

# Planning Strategy Statement

## Stafford Town - Other 'Reasonable' Alternative Locations



## 4 Stone Town – Other 'Reasonable' Alternative Location

**4.1** Through the Plan for Stafford Borough – Publication, Stone town is to provide approximately 500 new homes and at least 18 hectares of new employment land on Strategic Development Locations over the Plan period to 2031.

**4.2** Through the plan making process, a range of alternative strategic locations and directions of growth have been considered to deliver new development at Stone, including areas of land promoted by landowners and developers. At an early stage land to the north of Stone within the North Staffordshire Green Belt was considered but subsequently discounted, as there were other alternative locations to accommodate new development without removing land designated as Green Belt.

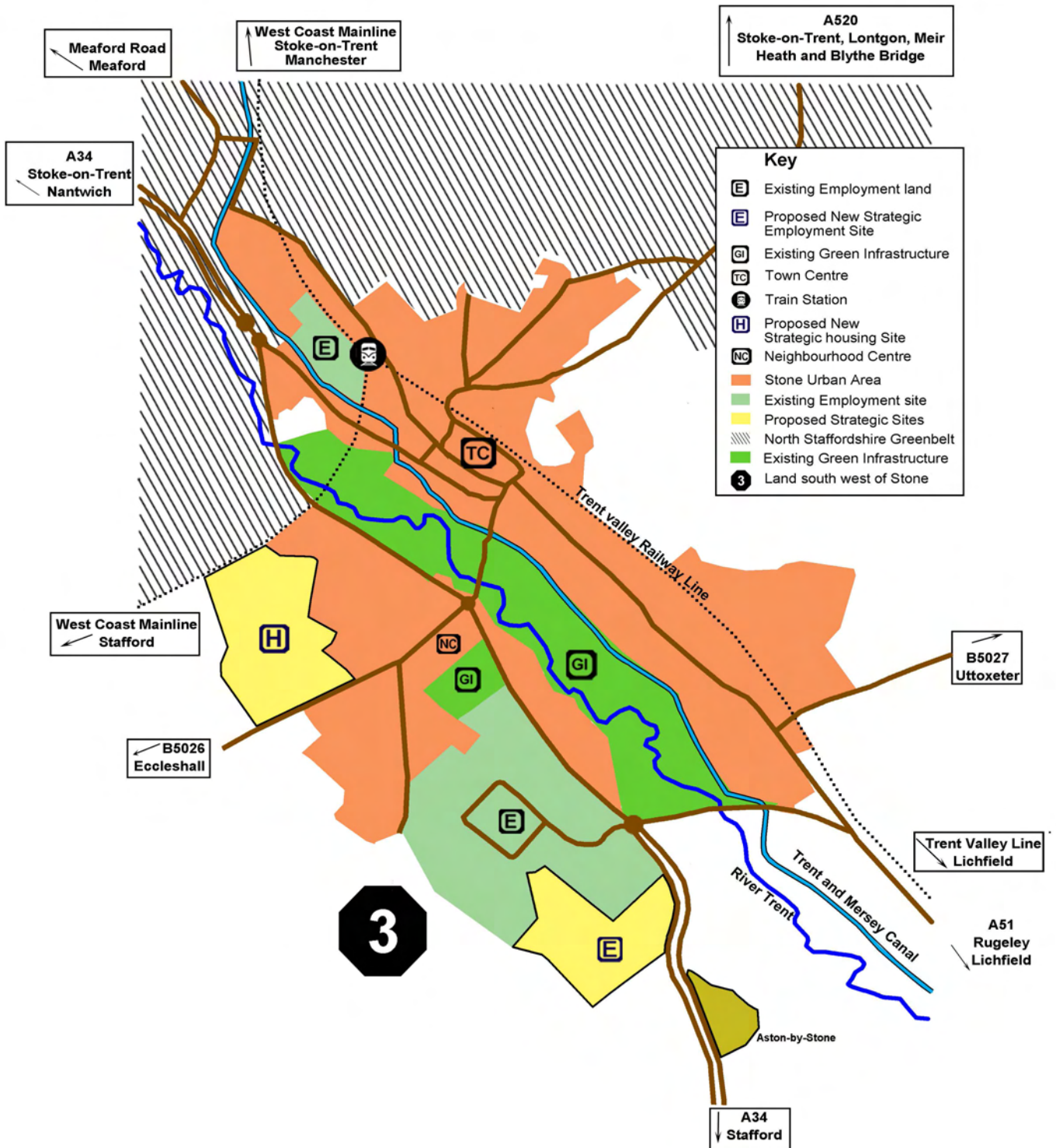
**4.3** Directions of growth were then considered through the Plan for Stafford Borough – Issues and Options consultation document to the south, east and west of Stone. Following an assessment of infrastructure and environmental constraints, new development to the south and west were identified as deliverable in planning terms for large-scale new development. However, the eastern direction of growth for Stone town is constrained by the West Coast mainline railway with access issues and located on prominent high landscape above the town.

**4.4** Turning to the west and south directions of growth for Stone town, the extent of development was then considered (refer to the Stone Town plan below). New development west of Stone is in close proximity to the primary school and can deliver a Strategic Development Location as a logical extension and rounding off of the existing urban area north of Eccleshall Road toward the railway line which acts as a physical barrier to development, with the North Staffordshire Green Belt beyond. New Land south of Eccleshall Road to the west of Stone would extend the urban area onto more prominent land above the town with part of the area subject to flooding issues and having Common Land status. New development south of Stone can deliver a Strategic Development Location for employment as an extension to the existing Stone Business Park. Due to the prominent rising land west of Stone Business Park, this alternative area for future employment was considered less acceptable. The published route for High Speed 2, whilst passing to the west of Stone, is far enough away not to form a barrier to the proposed Strategic Development Locations.

**4.5** A number of alternative strategic locations around Stone have also been considered during the Plan making process. Significant new development along the River Trent, and Trent & Mersey canal corridor has been discounted due to flooding constraints. Furthermore, other areas of land south of the A51 and south of the B5027 Uttoxeter Road have been considered and subsequently discounted, as development in these locations would further extend the linear form of Stone.

# Planning Strategy Statement

## Stone Town - Other 'Reasonable' Alternative Location



# Planning Strategy Statement

## 5 Next Steps

**5.1** Following the representation period on the Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report – Addendum, the Council will assess any representations received and produce a Submission version of the Plan for Stafford Borough for an independent Examination. Following the Examination and receipt of an Inspector's Report, the Plan for Stafford Borough (modified as necessary in line with the Inspector's conclusions) will then be formally adopted by the Council.

## 6 Responses & Further Information

**6.1** If you wish to make representations on this document or on the accompanying Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report – Addendum, please contact the Forward Planning section using the details below:

Forward Planning section  
Stafford Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Riverside  
STAFFORD  
ST16 3AQ  
Telephone: 01785 619000  
E-mail: [forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk)

**6.2** All documents relating to the Local Plan are available on the Borough Council's website at [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/forwardplans](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/forwardplans) Would you like this document in another format, such as large print? If so please telephone the Forward Planning team on 01785 619000 or e-mail: [forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk)